**OLUWOLE-OJO OLUWAGBEMI**

**MEDICINE/SURGERY**

**COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

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**TOPIC:**

**RELIGION: A THING OF CHOICE OR NOT**

There is obviously no doubt that the term religion and the fact that it has to do with choice or not has been debated since the time of its creation. And till today, people still wonder ‘do I have the choice of choosing my own religion’, or must I follow in my parent’s footstep and choose their own religion

Religion as a term, can be defined in different ways, but my favorite definition which I believe captures all what religion really is, is, religion is a programmed system pointing to a supreme being. The ‘system’ given in the definition above means that a lot of factors come together to define religion, some of these factors are faith, prayers, commandments etc. it is obvious that every single religion contains these factors which were all programmed into the system, hence religion being a programmed system. Programmed used in context means that all these factors are permanent and can never be changed because it has been with the religion ever since its creation. Now, that being said, of all these factors that are permanent, one factor stands as a support for religion not being a thing of choice, and this factor is belief.

Furthermore, belief is a factor that supports the fact that religion is not a thing of choice. Why, because if there’s anything that can drive parents to ensure that their children pick their religion is true belief in their religion. True belief means they believe their God is the one and only true God, every single religion believes this. Either your religion is Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity etc. the deep dark secret even if no one wants to admit it, is that that they think their religion is the only real religion and other religions are fake. If you can’t belief this fact, just ask yourself one question, can you leave the religion you are right now and go to another religion. If your answer is yes you don’t really believe in your religion. That being said, true belief will always prevail whenever the topic,’ is religion a thing of choice or not’ comes up and true belief will always ensure that religion is never a thing of choice, especially when the parents are true believers. This entire paragraph supports the fact that religion will never be a thing of choice, to know if religion has a chance to be a thing of choice you wouldn’t want to skip the next paragraph.

In addition, let’s examine Nigeria as a case study. Nigeria is one of the countries in the world that genuinely belief in religion, coupled with the fact that it also has diversity in religion which makes it a perfect case study to examine if religion is really a thing of choice or not. Research as shown that religion in Nigeria can really be a thing of choice, but it doesn’t stop there, surprisingly only 10 percent of Nigeria population has changed their religion and children cannot be found in this 10 percent. All who changed their religion are adults or close to becoming adults. This creates an imaginary line drawn between the children and adults in the fact that religion is a thing of choice or not. From the perspective of the children, every single child takes on the religion of the parent, whether they like it or not, for as they are being given birth to they are already introduced into religion. Now Nigeria as a case study, let’s consider Christianity for example, remember religion contains factors already embedded into a system which is already programmed to function that way as long as the religion exists, now, the programmed procedure for child birth in Christianity is christening after eight days, believe it or not, the child is already stepping into that religion without a choice. When that child grows up the child can never tell the parents that he wants to leave that religion, because the child has already been conditioned to accept and prefer that religion, now the main thing here is that the child never had the opportunity to choose his or her religion but had already been introduced into that religion since birth, and the only thing preventing the child from changing religion is either fear that the parents would find out or that the child feels that the religion he or she is already is the best because the parents are also involved in it an d also that their parents know what’s best, that’s from the child perspective. For the adult perspective, now the human being is already grown to have choices that can shape the way he or she perceives life. Now, its either the person stays in the religion the person was brought up in or he goes to another religion, it’s totally left to choice. From what has already been done to the individual from childhood, only 10 percent of adults now choose to leave their religion and move to another. This entire paragraph shows that religion could also be a thing of choice but not everyone has the luxury, and most times when people do have the luxury of choice they prefer not to leave.

In conclusion, the fact that religion is either a thing of choice or not a thing of choice is not fully correct because everyone faces the opportunity of choosing their own religion at point in their life whether that choice has already been affected by their childhood or not. Therefore my answer to this ever occurring topic is that religion could be a thing of choice or not.