

RELIGION AND PEACE BUILDING IN AFRICA:

*Proceedings of the International Conference of the Association for the
Promotion of African Studies on African Ideologies, Human Security
and Peace Building, 10th -11th June 2020*

Editors

Ikechukwu Anthony KANU

Ejikemeuwa J. O. NDUBISI

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DEDICATION

To Him who was the foremost Grand Patron of the Association
for the Promotion African Studies

Late Sir Emmanuel N. Kanu KSJ

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted in some quarters that religion constitutes the second nature of the African people. Religion, no doubt, permeates the way of life of an African. It dictates the likes and dislikes of an African. No wonder J. S. Mbiti observed that “Africans are notoriously religious.”¹ Religion is such a powerful force that can be used to make or mar a particular society. It can serve as a tool for unity or disunity depending on how it was employed.

In recent times, Africa has been engulfed with series of security challenges and violent conflicts, some of which can be attributed to religious intolerance. In Nigeria, for instance, there are cases of religious crises almost on a daily basis. Human beings are killed and properties are destroyed on the ground of religious violence.

Being highly disturbed by the above scenario, African scholars have asked: Is religion fundamentally an instrument of peace or violence? To what extent can religion be employed to maintain peace and harmonious coexistence in Africa? These and the related questions bothered the Association for the Promotion of African Studies (APAS). Therefore, the book in your hands is part of the fruits of their reflections on the above questions. This book is a collection of some papers that were read at the 2020 APAS International Conference (10 – 11 June) with the theme: African Ideologies, Human Security and Peacebuilding. This book highlights the unique importance of religion in peacebuilding in Africa. The ten (10) chapters herein advocate for religious tolerance and harmonious coexistence among African people irrespective of religious background. Religion, in the understanding of this book, should be a factor for unity and not disunity in Africa.

Endnote

1. J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1985), p. 1.

CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATION AND RELIGION: THE HABINGERS OF PEACE BUILDING IN AFRICA

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Executive Summary

Africa is a nation/continent with rich cultural and historical heritage, legacies and civilization. However, the western presence on African soil in time was an unfortunate experience owing to its negative influences like enforced slavery, colonialism, western domination and exploitation. Also, neo-colonialism, imperialism/capitalism, individualism and inequality followed as the aftermath. Africans really encountered conflicting stances and dilemma of true African identity given the western domination on African socio-political and economic institutions. Today in Africa, there still appear to be more violence and conflicts than in the past looking at increasing cases of insurgencies or terrorism, xenophobia/racism, tribal and religious skirmishes and other non-active wars or cold wars within some nations. Education, as far as peace building in Africa is concerned, has really led many Africans out and is still leading them away from those factors that promote conflicts: ignorant, immorality, corruption, injustice, bad leadership and the likes. Education in its fundamentality forms, informs and reforms both individuals and African society at large. Through change of mentality (mental reformation), enlightenment/re-orientation and ethical sanitization, individuals and indeed African nations are led into cultivation of African

values like the value of hard-work, truth-telling, protection of life, communal living and indeed the value of peace, for all these lead to peace building. Again, Religion as an ideology is seen as a vehicle for peace in Africa and beyond. It helps a lot in the formation of (certain) conscience. The reconciliatory role of Religion is an enormous vehicle for peace. Finally, Religious education and evangelization were always aimed at peace and meaningful living. Inter-Religious or Inter-faith dialogues were aimed also at bringing lasting peace in Africa. Methodically, the paper is analytical as it critically analyzes the actual ferment of the concepts and categories.

Keywords: Education, Religion, Africa and Peace-building.

Introduction

The concept of peace is really enormous. When we talk of peace building in Africa, the question that comes to mind is: whether African nations have been at war, especially seen how united they are in fighting our (2019/2020) common enemy, coronavirus pandemic disease (Covid 19). Most African nations have been in crises or conflicts, wars within itself and with others and certainly corruption/bad leadership is considered to be one of the main causes of ethno-religious conflicts seen in Africa. Poverty and injustice caused by corruption/bad leadership weaken any sense of mutual tolerance, social solidarity or co-existence while re-awakening social hatred, radicalism and violence. Using Nigeria as an example in its history of identity, violence and stability, an author writes:

Religious and ethnic nationalism has led to conflicts about control of state power, unequal allocation of resources, citizenship issues, state collapse, economic decline and ethno-religious clashes. Nigeria has been pushed hither and thither, by recurrent crises of regional or state illegitimacy, often impairing efforts at economic

transformation, democratization, national cohesion and stability.¹

Nevertheless, in clearer elucidation one recalls that (within the first four months,) not less than seven African nations have been in war in this present 2020. Reporting to the Journalists, the regional director for Africa for the international committee of Red Cross (ICRC) Patricia Danzi said her organization was struggling to cope with existing situations that strain already limited attention and resources. More concerning still was that new situations keep cropping up. And conflicts last and they don't stop.² Burkina Faso was mentioned as an example, where in 2019, 750,000 people were displaced by violence there by forcing ICRC to set up a new emergency response while maintaining their operation in neighboring Mali and Niger. In Libya and Central African Republic, various rebel groups have been fighting along religious line. Rwanda and Uganda closing borders and accusing each other of attempt of destabilizing their countries. Southern Sudan has been in political crises. At the end of 2019, Somalia witnessed terrorist attack in its capital, Mogadishu. Chadians fighting Boko haram terrorist in Lake Chad basin. Nigerian's own case is severe as almost a decade, has been at war with Boko haram Islamic terrorist group and in 2019, Fulani herdsmen came in with their own deadly attack and kidnapping. In all, not only conflicts and violence is witnessed, for there were displacement of people as well as casualties and death.

However, without further enumeration, one could see that issue of peace building in Africa is *ad rem* in this moment and the *raison d'etre* (reason of being) of this write up therefore is to appraise the rich potentials in Religion and Religious education in restoring and building peace and harmony among citizens in African nations, thus providing a veritable terrain for sustainable development in African continent. And before we plunge into deep analysis pertaining to this, we first define the basic concepts in this work.

Education

Etymologically education is derived from the Latin word “educare” which means to lead forth, drag out or to pull out ideas which are believed to be innate from childhood. So, education implies to lead out of darkness, a bringing forth into light. It is an enlightenment.

Education has various definitions. Education is defined as the process or means by which the individual is acclimatized to the culture or environment in which he is born in order to advance it.³ So, education here is believed to be process and an instrument both for social and economic development. Again, Education has been defined as a deliberate systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities.⁴ Here education is seen from the universal sense of its formal and informal contents. All aspects of learning that enables the individual interact fully with his environment is emphasized. Is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.⁵ Educational methods includes: storytelling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research? Education is the primary vehicle through which children and even adults use to learn the norms, values and skills they needed to function in society

Other writer, Reid holds that “education is a purposive activity towards ends which are rightly or wrongly deemed to be good”⁶. While Essien holds that we think of education and educated in terms of the very restrictive labels of engineers, mathematicians, doctors, lawyers, nurses rather than in those of citizens.

Religious Education is the term given to education concerned with religion. It may refer to education provided by the church or religious organization for instruction in doctrine and faith, or for education in various aspects of religion, but without explicitly religious or moral aims.⁷ In a school or college, the term is often known as religious studies. Religious education is also called moral education, and it is a process where children and young people engage in a search for meaning, value and purpose of life. This involves both exploration of

beliefs and values and study of how such beliefs and values are expressed.

Religion

It is very difficult to define Religion, Ikenga Metuh holds that it is an elusive concept as far as its definition is concerned. This he said is because the object of religion for the most part is invisible and spiritual beings who are not subject to observation and are concerned in different ways by different peoples.⁸ We have definitions of religion, given by some renowned authors like E.B Tylor, J. Martineau, H. Spencer J.G Frazer, and others. Tylor holds that Religion is a belief in spiritual being.⁹ However, this definition was greatly criticized as taking a very restricted view of both object and subject of religion. Martineau holds that Religion is the belief in an ever living God that is, in a divine mind and will, ruling the universe and holding moral relations with man.¹⁰ Spencer holds that Religion is a recognition that all things are manifestations of a power which transcends over knowledge.¹¹ Frazer holds by religion, he understood “a propitiation, conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the cause of nature and of human life.”¹²

Without much critique, we work with the above definitions of religion, only it is worthy to note that each stressed one aspect or another of religion to the exclusion of others. Thus Martineau and Spencer represent religion as some sort of belief or other cognitive state. Frazer sees it as ritual (conceived in a utilitarian fashion). Definition points to the essence and Julian Huxley writes that “the essence of religion springs from man’s capacity for awe and reverence, that the objects of religion... are in the origin and essence those things events and ideas which arouse the feelings of sacredness”¹³

Africa/African Nations

Africa is the world’s second largest and second most populous continent after Asia. At about 30.3 million Km² including adjacent islands. It covers 6% of earth’s total surface area and 20% of its land area. With

1.3 billion people as of 2018, it accounts for about 16% of the world's human population. Despite the wide range of natural resources, the continent is the least wealthy per capita in large part due to the legacies of European colonization in Africa. Despite this low concentration of wealth, recent economic expansion and the large and young population make Africa an important economic market in the border global context.

When we talk of African nations we are talking of 54 countries in Africa : Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, DR Congo, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Algeria, Sudan, Morocco, Angola, Mozambique, Ghana, Madagascar, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Malawi, Zambia, Senegal, Chad, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Guinea, Rwanda, Benin, Burundi, Tunisia, South Sudan, Togo, Sierra Leone, Libya, Congo, Liberia, Central African Republic, Mauritania, Eritrea, Namibia, Gambia, Botswana, Gabon, Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Eswatini, Djibouti, Comoros, Cape Verde, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles. Included are four dependent territories: Reunion, Western Sahara, Mayotte and Saint Helena.

Peace Building

Peace building is “an activity that aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the cultural and structural conditions that generate deadly or destructive conflicts,”¹⁴ Peace building is said to be in process when institutions like state, religious bodies, tribes, families and the like start constructing, structuring, creating or restoring conducive atmosphere or awareness necessary for individuals to live in harmony with one another and freely conduct their business or investments without war, strife, conflict and rancor.

Peace building revolves around developing constructive personal, group and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national and racial boundaries. This process includes violence prevention, conflict management, resolution or transformation and post conflict reconciliation or trauma healing. That is before, during and after any

given case of violence. For easy comprehension we differentiate it from peace making peace keeping and conflict resolution.

The United Nations Secretary General's Committee definition in 2007 holds that peace building involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthen national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay foundations for sustainable peace and sustainable development.¹⁵ commenting further, they stressed that "peace building strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized sequenced and therefore relatively narrow sets of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives"¹⁶

Western Education

From the Idealist perspective, the etymology, Latin *educare*, which is to lead forth, drag out or pull out ideas which are believed to be innate from childhood.¹⁷ So, for Plato and other idealists, education involves stimulation of innate ideas or abilities in an individual, to grow and blossom into original thought and wisdom. For John Locke and other Realists, the Latin *educare* means sending in or putting in ideas into the mind of a child which is believed to be blank or empty at birth. Here, it involves forming or training the individual with experiences. Which are acquired through senses and these senses provides the mind with impressions and information.

Now, without going further into the rationalists and empiricists war on the sources of human knowledge, we conclude that knowledge comes from senses as well as from reason or intellect. So, it is both subjectivity/objectivity, materiality/immateriality, and involves interiority/exteriority and knowledge is perfection for the more one knows, the more perfect he or she becomes

In the basic division of education, we have **Informal education** and this refers to the one that can occur outside a structured curriculum, it can occur through conversation and exploration and enlargement of

experience can occur unnoticed. It includes home schooling, auto-didacticism (self-teaching) and youth work. **Formal** is the one normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic intentional way, within a school, higher education or school or university. Is on regular basis, formally recognized, program is rigid and credential is gotten.

Non-formal includes various structured situations which do not either have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with formal learning, but, have more structure than that associated with informal with typically take place naturally and spontaneously as part of other activities. Examples, swimming session for toddlers, community based sports programs, boys scouts and girls guilds programs, community or non credit adult education courses, professional conference style seminars and continuing professional development.

Giving much insight on education in the great Books of Western world, we are meant to understand that education is not itself so much an idea or a subject matter as it is a theme to which the great ideas and the basic subject matters are relevant. It is one of the perennial practical problems which men cannot discuss without engaging in the deepest speculative considerations. And it is a problem which carries discussion into and across a great many subject matters, namely: the Liberal arts of grammar, rhetoric and a logic, Psychology, Medicine, Metaphysics and theology, ethics politics and economics. Thus:

It is a problem which draws into focus many of the great ideas : Virtue and truth, Knowledge and opinion, art and science, desire, will, sense, memory, mind, habit, change and progress, family and state, man, nature and God.¹⁸

Education has been a vehicle for peace (building), starting from its etymology which is a continuous process of leading one out of ignorance (educare) and the consequent act of leading one into knowledge (educare). Thus the goal or purpose of education prior to 1960 (in Nigeria) was simple to lead into light the new generation of

civil servants and public servants who would take over from the colonial masters from all facets of the society.

Conflicts and some evils arise mostly out of ignorance. Thus, Socrates holds that “no one does evil willingly”. However, this his philosophical dictum has received so many critique, but it is still evident that lack of authentic knowledge is the cause of some conflicts, wars and dissensions among individuals and groups. In Africa, Nigeria as an example, corruption is considered to be the one of the main causes of ethno-religious conflicts; poverty and injustice caused by corruption weaken any sense of mutual tolerance, social solidarity and co-existence while re-awakening social hatred, radicalism and violence.

Western and Religious Education the Bases for Peace Building

Philosophically, we are to establishing that both western and religious education is the basis for peace building. We know that peace building does not talk about peace only, but it facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the reoccurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building and political as well as economic transformation.¹⁹ And this distinguishes it from such words like: **peace-making**, which involves stopping an on-going conflict. But Peace-building happens before a conflict starts or once it ends. **Peace-keeping**, this prevents the resumption of fighting following a conflict, it does not address the underlying causes of violence or work to create societal change as peace building does. It also differs from peace building in that it occurs after conflicts ends not as it begins.

Conflict Resolution, here, two or more parties that engaged in disagreement, dispute or debate reach an agreement resolving it by help of some skills like active listening, emotional intelligence, patience, impartiality and the likes. It does not include some components of peace building like state building and socio-economic development. And these elements make peace building really different.

Intrinsically peace is an abstract concept and it lies within a person. And is only a man of peace can allow peace and reconciliation to reign. We mean a man with a religious conscience for it is religion that forms conscience. By conscience, we mean that “moral faculty which tells people subjectively what is good and evil and which manifests their moral obligation to them”²⁰.

Through Religious education, morality or moral formation and peace are directly or indirectly built on our youths. By morality, we mean thought pertaining to the conduct of human affairs and relations between persons. Hare, in his ‘Language of morals’ defined morality as “an active process which is the effort to guide one’s conduct by reason, that is, doing what there are justified reasons for doing while giving equal considerations to the interests of all those affected by what one does”²¹. By morality, we are referring to a set of personal or social standards for good or bad behavior or the principle concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. Moral formation is the training or education given to children or youths, thus shaping them according to the moral norms or customs of the society. This is obtainable when fundamental moral agents like parents, teachers, pastors /priests through the knowledge of Christian ethics or moral philosophy mould children’s and youths’ character through some ethical principles. In clearer elucidation, Peschke, writes:

Ethics {which is also referred to as moral philosophy} is a branch of philosophy that studies morality and prudence. Ethics deals with the rightness and wrongness of human conduct. It judges when man’s action is freely, knowingly and deliberately performed. Philosophical ethics or moral philosophy endeavors to mould a person’s character and to establish guiding principles for moral life.²²

So, here we are talking of moulding children’s or youth’s character and this is moral formation and ethics deals with such, For the word ethics originate from Greek character ethos, which means habit, custom or character.²³ Thus, all these are under Religious education and with its

effectiveness peace is assured. But a pertinent question is how effective is in our African nations, Nigeria inclusive.

As peace building involves institution building and political as well as economic transformation (to avoid reoccurrence of conflicts), we now state that it is religious education that gives one insights into developments at all level: religious, political, economic, academic, technological and the likes and finally makes man understand the real or genuine or authentic development, which in development of man himself as to better the lots of mankind is the goal of development. And once this is achieved there will be no conflicts between men as such. In line with this the purpose of Religious education is defined thus:

Learning about Religion and learning from Religion are important for all pupils as religious education helps pupils develop an understanding of themselves and others. Religious education promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of individuals and groups and communities.²⁴

Through religious education, people gain wisdom or insights from such spheres of life like artistic, musical and literary, and these insights help them to build peace in themselves and with other fellow men, as many great artists, composers, musicians and writers had deep religious and philosophical motivation and inspiration for their work²⁵ (and this is evident in African/Nigerian artists, composers and musicians) So, religious education is the basis of peace build also as it helps a lot in human authentic development in both cultural, historical and Philosophical, ethical and moral as well as in political, social and psychological transformation/developments.

Education: A Vehicle for Change/Transformation

Education is a veritable means of change or transformation, for human person and his society and environment as well. Education plays an important role as far as holistic development of man is concerned. First, premium is placed on the development of human mind or cultivation of

mind and this is seen to be fundamental of all development. And it's from here that one start to build for peace.

Man is to be advanced holistically or integrally in both social, religion, political and in other perspective. When we talk of advancement or development, we mean advancement of the whole man, whole facets, institution, segments, practices and values (moral and ethical inclusive). All these are under the roles education plays in formation of human person. And when it is done, change or progress has been made.

Religions in Africa

Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR) are the three types of religion in Africa.

Christianity is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of its founder Jesus Christ or Jesus of Nazareth. The adherents Christians believe that Jesus is Christ. And his coming as the Messiah was prophesizes in the Hebrew bible old testament, and chronicled or recorded in the New Testament. This religion was brought into Africa by early European missionaries. Around 49% of Africans are its adherents. It has so many denominations.

Islam is Abrahamic monotheistic religion that teaches that there is one God and Muhammad is a messenger of God. Has its origin at Mecca. Around 42% of Africans are its adherents.

African Traditional Religion is a religion found in African continent. It is a religion of an African man. But nowadays, around 8% of Africans are its adherents. Is called traditional because it is an indigenous religion, it is customary, long established, accepted, orthodox and normal to an African man. It has existed for quite long a time. It is a religion because there is a "belief in spiritual beings". It has a cultural system of designated behaviors and practices, world views, sanctified places, prophecies and the likes. It is still found in many tribes in Africa. In places where it may not be seen, it is still in existence through its

sources like artistic carvings, sacred kings, priests, and sacred institutions and the likes.

Religion a Vehicle for Peace Building in Africa

In order to elucidate this very well, we have to look at the three major religion found in Africa and see their contribution in terms of peace and development. We first start with African Traditional Religion.

ATR and Peace building in Africa

Starting from African traditional Religion, we recall that before the advent of white men in African soil, ATR has already established sources like art forms, oral traditions and sacred institutions. We are concerned with sacred institutions which are an established, expressed law, customs, usage practice, organization or other elements in the political and social life of the people. It is here one finds institutors for peace building, conflicts resolution and reconciliation. Other institutions found here includes: Sacred kingship, priesthood, chieftaincy titles, initiation rites, festivals and the likes. And they are hedged round with certain rites and beliefs, observations and taboos which are inspired and sustained by firmly held religious beliefs, example is the Golden stool linked with sacred kingship of the Ashanti people of Ghana

Owing to the inability of the white men to comprehend this ATR and its institutions, they gave it some derogatory names and tried to destroy its institutions but many are still functional till today like Nze /Ozo, peace keeping, custodian of customs and traditions. Communal bodies like Aladimma, town unions, womens' wing, youth bodies, age grades and peer groups. All these traditional groups help in peace building and development in African nations. They help to see that people live communitarian or communal life. Defining this type of life I.C Uzundu writes:

The way or model of life obtainable in traditional African society or community before the advent of the Europeans or white men is what is termed African communalism. This type of life may be found in some

other continents but the greatest manifestation of communalistic way of living is found in the traditional African community.²⁶

ATR institutions like kings, priests, ozo/nze etc still help in peace building in their different clans, communities, towns states and nations nowadays. Even in nation's democratic setting, they are mostly consulted as far as constituency democracy is concerned

Christianity and Peace Building in Africa

Christianity in comparison with ATR and Islam has the highest adherents in African nations and plays vital role in peace building more than other religions as is known to be religion of peace in name and in deed. Not only it evangelizes towards peace, preaching the beatitudes and forming people's consciences towards peace and justice, the Pope writes on peace building as well in the social teachings of the church. Example is *Magnum Opus* of John XXIII that dwelt on the rights and obligations of individuals and of the state as well as the proper relations between states. And he stated that "the peace between all peoples must be based on truth, justice, love and freedom".²⁷ This *pacem in terris* (peace on earth) dwelt much on human dignity, equality among all people, the right of women, nuclear and non-proliferation (of weapons). And United Nations endorsed all these.

Again, as peace building talks of institution building and economic transformation, Christianity not only have helped African nations in this regard, but it still does so through its many agencies like Caritas, Pontifical Mission Society (PMS), Red Cross, and of course, World Council of Churches (WCC) and others; and has been effective in its reconciliatory mission by making its adherents to put Christian peace in praxis after his founder Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace, who in His golden rule preached non-violence, no retaliation and love for one's enemies. Also Christians indulge in prayer for Christian unity, unity and peace in the world and they try and enjoin adherents to live it out.

Islam and Peace Building in Africa

Islam is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion that teaches that there is only one God and that Muhammed is a messenger of God. It has largest followers after Christianity in African nations; it is a religion of submission to God (Allah). It has four cardinal pillars: the Muslim Shahadan, profession of faith, Salat or prayer, Zakat, the alms tax levied to benefit the poor and the needy. Sawm, fasting during the month of Ramadan and the Hajj, the major pilgrimage to Mecca if financial and physical condition permits.

Islamic peace building approaches have not yet produced practical methodology as such. Islam is a religion of submission to Allah. However, Islam contributes to a greater percentage in all the conflicts, wars and dissensions encountered in African nations. The Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) is just for peace within them and not beyond even though available data shows that Islamic countries are the most war torn and violence ravaged nations in today's world. Islamic fundamentalists are always at war; example is the case of Boko haram terrorists that has been fighting the Nigerian state, Christians and is against western education in Nigeria since over a decade. Islam does not have much regard to women and this challenges the fundamental human rights.

Critical Evaluation

Thus far, we started to observe that conflicts, wars and dissention are the order of the day in many African countries and our country Nigeria is not left out as the menace of Boko Haram terrorists, Fulani herdsmen and kidnapers are increasing day by day. And we offer solution that Education, Religion and Religious Education are the vehicles for peace building in African nations (Nigeria inclusive). They are the basis for peace building. And Peace building theory when critically examined, one sees clarion call for education or need for education to support transformation processes related to change in security, political institutions, economic development or regeneration and social development in and within the post conflict stations. For the causes of

so many conflicts and wars usually be injustice caused by corruption and bad leadership. And the cumulative implications are poor development, lack of basic amenities. We in this article appraised the roles of Religion and Religious and Moral Education as far as formation of citizen's consciences are concerned. And formation of certain conscience helps one to adhere to good or value system re-orientation followed by ethical sanitization. Thus, there will be decline in corruption, no longer moral anarchy and modernization of values, no more much recognition and esteem to riches and value of hard work and truth are again held esteem, then durable peace will gradually be restored in our African countries.

However, education and religion are not only means of peace building, for education, especially Religion helps also in promotion of conflicts in African nations. In line with this, our author writes in the introduction of his work thus:

A cursory glance at the development of human history reveals that religion has always been a major component that is capable of initiating either conflicts or peace in the world.²⁸

Certainly, the above idea is glaring especially in African nation where Religion is key source of identity. But to either side one invest more, will surely determine the dividend to be expected. For instance, Islam is known to be a religion of peace, but most Islamic terrorists and fundamentalists are carrying on their Jihad, war, conflicts in some African nations – Mali and Nigeria are examples. Even among Christians, one sometimes sees conflicts arising. Those minor conflicts were in existence even among the early Christians or primitive Christianity. That shows man is an energetic being – “impossible possible being”. That is the nature of man and human psychology portrays this; and man at Nnewi and one living at Kano are not the same. The remedy is peace building, working for durable peace, using the agencies within reach to do it.

African traditional religion (ATR) had effective institutions working for peace building in Africa before the advent of white men who did not understand the religion and gave it derogatory names. ATR had justice delivery system which places the individual under the judgment of elders, subject to demands of customs and tradition.

However, some of those institutions owned by ATR were guilty of conservatism that tends to dismiss contemporary solutions to problems as irrational. There was problem of ostracization or excommunication.

They provide enabling environment/institution for promoting social justice. They embark on community-oriented developments and organized communal entities do assist to build markets, water projects etc. using communal efforts.

Finally, education helps a lot in peace building through its transformation process. Not only that it trains human beings to be good, the training of the body and the cultivation of bodily skills: gymnastics and manual works. Education helps much in formation of good or virtuous character, sometimes education reinforces inequalities and brings divisions, thus conflicts arises. But the Socratic dictum that no one does evil unwittingly is no more correct as we now know that a man can know what is good or right to do in a particular case and yet do the opposite. Some politicians really know what to do pertaining to bad roads and infrastructural decay and still chose to be corrupt, other examples includes kidnappers, Fulani Herdsmen, Bandits who go on killing rampage knows about the evil of taking another life but still chose to do so.

Conclusion

Education has been proved beyond every reasonable doubt to be a veritable catalyst for social development and economic transformation. Hence the saying that education is the door to the future and literacy is the key. For once educated, behaviors automatically change and perspectives also do same. As there is the disparity between learned and educated men, we conclude that it is only when Africans are educated

that there will be lasting peace or durable peace in Africa. African nations should imbibe the culture of peace building and be in serious consultation and discussion with certain agencies like United Nations, (UN) United Nations international children's emergency fund (UNICEF), Education for all (EFA) and the likes to help in peace building in their respective countries. Finally, African religious bodies should try more in peace building and economic development by engaging more in religious or moral education/enlightenment and in interfaith or inter-religious dialogue which will bring more peace to African nations. Thus Inter-religious or interfaith dialogue as an author writes "is neither a forum for disproving the belief of other, nor a space for arguing and attacking one another. It is not aimed at concession for in such dialogue each party remains sincere to their own faith. It aims at unity, but this unity is one with diversity as far as religion or faith is concerned."²⁹ The main focus of the dialogue is to build understanding and confidence, to overcome or prevent tension; increase mutual understanding and good relations. Also, to identify causes of tension in Christian- Muslim relations, breakdown the barriers and stereotypes which lead to distrust, suspicion and bigotry. Once all these are done, peace is built, economy improved and development experienced, as poverty Aristotle holds is the parent of crime and revolution.

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CHAPTER TWO

INCESSANT KILLINGS OF CHRISTIANS BY ISLAMIC SECTS: A THREAT TO PEACE IN NIGERIA

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Executive Summary

It is no longer in doubts whether there is a hidden agenda of extermination of Christianity in Nigeria by the Islamic sects. The recent incessant public killings of Christians and posting of the videos of secretly beheaded Christians in different social media is clear-cut evidence that these Islamic sects are gradually fermenting trouble in Nigeria. In the recent times, Nigeria's Boko Haram extremist sect has continued to demonstrate the ability to execute attacks. The security forces and political leaders of Muslim-majority Northern Nigeria are either complicit with Boko Haram's operations, or they are taking a rather complacent view of its success. A video released by Islamic State on 26th December 2019 which claims to show [the killing of 11 Christian hostages](#) in Northern Nigeria threatens to spark religious tensions in the country. The Islamic State sub-group called Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) said the "beheading" of the hostages was part of its campaign to "avenge" the killing of ISWAP leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a US military raid in Syria. The findings of this paper have shown that there is declaration of religious attack by Islamic religion on Christianity. Again, the deliberate effort to give religious colouration to the farmers-herders

clashes and the Boko Haram insurgency, in particular, has undoubtedly helped to conclude that the government is doing little or nothing to guarantee religious freedom in the country. Therefore, the purpose of this study, is to foretell to Nigerians, especially the government the impending dangers by these needless incessant killings of Christians, it is also an avenue to appeal to the Islamic religious leaders to cease fire on these constant killings in order to arrest impending revenge by those that hate what ISWAP and Boko Haram are doing in Nigeria. Data collection method for this research is mostly secondary data collection. The research concludes with proffering the theory of peace by Johan Galtung and its proper application in Nigeria situation as solution, especially on this incessant killing of Christians in Nigeria.

Keywords: Incessant Killings, Christians, Islamic Sects, Threat, Peace, Nigeria

Introduction

Boko Haram, more than before, contemporary Nigerian society has been beset with religious conflicts that have threatened to tear the fabric of the country's unity and peace. To a large extent, one can say that Nigeria of the past before independence boasted of religious flexibility and tolerance for many years. However, recently, it seems to have been shelved as gruesome stories relating to religion rear their ugly heads frequently, causing loss of lives of Christians. One can say that a curious feature of today Nigerian society is religious intolerance, most especially in the Northern and the Middle Belt regions of the country. Religious fanaticism in the northern part of Nigeria has been hidebound and its spread is unbridled. Religious violence has been unleashed on many innocent Christian citizens of this country, that one wonders if Nigeria is truly a country which gives room for religious freedom.

There is palpable apprehension among the citizens due to the Boko Haram insurgencies in different parts of the North. For over ten years,

cities like Maiduguri, Bauchi, Damaturu and Gombe have been bedeviled with fear due to the Boko Haram insurgencies. Religious intolerance prevails in the country and this is an abuse of human rights. The high rate of killings of Christians due to religious intolerance in many parts of the country is worrisome. A great concern at this alarming phenomenon is informed by the slaughter of Rev. Lawani Andimi who was attacked by Boko Haram at Michika in Adamawa State; though he was declared missing, later he appeared in a video released by Boko Haram on January 5, in which he pleaded with authorities to secure his release. The terrorists had demanded a ransom of two million Euros and were offered N50 million, which they rejected before beheading the cleric. Indeed, the insurgents had the effrontery to call the wife of the slain Pastor that they will kill her husband on Saturday, but they delayed until Monday. The governments need to inhibit the superfluous of this religious intolerance and chauvinism among the people of this country.

There is also another story of an evangelist, Mr. Akinyemi Oladapo, a known soul winner in the South West who was brutally attacked for his role in converting many Muslims to Christianity. It was reported that Oladapo was killed after he became the spiritual father for one Mr. Mobolaji Akingbade, the son of a popular Islamic scholar. He ran away to Abeokuta where he was attacked by some unknown assailants reminding him that he has no hiding place in the country. Since then, he has never been seen again. We should not forget in jiffy the extrajudicial murder of a 75-year-old woman, Mrs. Bridget Agbaheme, a Christian and trader at Kofar Wambai market, in Kano, who was beaten to death by irate youths after accusing her of blasphemy against Islam, or Mrs. Eunice Elisha of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Kubwa, Abuja, who was killed recently for preaching. Before Nigerians could comprehend the motive behind such barbarity, another Christian and carpenter at Kakuri area of Kaduna metropolis, Mr. Emmanuel Francis, was mobbed and stabbed severally by some Muslim youths for failing to observe the Ramadan fast.

Are we running out of options or will? On January 20, 2020, the Islamic State West Africa Province, ISWAP, an offshoot of the Boko Haram

terrorists group, released a video showing the execution of Ropvil Daciya Dalep, a 22-year-old Christian student from Plateau State. Rapvil Daciya was from Jing village in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau who was studying Biology at the University of Maiduguri. He was kidnapped on January 9 in Borno State along with other two students one of whom was a 20-year-old Zoology student from Plateau, Lilian Daniel Gyang, while they were returning to the university after the Christmas. The video shows Dalep calmly kneeling down while a masked child stands behind him wielding a pistol. Before shooting Ropvil, the under-aged child, obviously acting on instruction, chanted in Arabic, and then spoke in Hausa. Right to religious freedom is based on the inherent dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27). Even in the Qur'an 2:256, it is stated that "there is no compulsion in religion". Recent report of forcing Leah Sharibu to Islam and marriage too is unislamic, barbaric and therefore stands condemned. In the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, it is explicitly affirmed that the recognition of the dignity and the rights of the human person is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace, and that disregard and contempt for them are acts of barbarousness that offend the conscience of humankind. The right of the individual and of communities to social and civil freedom in religious matters carries with it the right to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. The insecurity of lives and property in recent times was the main reason behind the formation of the security outfits in different corners of the country. We must restate that religious belief is fundamental to many human identities. It is part of the ways in which human beings experience the world around them. Hence, all have the right to enjoy freedom to choose which religion that one is convenient with. Belonging to a particular religion must not be by compulsion.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept clarification is centrally important to theory development. While often understood as a formula-driven task, concept clarification is really a process that engages critical thinking. The central challenge in concept clarification is to understand how words create things. In this literary work I define and discuss concepts pertinent to the subject of this study. These include: Incessant Killings, Christians, Islamic Sects, Threat, Peace, Nigeria. This will give the readers insight into researcher's intention for the choice of the topic.

Incessant Killings

Incessant killings can say to be uninterrupted in time and indefinitely long continuing of killings. According to Tauna (2020), following [what the Christian Association of Nigeria \(CAN\)](#), in Adamawa State described as rampant killing of Christians in the state. From Tauna's opinion the word incessant is synonymous or can be used interchangeably with the word rampant. Dami Mamza buttressing that there are incessant killings going on against Christians recalled [that three Christians, including two prominent Christian leaders](#) as well as a journalist, were killed around the state within the last one week. The three were a pastor and politician, Rev Denis Magauri, killed by unknown persons at his residence in Mayo Belwa; a broadcaster with Radio Nigeria's Fombina FM, Mr Maxwell Nashion, killed also by strange elements; and the Michika LGA Chairman of CAN, Lawan Adimi killed by Boko Haram insurgents. Incessant killings are a situation where there is constant gruesome murder of people unduly, against the law. Adibe (2014) in explaining the emergence of Boko Haram said, Under a radical Islamic agenda, these militants have perpetuated violence across Northern Nigeria since roughly 2009, aiming to rid the country of any Western influence. This means that since 2009 the Islamic sects have deployed many ways in killing Nigerians, especially the Christians without substantial interventions by the government. Cook (2012) said, Boko Haram's new phase of attacks on Christians can be divided into several target categories which are:

- i. Attacks against local Christians in Boko Haram's core operating area of Borno and Yobe states, and the adjacent state of Bauchi.
- ii. Major suicide operations or bombing attacks of high-profile churches in Jos in Plateau State and the capital of Abuja
- iii. Minor operations against church or parachurch personnels throughout the north and middle belt regions of Nigeria. These operations represent a fairly major shift in the goals of Boko Haram, which are still squarely Nigeria-focused, and represent the opposition of certain elements of the Muslim north to the spread of Christianity in the region.

Islamic Sects

A sect is a subgroup of a [religious](#), [political](#), or [philosophical](#) belief system, usually an offshoot of a larger group. Although the term was originally a classification for religious separated groups, it can now refer to any organization that breaks away from a larger one to follow a different set of rules and principles. The word *sect* comes from the [Latin](#) noun *secta* (a feminine form of a variant past participle of the verb [sequi](#), to follow), meaning "a way, road", and figuratively a (prescribed) way, mode, or manner, and hence [eponymously](#), a discipline or school of thought as defined by a set of methods and doctrines.

Sociological Definitions and Descriptions of the Term Sect

There are several different sociological definitions and descriptions for the term sects. Among the first to define them were [Max Weber](#) and [Ernest Troeltsch](#) (1912). In the [church-sect typology](#) they are described as newly formed religious groups that form to protest elements of their parent religion (generally a [denomination](#)). Their motivation tends to be situated in accusations of apostasy or [heresy](#) in the parent denomination; they are often decrying liberal trends in denominational development and advocating a return to true religion. The American [sociologists](#) [Rodney Stark](#) and [William Sims Bainbridge](#) assert that "sects claim to be authentic purged, refurbished version of the faith from which they split". They further assert that sects have, in contrast to churches, a high degree of tension with the surrounding society. Other sociologists of religion such as Fred Kniss have asserted that

sectarianism is best described with regard to what a sect is in tension with. The English sociologist [Roy Wallis](#) argues that a sect is characterized by "[epistemological](#) authoritarianism": sects possess some authoritative locus for the legitimate attribution of heresy. According to Wallis, "sects lay a claim to possess unique and privileged access to the truth or salvation" and "their committed adherents typically regard all those outside the confines of the collectivity as 'in error'". He contrasts this with a [cult](#) that he described as characterized by epistemological individualism" by which he means that "the cult has no clear locus of final authority beyond the individual member.

Christians

According to the demographic presentation of Brian J. G., Todd M. J., Vegard S. and Gina A. Z. (2017) about the population of Christians in Nigeria, "46.3% of Nigerians identify themselves as a Christian" (p.1). Though the percentage of Christians differ in my consultations, but the percentage of the population Christians in Nigeria ranges between 45% to 49%. The answer can be found by looking at how the word Christian is commonly defined, then examining how does the Bible define a Christian. Knowing the difference will make defining a real Christian meaning so much more than just a definition.

According to New Pew Research Centre (2017) demographic analysis, Christians remain world's largest religious group. Christianity is the number one world religion by number of adherents. Members of the Christians religion are called Christians. Christians generally believe Jesus to be son of God, the second person of the Trinity. What is a Christian? The Perception or the answer to the question will vary greatly depending on whom you ask. To some, it means you were born in a "Christian" nation or you come from a Christian family. To others, it means you believe in Jesus or the religion that is based on Jesus' teachings. Yet others use the word Christian to speak of a deep personal relationship between Jesus Christ and an individual. Many in the very early Christian movement, a Christian was defined as a person who was baptized and proclaimed Jesus is Lord. Their definition was true to them because it agreed with their understanding of their religious belief. A

dictionary definition of a Christian would be something similar to a person professing belief in Jesus as the Christ or in the religion based on the teachings of Jesus.” While this is a good starting point, like many dictionary definitions, it falls somewhat short of really communicating the biblical truth of what it means to be a Christian. Followers of Jesus Christ were first called “Christians” in Antioch ([Acts 11:26](#)) because their behavior, activity, and speech were like Christ. The word “Christian” literally means, belonging to the party of Christ or a follower of Christ, or Christlike.

Who is a Christian? The Biblical Definition

Since the Bible is the authority for the Christian faith; let’s see what it says about the word “Christian.” The word is only used three times in the New Testament and each instance is referring to the first Christians of the early church.

- i. “...So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11:26).
- ii. Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?’” (Acts 26:28).
- iii. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Peter 4:16).

They were called “Christians” because their behavior, activity, and speech were like Christ Jesus. The word Christian means, “follower of Christ” or “belonging to the party of Christ.” So, what made them part of this group called “Christians.” The word Christian was given to the early followers of Jesus, and the name has 'stuck' to this day. A Christian is someone who looks to Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life, someone who acknowledges his need for a Savior and who tries to emulate Christ in his daily life. A Christian is a person who is trusting Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation, and is seeking to follow Him in their daily life. To put it another way, a Christian is committed [to Jesus](#) as both their Savior and their Lord (or master).

Let me explain what this means. It means first of all that Jesus Christ was more than an extraordinary man; He was the unique Son of God, fully God and fully man. As Jesus Himself said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). It means also that Jesus Christ was sent into the world for a purpose and that purpose was to save us from our sins. Sin separates us from God; it also makes us subject to God's judgment. But God loves us, and on the cross all our sins were placed on Christ, and He took upon Himself the judgment and Hell we deserve. When we commit our lives to Christ, God forgives us and now our desire is to live for Him instead of ourselves.

Threat

Threats are negative, and external. This means that threats do not benefit your company, but there is nothing you can do to stop them from coming about. A statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done. A person or thing likely to cause damage or danger. In nut shell threat is an expression of an intention to inflict pain, harm, or punishment. Other concepts include;

- i. An indication of impending danger or harm:
- ii. One that is regarded as a possible source of harm or danger.
- iii. The condition of being in danger or at risk.

Threat to Peace

The European Union identified act of terrorism, particularly in Nigeria, as one of the major threats to peace and security in West Africa. Since 2002, it has gradually acknowledged that different manifestations of continuous killing of Christians constitutes a threat to peace of Nigeria as a country and therefore justify the use of enforcement measures. In order to understand the threat to peace, it is also important to reflect on the meaning of the word 'peace'. The latter can be defined either negatively or positively. In the negative sense, the word refers to the absence of organized use of armed force; therefore, in order to constitute a threat to peace, the situation in question must have the potential of provoking armed conflict between states or groups in the short or medium turn. Still, an actual outbreak of armed conflict is not

necessary. The term ‘threat to peace’ is sufficiently flexible and dynamic to include all major forms of serious misconduct. However, in every case, a threat to peace is a situation that objectively can be characterized as destabilizing and potentially explosive. The positive concept of peace is wider and includes also friendly relations between states, as well as other political, economic, social, religious and environmental conditions that are needed for a conflict-free community or society. There are some textual supports for the positive notion of peace in the United Nations Charter; for example, Article 1 sections 2 and 3 speak about the strengthening of universal peace through the development of friendly relations and co-operation among nations. Absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure peace and security. Religious crisis, instability and use of force to convert people from one religion to another have become threats to peace and security in Nigeria.

Today, 60 years of independence, and over hundred years after existence, the Giant of Africa is plagued by numerous that are threatening her unity as a nation. *In a time of national crisis, no reasonable person should stand aloof and wish that the crisis resolves itself.* Global insecurity orchestrated by manmade disaster such as: terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery and armed banditry is gradually becoming a national embarrassment to the Nigerian people. The upsurge in criminal activities seems to have taken a new dimension to the extent that Nigerians are becoming worried, as it portends a great danger to the unity of the country. Peace and harmony seem to be eluding our people. A lot of things seem to have fallen apart and the Centre can no longer hold. Our existence as a nation is threatened, and our existence as people is equally being threatened. The peace and unity of Nigeria as a country is threatened by many things which among them is the incessant killing of Christians by deadly and dastardly group called Boko Haram.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge, within

the limits of the critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory which explains why the research problem under study exists. Therefore in this paper the writer has chosen to use the theory of peace as propounded by Johan Galtung which explains the writers idea for the choice of the topic.

Johan Galtung a Mini Theory of Peace

The basic point is that peace is a relation, between two or more parties. The parties may be inside a person, a state or nation, a region, religion or civilization, pulling in different directions. Peace is not a property of one party alone, but a property of the relation between parties. According Galtung (1964) there are three kinds of relations we can have, which include;

- i. Negative disharmonious: what is bad for one is good for the other.
- ii. Indifferent: a non-relation, they do not care about the other.
- iii. Positive harmonious: what is bad-good for one is bad-good for other.

In the real world, relations may be mixes of all three. When the negative relation is brought about with intent, the party is an actor, we talk about direct violence, or harm, and about war if the actor is collective. If the violence to a party is not intended (but watch out for acts of commission, more or less intended) it may be referred to as indirect, often caused by inequitable structures producing harm -structural violence; and then the role of culture legitimizing either or both types of violence: cultural violence. From these follow two concepts of peace, which are as below:

- i. Negative peace
- ii. Positive peace

Negative Peace: This can be better explained as the absence of violence, like a cease-fire, like keeping them apart, not negative but indifferent relations. At this point, not that peace have been achieved, but a compulsory separation is applied to the conflicting party in order

to achieve peace. Sometimes, in order to achieve this negative peace certain instruction are given to the both conflicting parties of which either of the parties violates, a certain punishment must follow.

Positive Peace: The presence of harmony, intended. It is the integration of human society. Peace seems to be an "umbrella concept", a general expression of human desires, of that which is good, that which is ultimately to be pursued. This is peace as a synonym for all other good things in the world community, particularly cooperation and integration between human groups, with less emphasis on the absence of violence. The concept would exclude major violence, but tolerate occasional violence. It is a concept that seems to be particularly widespread in underprivileged groups, groups that are less in status quo oriented.

One approach to negative peace studies opens for peace and conflict studies, seeing violence-war as the smoke signals from the underlying fire of a conflict. And that leads to a major approach to negative peace: remove the conflict, by solving it or, more modestly, by transforming it so that the parties can handle it in a non-violent way, with empathy for each other, and with creativity. This is applicable in Nigeria situation. It is high time Nigeria government should apply some noticeable violence on this groups that are killing Christians and innocent souls in Nigeria. For years now, these killers have been handled like the untouchable and first class citizens in the country. Nigeria government has not been decisive in her approach to calm menace of insurgency in Nigeria. A military dictator who was one of the military heads of Nigeria government-General Sani Abacha, said that when insurgency lasts more than 24 hours government has hand in it.

The root of a conflict is always a contradiction, an incompatibility or clash of goals which then easily translates into a class of parties and violent behavior. At any stage in this process negative attitudes may enter and attitudes, behavior and contradictions then feed into each other in vicious cycles. In the wake of those processes are traumatized parties and actors with festering wounds on body, mind and spirit.

These two aspects of the search for peace are not unrelated since most peace promoters probably would agree that the most promising way to reduce negative relations to a minimum is via an increase of positive relations, but empirical correlation does not imply logical dependence, for which reason the two concepts should be kept separate. What are these positive relations? Just to mention some examples:

1. Presence of cooperation
2. Freedom from fear
3. Freedom from want
4. Economic growth and development
5. Absence of exploitation
6. Equality
7. Justice
8. Freedom of action
9. Freedom of religious affiliation

Some comments of this set of these values:

Presence of cooperation: we mean a pattern of interaction between two parties, whether religious or secular so that there is an exchange of values between them, of commodities, services, knowledge, people etc. This is the opposite of isolation, it is interdependence between nations.

Freedom from fear: we mean a state of affairs such that individuals, and nations, predict with relatively high probability a major negative event in the future, an event with relatively high negative utility, and this expectation dominates their life and existence, whether they live in the shadow of floods, earth-quakes, hunger, war (internal or external) or other calamities.

Freedom from want; we mean that neither in the life of the individuals should major, primary needs remain unsatisfied or unsatisfiable. Thus, we mainly refer to such needs as hunger, thirst, shelter, sex, basic security.

Economic growth: and development we mean an organization of the structure of groups and the relations between groups so that 1. Resources per capita increase and 2. These resources are better distributed. This is not only a question of technological development but also of social and religious organizations within the country.

Absence of Exploitation: we mean that all value exchanges between individuals as well as between ethnic and religious groups take place at, roughly, equal terms. Thus, no individual shall be able to receive very much more from another individual than he gives back to that individual.

Equality: we mean that all individuals irrespective of religious affiliation are regarded as having the same essential value, none is implicitly worth more and entitled to basically different types of life or existence than others. Extreme "gaps" in opportunities and resources at the disposal of individuals or of groups should not be tolerated.

Justice one may mean roughly the same as by equality, but there is also the dimension of basic, fundamental rights, not only individual or national worth or value.

Freedom of action: we mean that all individuals should have a wide range of possible actions open to them - both that they have been stimulated to have the imagination to conceive of such action and that they have the means to carry them out.

Freedom of religious affiliation: we mean that every citizen should be given freedom of choice to choose religious affiliation of his/her choice devoid of use of force or compulsion of any kind. It should also extend to when decides to leave his former religion to another for reasons best known to him. For example when one leaving Islam for Christianity he/she should not by any means be threatened. Most of the killings in Nigeria is traceable to religious crisis and masterminded by Islamic religious sects.

Boko Haram as a Sect of Islamic Religion in Nigeria

Boko Haram as a sect of Islamic religion is also part of Islamic religion in Nigeria. Islamic religion is not different from Boko Haram and Boko Haram is not different from Islamic religion in Nigeria; both exist towards achieving the same goal. Agbiboa (2013) buttressed the idea that both Boko Haram and Islamic religion interrelates in the following words, Radical Islam is not a new phenomenon in northern Nigeria. Following independence in October 1960, the rise of the radical Maitatsine movement in the 1970s led to clashes with the Nigerian Police Force in Kano in December 1980, and in Maiduguri in October 1982, leaving many hundreds dead. (p.8). Ekot, (2009) opined that Alhaji Muhammadu Marwa, known as the Maitatsine (“One who curses”), championed these intra-religious riots (p.56).

Hickey(1984) The uprisings had its roots in the “deeply conservative practice of Islam,” dominant in the region that had its origins in the highly successful jihad (holy war) of Sheik Usman dan Fodio of Sokoto (1754–1817) in the first decade of the nineteenth century. (p.251). Crowder (1978) said that what began as a search for religious purification soon became a search for a political kingdom (p.71). Udoidem (1997) shares the same opinion when he said; with the outcome that “Islam has remained the focal veneer for the legitimacy of the northern ruling class, and consequently, its politicians have always prided themselves as soldiers for the defense of the faith” (p.156).

Forest (2012) said, since 2009, however, Boko Haram, yet another religious terrorist group from North Eastern Nigeria, has been responsible for more violence than any other armed group in Nigeria. The nomenclature, “Boko Haram,” is derived from a combination of the Hausa word, boko (book), and the Arabic word, haram (forbidden). Put together, Boko Haram means “Western education is forbidden,” as it is important here to clarify that the Hausa word, “boko,” originally had implications of “falseness” and “duplicity.” This certainly has increasingly become the case in recent times, but only with regard to books of Western provenance, as they were deemed to contain material

antithetical to Islam and, therefore, “boko.” Onuoha, (2012) agreed that Boko Haram is working in defence of Islamic religion:

In any case, Boko Haram has even rejected the designation, “Western education is forbidden,” and instead, the group now prefers the slogan, “Western culture is forbidden.” The difference, as one of the senior members of Boko Haram noted, is that “while the first gives the impression that we are opposed to formal education coming from the Westm, which is not true, the second affirms our belief in the supremacy of Islamic culture (not education), for culture is broader, it includes education but not determined by Western education” (pp.1-2).

According to Agbibo (2014) who said, “Do not think jihad is over. Rather jihad has just begun” (p.1). this he said with regard to formation and activities of Boko Haram Islamic sect in Nigeria. He furthered to to opine that:

The lethal and growing threat posed by the Nigeria-based Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram or People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad. Specifically, the group's emergence and grievances, as well as its increasing links to the global jihad as spearheaded by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and its affiliates like the Somalia-based al-Shabaab. (p.1).

Udounwa (2013), Boko Haram officially calls itself Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wati wal Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad).

Nigeria is currently faced with internal security challenges posed by the group “Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wati Wal Jihad,” also known as Boko Haram. Boko Haram's objective is to establish Islamic rule in Nigeria through imposition of Sharia law throughout the

country. Boko Haram's insurgency is fueled by Nigeria's history, geopolitical structure, ethno-religious composition and socio-economic disparities. (P.1).

Across northern Nigeria, Western education continues to be linked to attempts by evangelical Christians to convert Muslims who fear the southern economic and political domination. As Isa (2010) contended, the term, Boko Haram, implied a sense of rejection and "resistance to imposition of Western education and its system of colonial social organization, which replaced and degraded the earlier Islamic order of the jihadist state. (p.322).

The Boko Haram insurgency is not unrelated to the fact that a Christian from the largely Christian-dominated south is in power. As one of their pre-conditions for peace, Boko Haram called on President Jonathan to embrace Islam or resign from office (Nigerian Tribune, 6 August 2012).

The comingling of religion with politics in Nigeria is portentous for the stability of the country and the emergence of a true national identity. Unfortunately, government complicity in religious matters has often fanned the flames of religious tensions. Kenny, (1996) and Ekot, (2009) informed that Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB), during his tenure as president (1985–1993), for example, unilaterally registered Nigeria as a full-fledged member of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). This is anchored on the core values and goals of the OIC, membership of the organization is underpinned by a commitment to the advancement of Islam. Toeing a similar line, President Sani Abacha, who succeeded the Interim National Government set up when Babangida was forced out of office, again unilaterally registered Nigeria as a member of the D-8 (Developing-8), an organization for development cooperation among major Muslim developing nations, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

These decisions caused much consternation and anxiety among Nigerian Christians who saw the government moves as an attempt

toward the Islamization of Nigeria. Following a chorus of disapproval by Christians, the issue of Nigerian membership in the OIC was put on hold. Udoidem (1997) said:

This decision, however, precipitated a series of religious disturbances in the north, beginning with the March 1986 clash in Ilorin between Muslims and Christians and the May 1986 clash between Christian and Muslim students at Uthman Dan Fodio University in Sokoto. (p.172).

The politics of religion in Nigeria is evident in the Sharia law debate, which has always pitted the Muslim-dominated north against the Christian-dominated south. Ekot,(2009) said, the issue engulfed Nigeria shortly after her return to democracy in 1999. Zamfara State was the first northern state to introduce Sharia as the supreme law of the land. The then Zamfara governor, Ahmed Sani, was quoted as saying: "Whoever administers or governs any society not based on Sharia is an unbeliever" (The Post Express, 15 July 2000). Following his example, many northern governors also soon introduced Sharia law, but in the case of Kaduna State with half of its population being Christians, there was a strong resistance. This led to violent religious confrontations in February 2000 between Christians and Muslims as attempts were made to implement the Sharia law. In this conflict, hundreds of people were killed, property worth billions of Naira was destroyed and thousands of people were rendered homeless. From the onset wrote Ekot (2009), "The Muslims had never given up their quest for Nigeria to be an Islamic state ..." (p.54).

The Islamic State in West Africa or Islamic State's West Africa Province (abbreviated as ISWA or ISWAP), formerly known as Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād "Group of the People of [Sunnah](#) for Preaching and [Jihad](#)") and commonly known as Boko Haram is a [jihadist](#) terrorist organization based in northeastern [Nigeria](#), also active in [Chad](#), [Niger](#) and northern [Cameroon](#). Founded by [Mohammed Yusuf](#) in 2002, the group has been led by [Abubakar Shekau](#) since 2009. When

Boko Haram first formed, their actions were nonviolent. Their main goal was to *purify Islam in northern Nigeria*. Since March 2015, the group has been aligned with the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant](#). Since the [current insurgency started in 2009](#), Boko Haram has killed tens of thousands and displaced 2.3 million from their home and was at one time the world's deadliest terror group according to the [Global Terrorism Index](#). Global Terrorism Index (2019) report said: The most recent escalation in violence follows increased militia attacks and implementation of new anti-grazing legislation. In Nigeria, terrorist activity is dominated by Fulani extremists and Boko Haram. Together, they account for 78 percent of terror-related incidents and 86 percent of deaths from terrorism.

Boko Haram Mission is on Nigeria Christians

Yusuf's successor, [Abubakar Shekau](#), vowed to exact revenge on the Nigerian government. A [violent campaign](#) against the state was launched. A year later in 2010, Shekau sought to make it a Jihad against Christians.

According to Adibe (2019), this is evident in a message reportedly broadcast over the Internet in July 2010, [Shekau was reported](#) as saying: This is a message to President Goodluck Jonathan and all who represent the Christians. We are declaring a holy war! We will fight the Christians, because everyone knows what they have done to the Muslims! It is obvious that from the preceded assertion Boko Haram was created as a veritable instrument to fight Christians and governments headed by Christians.

Today, Boko Haram is believed to be made up of at least two main factions, one led by Shekau and the other, known as the [Islamic State West Africa Province](#), led by [Abu Abdullah Ibn Umar al-Barnawi](#) who is said to be one of the sons of Boko Haram founder Mohamed Yusuf. However, there appears to be two people with the same name or aliases, one of whom is not linked to Yusuf.

It is now estimated that by 2018 Boko Haram had been linked to the deaths of [over 37,000 people](#). The United Nations Children's Fund has reported that the group has kidnapped [more than 1,000 children](#) in northeastern Nigeria since 2013 to spread fear and show power. Similarly, the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#) believes that over two million people have been displaced in the North East as a result of Boko Haram's terror activities.

Brutal Killing of Christians by Boko Haram and Other Islamic Sects

In the recent times, there are trending records of Muslim groups killing Christian apart from that of 1980s and 1990s massacre of Christians and bombing of churches. The following is a list of [massacres](#) that have occurred in over the past number of years in [Nigeria](#). In 1991, the late German Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke attempted a crusade in Kano, causing a religious riot leading to the deaths of about a dozen people.

In 1991, during Bonnke's visit to [Kano](#) in Nigeria, there were riots in the city as Muslims protested over remarks he had reportedly made about Islam in the city of Kaduna on his way to Kano. A rumor was spread that Bonnke was planning to "lead an invasion" into Kano. Muslim youths gathered at the Kofar Mata Eide-ground where they were addressed by several clerics who claimed that Bonnke was going to blaspheme Islam. About 8,000 youths gathered at the Emir's palace and after noon prayers the riots ensued, during which many Christians sustained various injuries and several churches were burned. This riot was as a result of deliberate misinformation from both religious and political leaders of the state about the Bonnke's evangelical mission to Kano State.

There is public and callous display of video in the social media which shows the Islamic sect-Boko Haram ruthlessly beheading Christians. British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) released news about the activities of Boko Haram. The Islamic State group has released a video claiming to show the killing of 11 Christians in Nigeria. The footage was filmed in an unidentified outdoor area. One captive in the middle

is shot dead while the other 10 are pushed to the ground and beheaded. According to the speech released by Abubakar Shekau the kingpin of Boko Haram "we killed them as revenge for the killing of our leaders, [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#).

Klett (2017) reported the series of killing of Christians as follow;

- i. Muslim Fulani herdsmen killed 16 Christians in separate attacks in Plateau state this month amid a spate of violence carried out by various groups against believers in Nigeria.
- ii. Herdsmen invaded Torok village in Riyom County on January 20th, killing Reuben Bulus, a 25-year-old member of the Church of Christ in Nations, said Dalyop Solomon Mwantiri, a human rights activist with the Emancipation Centre for Crisis Victims in Nigeria, to [Morning Star News](#).
- iii. Just two days earlier, 13 COCIN members [were slain](#) in Plateau state's Kulben village, Mangu County, in an attack carried out by about 20 herdsmen who also wounded three others. In Gako village, near Rim in Riyom County, another COCIN member, Ngam Stephen Dachung, was shot and killed by herdsmen on Jan. 1, Mwantiri said.
- iv. In December, herdsmen killed a Christian woman, Mary Machief, and her baby daughter in Plateau state's Bokkos County. A relative told the outlet Machief was not killed instantly but died later from her wounds.

Christians in the northern region and in the Middle Belt have experienced an uptick in violence at the hands of radical Islamic groups, such as Boko Haram, ISWAP, and Muslim Fulani herdsmen in recent years. Curry said, the great tragedy of Nigeria's ineffectual response to Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen is now parts of Cameroon and those other areas like Burkina Faso are greatly affected. Nigeria still represents the most violent country in the world for Christians as far as Open Doors USA's data can track. The persecution watchdog ranks Nigeria at No. 12 on its 2020 World Watch List of countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. It observed with great dismay that, the

messages in the videos are clear: whether it is the continuous attacks of Boko Haram or ISWAP or even Fulani militia, the fact remains that a full scale jihad has been launched against Christians in Nigeria. Vanguard News of 31 January, 2020 opined the following, it is of grave danger to pretend not to see it, keep quiet over it or try to be nice about it and water it down. Many evidences point to it that Christians are hunted down in Northern Nigeria. The biggest symbols of this sad truth are the remaining over 100 Chibok schoolgirls, Dapchi schoolgirl, Leah Sharibu and others in the den of the Boko Haram terrorists.

Killings and abductions are on the rise. On January 8, 2020, an armed gang dressed in military uniforms forced its way into the Catholic Good Shepherd Seminary located off Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria Express Way, home to some 268 seminarians, and abducted four first-year philosophy students: Pius Kanwai, 19; Peter Umenukor, 23; Stephen Amos, 23; and Michael Nnadi, 18. One of the abducted students was later dumped along Kaduna-Abuja highway because the abductors felt he would not survive given the type of injuries they inflicted on him.

Then on January 9, 2020, Dachiya Dalep, a student of the University of Maiduguri, was abducted on his way to school from Jos. Twelve days later the gory video of his gruesome execution surfaced by Boko Haram. Another gory incident was the beheading of the abducted Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, in Michika Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Rev. Lawan Andimi. The terrorists had demanded two million Euros ransom but were offered N50 million, which they rejected before beheading Rev. Andimi and sending the gory picture of his killing to the President of the EYN Church, Reverend Daniel Mbaya. Just the Sunday before Rev. Andimi's beheading, another clergyman, Rev. Denis Bagauri, was murdered by gunmen in his residence at Mayo Belwa of Adamawa. The list will keep growing if continued to be mentioned.

In 2017, the United States House of Representatives had cited Nigeria as the most dangerous place for Christians in the world. In December last year, the U.S. authorities reacted again by placing Nigeria on a

Special Watch List for tolerating severe violations of religious freedom, saying sectarian violence increased in 2018.

Before that, former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, in January 2019, alleged that Boko Haram was being ‘empowered’ by the Federal Government. And CAN, along with other Christian groups, have accused the Federal Government of not doing enough to stop these evil acts. The Federal Government should arise to protect Nigerians irrespective of their faith. There is no way that Christianity or any other faith can be uprooted from Northern Nigeria. Those who have made it their agenda must be ruthlessly pursued and uprooted instead.

Impending Dangers in Nigeria for This Incessant Killing of Christians

Nigeria as a country is no longer safe as there are many things militating against the peace of Nigeria. There are agitations going on already within the country and no one can be pellucid in his/her prediction of what these ongoing agitations will lead to, but it may look presumptuous if one says that it will lead to war that will eventually disintegrate Nigeria.

Christianity lies in achieving greatness in the face of the world’s hatred. Fifteen-year old Leah Sharibu’s refusal to deny Christ and convert to Islam, which cost her freedom, exemplifies what Christians are going through in Nigeria. The threat to make her a slave for life in captivity, by the Islamic Jihad in West Africa (ISWAP), a Boko Haram faction, says it all. Her case and those of thousands being killed because of their Christian faith reveal that Christians are under severe persecution. However, the Nigerian authorities have always downplayed or denied this reality.

The persecution occurs in systemic, institutionalized and direct forms. According to Gideon Para-Mallam Persecution can take many different forms. There is of course the obvious and painful one of physical harm. Persecution can also be subtler. This occurs when the instruments of the

State, particularly in Northern Nigeria, are variously used to target and marginalize Christians.

This takes different forms across states, but the pattern is almost predictable:

- i. Christian students are denied places to meet for prayer, Bible study, and worship.
- ii. Christians are denied Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) for lands where church buildings are already in place.
- iii. Abductions and forced marriages of young and under-aged Christian girls are common and increasing in the northern states. This is especially prevalent among the Maguzawa unreached people groups and Hausas who convert to Christianity.

Survival through Self-Defense: Nehemiah 4 & 6: 15-16

The oppressed may sometimes be moved to be weird in his actions. Nehemiah effectively mobilized his people to defend themselves against attacks. He never asked his people to attack but he charged them to defend the work and by implication the land. Defending our ancestral lands need not be confused with defending the church. Only God can defend his church (Matt 16:18). Defending our ancestral lands is imperative; we should not be driven off our God-given land under any guise. There is no biblical mandate for reprisal or retaliatory attacks. However, grassroots mobilization to defend and police our communities through vigilantes is necessary.

The strongest confidence in the protection and favour of God does not preclude the use of all or any of the means of self-preservation and defense which his providence has put in our power. While God works in us to will and to do, we should proceed to willing, through the power

he has given us to will; and we should proceed to action, through the power he has given us to act. We cannot will, but through God's power; we cannot act, but through God's strength. The power, and the use of it, is two distinct things. We may have the power to will, and not will; and we may have the power to do, and not act: therefore, says the apostle, seeing God has wrought in you these powers, see that you work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling. Prayer to God, and a diligent use of all appropriate means, will defend his people from the rage of their enemies, and carry them forward in their appropriate work till it is accomplished.

Nigeria situation especially the recent uncontrollable incessant killing is forcing many non Muslim Nigerians including Christians to start adopting some systems of security and defense whereas the security operatives of the government have shown high and noticeable failure in protecting the citizens and their property. A typical example of this, is the launching of Operation Amotekun, a security outfit based in all the six states of the [South Western, Nigeria](#), responsible for curbing insecurity in the region. It was founded on 9 January 2020 in [Ibadan, Oyo State](#), Nigeria as the first regional security outfit initiated by a geopolitical zone in Nigeria. According to Okonkwo (2019):

As a result of continuing insecurity in Nigeria's northeast, conservative Christian groups including Washington DC-based Save the Persecuted Christians (STPC) have seized on the killings to urge the Trump administration to appoint a US special envoy to Nigeria and the Lake Chad region to monitor what it called "heightened violence against Christians." In conservative media across America, there are [barrage of stories](#) emerging about the persecution of Christians in Nigeria. The Christian Post [reported](#) Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen have killed over 1,000 Christians in Nigeria in 2019 alone. (p.5).

More of these should be expected from other tribes in Nigeria both from within and outside the country because Nigeria security system has proven utter failure in protecting Nigeria citizens and their property.

Conclusion

The Nigerian government has over the last few months indicated its disposition to resolving the Boko Haram insurgency through what may be described as a carrot and stick approach. The former involves political dialogue with all stake-holders. Onuoha, (2012) reviewed that the Nigerian state established a committee of inquiry led by Ambassador Usman Galtimari to “identify the grievances of the sect and make possible recommendations on how to improve security in the northeast region” This carrot approach also included programs by the government to address deep-seated problems in northern Nigeria such as poverty, unemployment, social injustice and public corruption conditions that continue to galvanize extremist tendencies among northerners. President Jonathan offered to grant amnesty to Boko Haram members. However, Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, responded to the president’s amnesty entreaties by saying that his group had done no wrong, and that an amnesty would not be applicable to them. According to Shekau, it was the Nigerian government committing atrocities against Muslims. In his words: “Surprisingly, the Nigerian government is talking about granting us amnesty. What wrong have we done? On the contrary, it is we that should grant you pardon (Atlanta Blackstar, 23 April 2013). Onuoha (2012) said:

Despite the above attempts by the Nigerian government to negotiate in a non-violent way with the northern extremist group, the stick response to the Boko Haram uprising has received greater attention, involving the use of state security forces to “mount aggressive pursuit and crackdown of Boko Haram members. (p.5).

To this end, the Nigerian government established a special Joint Task Force (JTF), known as “Operation Restore Order (JTORO)” to eliminate the threat posed by Boko Haram. The JTF had had modest successes, including the September 2011 arrest of a top Boko Haram commander, Ali Saleh, and five accomplices in Maiduguri. However, JTF have been accused of killing innocent people in the name of counter-terrorism.

In the recent time, Nigeria government has returned to carrot approach to solving Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. On 28th February, 2020 I read the following news headline “Repentant Boko Haram members will get free foreign education” That may sound to be tactical approach to Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, but in the real sense that is the worst approach the Nigeria government had ever given to Boko Haram problem which indirectly will exonerate them from the judgment they deserve and increased membership of Boko Haram seeing that when a member repents he will go abroad for free foreign education. Nigeria government is planning to send the notorious killers (the Boko Haram members) abroad perhaps to America in order to go and under study America as Osama Bin Laden did to facilitate the future of Islamic world attack against America. Hitherto, Nigeria government has not unfolded their plans on how government has compensated the families of the parents Boko Haram members killed, especially the soldiers that died fighting Boko Haram insurgency. When majority is grieved by these incessant killings of Christians going on Nigeria, people may be forced to pick arms for defensive purposes.

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CHAPTER THREE

RELIGIOUS FANATICISM AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

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Executive Summary

Nigeria has witnessed different kinds of security challenges at different periods in her existence as a nation. However, the nature and trends of insecurity in the country have been worrisome in recent times. This paper examines the link between religious fanaticism and security challenges in Nigeria. Currently, the country grapples with a lot of security challenges such as assassination, ritual killings, armed robbery, kidnapping, ethno-religious violence, banditry and insurgency. The central thesis of the paper is that religious fanaticism coupled with other factors has increased the level of insecurity in the country. This has given rise to loss of lives and property, proliferation of arms, fear and instability in the country and proliferation of security guards. The paper recommends proper religious education and de-radicalization of religious fanatics; as well as the electronic surveillance of the nation's borders to check smuggling of illegal weapons into the country among others. It is believed that such measures will help in stemming the ugly tide of insecurity in the country.

Keywords: Religion, Fanaticism, Insurgency, Security.

Introduction

The present state of security crisis in Nigeria is very worrisome. As a multi-religious nation, Nigeria is faced with the challenge of utilizing her religious diversity in achieving a secure and prosperous nation. It is expected that religion should be a factor that promotes security in the society since it is known to help in fostering national peace, unity and progress. However, when religion is abused by the adherents, it leads to insecurity. Nigeria today is faced with the problem of religious fanaticism. This has given rise to different security challenges in the country such as religious violence and insurgency in recent time. In this line of thought, Ottuh (2013) asserted that religious fanaticism breeds religious conflicts.

Though insecurity is not a new thing in Nigeria, the number of security challenges in the country in recent time is alarming. Imhonopi and Urim (2012) noted that the number of violent crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, carjackings, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically-motivated killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria. According to Onifade, Imhonopi, & Urim (2013), the rising number of security challenges in the country may not be unconnected with “the increasing ethnic hate, religious bigotry, political rivalry and a growing population of disgruntled citizens in the country who feel that they have been short-changed and given very limited or no access to the common patrimony” (p. 53). In the same vein, Egwu (2001) argued that the primordial tendencies of various ethnic groups towards violence, the perennial eruption of various ethnic militias and the preponderant religious fundamentalism in place, given expression to by some sections of the dominant religious establishments in Nigeria, have inevitably aggravated the scale and propensity of insecurity and widened its scope in various ramifications.

Nigeria’s religious space is dominated by two major religions: Christianity and Islam. There are also some adherents of the African Traditional Religion. Out of these three religions, religious fanatics that

have posed serious security challenges to the nation have mostly risen from Islam. Though, religious fanaticism in Nigeria is not exclusive to Islam, it is more pronounced among Muslims in Northern Nigeria. This paper will therefore concentrate on religious fanaticism among Muslims in Northern Nigeria and its effect on the security of the country.

Conceptual Clarification

Religion

Religion as a concept has no generally accepted definition. It has been defined in many ways by different people depending on their orientation and perception. According to Agha (2012), “religion is the conscious or unconscious belief in spiritual being and elements (forces of nature) with powers” (p. 21). For Hick (1994), religion is human recognition of super human controlling power and especially of a personal God or gods entitled to obedience and worship. Also, religion according to Bouquet (1941) is a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute or simply God. Durkheim (1915)’s definition is one of the most popular definitions of religion. He defined religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community and all those who adhere to them. All these definitions point to the issue of beliefs. Religion can therefore be defined as a system of beliefs and practices relative to a supernatural being which unite the adherents into one moral community.

Religious fanaticism

Omomia (2015) described a fanatic as an over-enthusiastic person. According to Asghar (1997) fanaticism can be defined as over-enthusiasm and zealotry which may cross all bounds of reason and may tend to become wild and dangerous. Fanaticism therefore can be referred to as over enthusiasm. Those who are over-enthusiastic about their religious beliefs and practices to the detriment of others are therefore religious fanatics. Hence, Balogun (1988) cited by Oduwole and Fadeyi (2013) defined religious fanaticism as a violent and

unreasoning religious enthusiasm. Onimhawo and Ottuh (2007) stated that to become a religious fanatic is to be wild and excessive about matters that relate to one's belief. According to Iwe (1987) religious fanaticism is an "irrational attitude to religion which leads the religionist to practice religion beyond the bounds of reason and, therefore, without moderation" (p. 44). Religious fanaticism is the manipulation of religion and religious beliefs by religious adherents to satisfy their selfish interest. It is a negative attitude to religion which often involves the use of violence. Iwe (2000) asserted that "it is obvious that religious fanaticism is essentially a negative and vicious attitude to religion, characterized by exaggeration, excesses and violence" (p. 11). Religious fanaticism is therefore an irrational practice of religion in which adherents make use of violence to promote their religious faith and teachings.

Security

The term security has been variously described by scholars. Akin (2008) cited by Ozoigbo (2019) described security as any laid down procedures toward the protection of persons and property against hostile persons. It is a situation where by a conducive atmosphere is created within which people in the state can go about their normal daily activities without threat to either their lives or property. According to Adeleke (2013) "security is a situation in which citizens are free from any threats to their life and means of livelihood, safe from bodily harm, diseases, unemployment, and human rights violations wherever they may find themselves within a sovereign nation" (p. 8). Palme (1992) argued that there is a connection between security and survival. For him, security is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. Thus, security is synonymous to freedom from danger, fear and doubt among others. Otto and Ukpere (2012) noted that security relates to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis. Security can therefore be described as freedom from threat or violence which could lead to the loss of lives and property.

Religious Fanaticism and Nigeria's security problems

The importance of religion to mankind cannot be overemphasized. In Nigeria, no account of the state will be complete without reference to religion. This is because, the Nigerian state is one that embodies an extremely complex web of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. A geographic and religious line divides the country into a Christian-dominated south and a Muslim-dominated north (Ezeani & Chilaka, 2013). However, Religion that supposed to be a unifying factor among several ethnic groups in Nigeria has turned out to be one of the catalysts that are causing destruction of lives and property due to narrow-mindedness, misunderstanding, fundamentalism and fanaticism of religious adherents (Afolabi, 2016). There is no doubt that religious crisis has been as old as religion itself, but the tendency to promote militancy and intolerance from within extremist religions appears to be much more common in recent time.

One of the dangerous attitudes of adherents of various religions in Nigeria is the claim of supremacy of their religions over others. Most religious practitioners, especially Christians and Muslims see their religions as the only authentic religion. With this state of mind, they adopt every possible means to ensure that others are converted to their faith. This leads to intolerance and crises which in most cases degenerate to violent security challenges. From the foregoing, it is clear that it is not religion per se that brings about crises in the country but adherents of different religions who engage in irrational practice of religion.

The insecurity in Nigeria is a serious concern to every right thinking citizen of the country. The security of the nation is at stake with series of incidences of assassination, ritual killings, armed robbery, kidnapping, ethno-religious violence, banditry and insurgency prevailing in many parts of the country. These challenges are eating up the nation's sense of 'identity and security' as it affects virtually everybody in the country. Out of all the security challenges in Nigeria, religious crises and insurgency are orchestrated by religious fanaticism. Religious fanaticism brings about religious conflict through religious

intolerance which leads to security problems in the country. This section addresses security problems in Nigeria orchestrated by religious fanaticism. Focus is on the security challenges in Northern Nigeria championed by Islamic fanatics.

Religious crisis

Religious crisis has become the bedrock of Nigerian's security problem since her Independence in 1960. Today in Nigeria, there are abundant cases of religious clashes which have led to loss of lives and property. According to Okafor (2017) "over the years, religious clashes have occurred among Nigerians who began to see themselves as Muslims, Traditionalists, and Christians, and no longer in their ethnic or tribal identity" (p. 1). However, all the major religions in the country had been managing the disaffection until Maitatsine riot in Kano in December 1980. The riot was an intra Muslim crisis championed by the Maitatsine fundamentalists to purify Islam from idolatry and syncretism (Ekundayo, 2017).

The *Maitatsine* uprisings started in Kano in 1980 and spread to other neighbouring states in the North. According to Anugwom (2018) *Maitatsine* uprisings remain perhaps the longest and most widespread Islamic fundamentalist strife in the history of modern Nigeria. Mohammed Marwa, the leader of the *Maitatsine* movement, adopted "Maitatsine" as a nickname which means "the one who damns" in Hausa language. Anugwom (2018) noted that Marwa manifested this in his public speeches which were composed of curses and incendiary outbursts against the Nigerian state and non-Muslims. The group engaged in terror and religious killings between 1980 and 1992 in the northern states of Kano, Borno, Kaduna, Adamawa, Katsina, Gombe and Bauchi and hundreds of thousands of lives were lost before the uprisings ended in 1992 (Udoidem, 1997). Within two weeks, the Maitatsine had killed about 5,000 people. Though, a large number of the casualties were Muslims, scores of Christians were also killed. Many Churches, Christian Schools and businesses were destroyed.

The Maitatsine riot had no sooner subsided than the riot of the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria began in 1985, also in Kano. The

riot was a Muslims' protest against the building of a new St. George's Anglican Church which was said to be too close to a Mosque in Fagge district of Kano. Despite the fact that the old Church building had been there since 1930 before the Mosque in question was built in 1970. The fundamentalist Muslim youth put the Church to sword and 564 Christians lost their lives (Boer, 2003).

Since the re-emergence of democracy in Nigeria in May 1999 there has been a continued rise in religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Prominent among the religious crises that took place within this period was the *Sharia* crisis.

On February 11, 2000 the Islamic *Sharia* legal system was introduced in Zamfara state. Afterwards there was its subsequent introduction in eleven other States of Northern Nigeria, including Katsina, Kano, Sokoto, Bauchi, Niger, Gombe, Jigawa, Borno, Kebbi, Yobe and Kaduna States. In each case, the introduction of the *Sharia* law was accompanied by controversies which led to series of crises that claimed so many lives and displacement of people. In the case of Kaduna which is populated perhaps equally by Christians and Muslims, the tension degenerated to very violent conflicts in February and May 2000, that saw to the death of thousands of Muslims and Christians, including a Catholic priest and a legislator (Ehusani, 2002). The riots left at least 3,000 persons dead and led to the displacement of over 63,000 people within Kaduna and its surroundings (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2007). These displaced persons sought refuge in the police and army barracks, considered to be the safest places in the heat of the conflicts. Although *Sharia* legal system is an age-long practice among the Muslim population in the state, what triggered the *Sharia* conflicts of 2000 was the impression of the Christian citizens that the action will turn Kaduna State into a Muslim state (Alao & Mavalla, 2016). Between February 2000 and March 2002, similar *Sharia*-related riots erupted in parts of Kaduna, Bauchi, Plateau, Niger and Nasarawa States. The tension generated by the *Sharia* all over the country was such that a quarrel between two people of different faiths (Muslim and Christian) often degenerated to inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict in which hundreds of lives were lost and property worth millions of

Naira were destroyed, while survivors relocated to safer places (Ede, 2017).

Insurgency

The emergence and activities of the dreaded Islamic sect popularly known as *Boko Haram* in Northern Nigeria have been issues of concern to the security of the country (Ede, 2017). This sect, made up of Islamic fanatics, has introduced insurgency in their bid to achieve their religious goal. Boko Haram's ideological mission is primarily to overthrow the Nigerian state with its Western values and then impose strict Islamic Sharia law in the entire country. Anugwom and Oji (2004) had drawn a connection between Boko Haram and other past Islamic fundamentalist episodes in the history of Nigeria such as the Jihad by Usman dan Fodio and the Maitatsine riots.

The most commonly accepted translation of the name *Boko Haram* in Hausa language is "Western education is forbidden". *Boko* originally means *fake* but came to signify Western education, while *haram* means *forbidden*. It has also been translated as "Western influence is a sin" and "Westernization is sacrilege". The group's official name is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad*, which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" (Banjo, 2016). The group was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state. Yusuf had a strict, fundamentalist interpretation of the Qur'an and believed that the creation of Nigeria by British colonialists had imposed a Western and un-Islamic way of life on Muslims. He established a religious complex which included a mosque and an Islamic school which attracted poor Muslim families from across Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The centre had the political goal of creating an Islamic state, and became a recruiting ground for jihadists (Ede, 2017). At the early stage, the group was not violent as Yusuf did not openly preach violence (Kukah, 2015). However, following the attack on the group by the Nigerian security forces in 2009 and the subsequent killing of Mohammed Yusuf, the group turned violent and started unleashing mayhem through bombing of government and religious institutions. *Boko Haram* re-emerged in

2010 with assassinations and a major raid on a prison more than a year going underground. Yusuf's deputy, Abubakar Shekau, who police claimed had been killed in the 2009 uprising, began to appear in videos as the group's new leader. Attacks gradually grew more deadly and sophisticated, particularly with the use of explosives.

The sect has graduated from cruel drive by attacking beer parlours to bombing of security buildings, public buildings and Christian institutions (churches) which happened to be the most affected. Despite the claims by the new administration of Muhamadu Buhari that *Boko Haram* has been "technically" defeated; the insurgents are still carrying out attacks on innocent Nigerians, especially in the North-Eastern part of the country (Dara 2016, Adeniyi, 2016). There are indications that these Islamic fanatics and insurgents have international connections (Uji & Or Tserakaa, 2014). Sources confirmed that while the organization relied on donations by its members in its earlier days, its links with Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) opened it to funding from groups in Saudi Arabia and the UK (Taiwo, 2010).

Implications and Recommendations

It is not easy to measure the cost of the prevalent insecurity in Nigeria in monetary or real terms, however it is clear that it has cost Nigerians enormous human and material resources. Security plays a major role in the existence and sustenance of human being. Hence, Coupland (2007) asserted that insecurity has a far reaching impact on people's lives and well-being and for this singular reason the government has to be alive to its responsibility of guaranteeing security. Some of the implications of the prevalent insecurity in Nigeria are highlighted here.

Loss of lives and property

One of the major negative effects of insecurity in the country is the loss of lives and property of citizens. Nigeria has been going through so many security challenges leading to scores of deaths of innocent civilians, foreigners, some members of the nation's security personnel, elected officials and many government workers. Onifade, etal, (2013) noted that "the insecurity challenge has assumed formidable

dimensions forcing the country's political and economic managers and, indeed the entire nation, to rue the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of safety in most parts of the country" (p. 53).

Oduwole and Fadeyi (2013) observed that:

The most painful consequence of religious violence is the reckless destruction of lives and property. It is a painful outcome of religious fanaticism and violence because no known scriptural religion tolerate murder, but at the slightest act of provocation, many religious bigots and fanatics deploy the latest and most sophisticated weapons of war available to destroy and maim human beings (pp. 55-56).

Instability

Insecurity resulting from religious fanaticism also leads to instability in the country. The continued state of insecurity threatens the very fabric of national integration in the country and creates the ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety. It hinders national integration and social harmony. It denies Nigerians their right to peaceful co-existence and breeds mutual suspicion among members of different religions. It has caused Nigeria not to come to a speedy realization of all the positive values that come with modern democracy. It destroys the oneness of the nation and retards the growth and development of the nation.

Proliferation of Arms

Arms proliferation is one serious problem facing the country. The security challenges in the country and the country's porous borders have inadvertently facilitated arms trafficking. Insurgents take advantage of the peculiar difficult terrain in the Nation's border areas and ineffectual security system to smuggle arms. Hence, arms proliferation has grown by heaps and bounds in Nigeria.

Proliferation of Security Guards

The enormity of security challenges in the country, coupled with the failure of public security in Nigeria, has led to the proliferation of security guards by organizations and communities. Communities and organizations now engage the services of different security outfits.

Most communities now have vigilante groups for the security of their people.

Implication on social security

Human security entails access to the basic necessities of life such as food, nutrition, clean drinking water, hygiene and sanitation and housing. The provision of social security can only be guaranteed when there is peace in the nation. Insecurity leads to fear, coercion, displacement and deprivation of basic daily needs such as drinking-water, food and health care. According to Meddings, (2001) when people's security is guaranteed, it gives them the freedom, physically and mentally to get on with the business of building their lives without fear of molestation or violent death. Thus, to experience a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being security is essential.

Implication on national economy

Insecurity impacts the national economy negatively. One of the consequence of religious violence is the disruption of socio-economic life of the people. As people escape to safer places and hide for their lives, during crises, the economic life of the society suffers. The productive aspect of most manufacturing businesses depends largely on the availability and regular supply of raw materials for production. Insecurity cuts off the supply of such raw materials hence, jeopardizing production activities. Also, insecurity affects marketing of finished products as there is a continuous exodus from areas of insecurity. There is also an increase in security spending as most business organizations operating in Nigeria spend a lot in maintaining private security outfits. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) observed that the destruction of business buildings, properties and equipment is tantamount to loss of capital which has ruined not a few businesses in Nigeria. Thus, security is critical for the nation's development and its absence means that economic growth and development cannot be achieved.

Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations are made:

- a) There should be proper religious education for the youths. This will help to sharpen and refine their religious understanding.
- b) Government should put in place a rehabilitation programme to de-radicalize repentant religious fanatics. This will help reintegrate them back to the norms and values of the society.
- c) There should be electronic surveillance of the nation's borders to check smuggling of illegal weapons into the country. This will help reduce the accessibility of weapons by terrorists and other religious bigots who go about killing people at every slightest provocation.
- d) There is need to discontinue the almajiri system of education and the reintegration of the almajiris into government schools. This will help to ensure proper education of the children in order to avoid losing them to Islamic fundamentalists.
- e) There is need to promote inter-religious dialogue in Nigeria. This will contribute a great deal in averting religious violence.
- f) Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and religious bodies should frequently organize religious seminars on peaceful coexistence among religious adherent in Nigeria.
- g) There is the need to create employment for the teaming unemployed youths. This will help to reduce their chances of being used by religious fundamentalists and terrorist to cause trouble in the society.

It is believed that if the above measures are taken, security challenges orchestrated by religious fanaticism would be brought to the barest minimum.

Conclusion

Religious fanaticism has orchestrated unbridled conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. There have been several incidents of religious violence in post-colonial Nigeria, especially in the Northern part of the country. Most of the religious violence in Nigeria were caused by religious intolerance and rivalry between the adherents of the two dominant religions, Islam and Christianity. Religious fanaticism in the Northern part of Nigeria has been hidebound and its spread is unbridled. Insecurity caused by religious fanatics have graduated from the usual religious violence to insurgency in recent time. The Boko Haram insurgency, which seeks to establish in northern Nigeria an Islamic

caliphate governed by Sharia laws, has worsened the security situation of the country. Apart from religious fanaticism, other factors affecting the security of Nigeria include porous borders, arms proliferation, governance failure, and corruption. Insecurity in Nigeria has given rise to loss of lives and property, proliferation of arms, fear and instability in the country and proliferation of security guards. The issue of security therefore should be the concern of every citizen of the country.

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CHAPTER FOUR

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND RELIGIOUS PEACE BUILDING IN NIGERIA: READING ACTS 15:2-15

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Executive Summary

The conflicts in Nigeria have triggered the worst humanitarian crisis since after the independence, and if not checked, will continue to rise. Population and values displacements are increasing and an entire generation of children has and is being exposed to war and violence, increasingly deprived of basic services, education and protection. Three major religions are being practiced in Nigeria; Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion. These religious affiliations make it more difficult for the country to engage in meaningful interfaith dialogue because she is deeply affected by religious identities and meanings. Hence peace search based solely on secular values will probably not be sustainable. It is therefore the aim of this paper to recommend religious dialogue as expressed in the Acts 15: 2-15 which involves the different religious believers and recognize their religiousness. The council of Jerusalem thus demonstrated the willingness of the religious leaders to make compromise on certain issues in order to maintain peace and unity.

Keywords: Interfaith, dialogue, religious peace building.

Introduction

The insecurity in Nigeria today is of great worrisome and concern to all stakeholders and the entire citizens. It has triggered the most

humanitarian crisis since after the independence. Sectarian conflict is so high in Nigerian that of the three major tribes, existing situation seems to suggest that almost none appreciates the other. The country is deeply affected by religious identities and meanings. Economic analysts, legal experts, religious leaders and political scientists and even the ordinary citizens are alarmed by the devastating consequences of this unfortunate situation. Many are apprehensive that the unity or as the case may be, the unity of the nation called Nigeria is in jeopardy. All are in dire fear with no trust in their day to day dealings with others. Most people are compelled to doubt and to question almost everything as to its authenticity. Nothing appears ordinary these days. There is tension everywhere which pushes many to placing security measures in their various residential places consequently pushing them to be unusually and abnormally hypersensitive to any state of unrest and disorder.

The various regions in the country; the southern, eastern, western and northern regions are a volatile mix of insecurity, ethno-religious and political instability. Many tragedies and devastations had become noticeable and felt due to the domineering, overbearing manifestation of ethnic and religious genocide. Many have been killed, others maimed while other people's property have been destroyed. The situation even saddens the heart when all these take place with impunity; no repercussion of judicial redress and moral approbation seems to be given to all these violence

In the light of all these ugly and threatening situations in the country, for which various formed committees and institutions have failed to fight, this paper therefore is posited to recommend the use of interfaith dialogue as in the case of Acts 15: 2-15 where Christians and Jews reach a certain compromise in some aspect of their belief to gain peace and tranquillity. Consequently, the situation in Nigeria at this moment needs this kind of interfaith dialogue if peace, unity and development must be gained.

Conceptual Framework

Interfaith

The term interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative, constructive and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions and faith, at both the individual and institutional levels. Increased awareness of religious plurality, the potential role of religion in conflict, and the growing place of religion in public life present urgent challenges that require greater understanding and cooperation among people of diverse faiths to increase acceptance of others and to better understand their identity. For Greenebaum (2014) such interfaith dialogue can take a wide variety of forms, ranging from joint appeals by high-level religious leaders, to attempts to develop mutual understanding and the recognition of shared values and interests, to grassroots efforts to encourage repentance and promote reconciliation.

Dialogue

Etymologically, dialogue means a speech across, between, through two or more people. Dialogue comes from the Greek *dialogos*. *Dia* is a preposition that means “through,” “between,” “across,” “by,” and “of.” *Dia* does not mean two, as in two separate entities; rather, *dia* suggests a “passing through” as in diagnosis “thoroughly” or “completely.” *Logos* comes from *legein*, “to speak” Crapanzano (1990). *Logos* means “the word,” or more specifically, the “meaning of the word,” created by “passing through,” as in the use of language as a symbolic tool and conversation as a medium. As Onians (1951) points out, *logos* may also mean thought as well as speech—thought that is conceived individually or collectively, and/or expressed materially. Consequently, dialogue is a sharing through language as a cultural symbolic tool and conversation as a medium for sharing. Accordingly, dialogue refers to the mutual exchange of experience, ideas and opinions between two or more parties; i.e., a conversation. Dialogue is two-way or multi-way communication. It presumes the opportunity to reply on several occasions in order to enhance a line of reasoning. The concept of dialogue contains a dimension of simultaneity and direct contact, either physical or via technical aids. In order to achieve genuine civic participation, there must be some form of dialogue between citizens and

those in positions of power. In a dialogue, everyone taking part must be given the chance to study the other parties' suggestions and opinions, contemplate them and respond. According to Turner (1969 p. 140)

Dialogue is a culturally and historically specific way of social discourse accomplished through the use of language and verbal transactions. It suggests community, mutuality, and authenticity—an egalitarian relationship. So understood, dialogue provides a meeting ground, *communitas*, and manifests itself in a variety of spontaneous and ritual modes of discourse in which nature and structure meet.

Listed below are some of the phrases used by people who have engaged in dialogue in many different schools, corporations, government, non-profit organisations, communities, families:

- a level playing field with respect for all
- a chance to get all our cards up on the table and play with a full deck
- space and pace that allows for all to hear and be heard
- recognition and strengthening of relationships
- an exploration of our individual and group assumptions to reveal our thinking and generate new possibilities
- building shared understanding of differing points of view
- ability to hold the tensions of complexity and paradox and see systemic patterns

Religious Peace-building

According to Little, David, Appleby, and Scott (2004)

Religious peace-building is a term used to describe the range of activities performed by religious actors and institutions for the purpose of resolving and transforming deadly conflict, with the goal of building social relations and political institutions characterized by an ethos of tolerance and nonviolence.

Philpott, Daniel, Powers and Gerhard (2010) contend that religious peace-building includes the beliefs, norms, and rituals that pertain to peace-building, as well as a range of actors for whom religion is a significant motivation for their peace-building.

Religions in Nigeria

Emergence of Islam in Nigeria

Islam infiltrated Nigeria through the Northern Part of her borders. Islam predates Christianity in Nigeria. Metuh (1985) asserts that Islam came to Northern Nigeria about five or six hundred years before Christianity. Enwerem (1995) points out that Islam arrive Nigeria sometime between 1000A.D and 1100 A.D., it first come in contact with the town Bornu in the North-eastern Nigeria before it overtook the entire Hausa States between 14th and 15th Centuries (Trimingham 1962). Ekeopara (1996) opines that initially, Islam was propagated only among City dwellers and was chiefly patronized by the upper class for economic, social and political reasons. It was not until the time of Uthman Dan Fodio's Jihad that Islam spread to every nook and cranny of Northern Nigeria and was forced upon the people. In his studies, Ekeopara (1996) observes that:

From 1750 AD, Islam in Northern Nigeria entered into a new phase. It became militant and intolerant of the Traditional religious system. By this time, Muslims were no more satisfied with receiving tributes. They were now bent on wiping out all associations of pagan custom with Islam. The infidels or unbelievers were forcefully converted by the military might of the Jihadists and not through preaching (p. 12).

Historical evidence shows that upon capturing a place, the Jihadists immediately introduced Islamic system of Law and government in order to cement their stronghold in the region.

Emergence of Christianity in Nigeria

Christianity entered Nigeria in three phases. In the first phase, Christianity is reported to have made its appearance in Nigeria in the 15th Century. Historical facts abound that Benin and Warri in the Niger Delta region are the first cities to witness missionary presence in

Nigeria. The earliest known Christian Mission that first showed up in Nigeria is the Portuguese Roman Catholic Mission which came to Benin in 1485 at the invitation of Oba Uzolua and later in 1514 by Oba Esigie, Kings of Benin (Agha 1999; Tasie 1978). Njoku (1980 p25) asserts that

Roman Catholics were the first to send missionaries to Southern Nigeria. By 1487, the Portuguese, who had already opened up trading connection with Benin City two years earlier, sent out Portuguese Catholic Christian Missionaries to Benin City and Old Warri. These early missionaries laboured under difficult conditions. Despite the initial good reception, the mission to both Benin and Warri collapsed due partly to inadequacy of the numerical strength of the missionaries and partly to the cold feet which the Obas and their people developed later.

History shows that the initial attempt in planting Christianity in Benin failed because “The Kings of Benin City remained strongly attached to their indigenous religion” (Baur 2009, p.75).

The second attempt in the 16th Century under Oba Esigie succeeds to a certain extent as the Oba himself and most of his chiefs did submit themselves for baptism and actually professed and practised Christian religion fairly in their own terms. Ultimately Christian churches were built but unfortunately the Benin Mission appears to have remained confined to the royal court. Much later, it is reported that Some Spanish Capuchins, some Augustinian monks and some missionaries from the Sacred Congregation de propaganda Fidei had their turn in the Benin and Warri Mission field with both positive and negative responses each time. How far this Benin mission expanded is not known. But it is most likely that the crucifixes, mutilated statues of saints and several Catholic emblems that were discovered within the Benin royal court several years later reveal that some measure of success was recorded in the Benin missionary work. Njoku (1980) affirms that,

When the British came to Warri in 1897 they said that they saw people with rosary beads like that of the Roman Catholics. The Chief, the Olu of the Jekris (Itshekris) had a silver crown with

cross in front which was sent to his forefather by the king of Portugal. He wears a garment resembling a Dalmatic and wears a chaplet with a crucifix attached (rosary beads) round his neck (p26).

In the second phase, Christianity is reported to have penetrated Nigeria through Western Nigeria. Lagos as at 1841 had developed into a notorious slave market with its King Kosoko as the Principal promoter of the trade (Dike 1957). Evidence indicates that it was after his deportation by British administration that real missionary enterprise began in Yoruba land. Among the earliest missions that evangelized Yoruba land are the Wesleyan Methodist Mission and the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) ably represented by the Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman and Catechist Henry Townsend respectively in 1842. Samuel Ajayi Crowther became the first Yoruba man to get converted at Sierra Leone as a freed slave. He became instrumental in reaching his own people with the gospel (Oduyoye 1969).

Calabar Mission followed in 1846 with the Scottish Presbyterian Mission taking the lead in evangelizing the Efik people. Essien Ukpabio, a native of Greek town emerged the first convert and was baptised by the Reverend Hope Waddle, the first pioneer missionary to Calabar after being to Ethiopia. Other missionaries like Mary Slessor joined later in the missionary work in Calabar. King of Greek town, King Eyo Honesty was one of the main actors that helped missionaries to plant Christianity in Calabar. From Calabar, the Presbyterian Church spread to the other parts of the former Eastern region (Ajayi 1965; Kalu 1978). According to Ajah (1994) “Christian Missions came to Eastern Nigerian mainly through two angles. The first angle was through Lagos area or from Western Nigeria, and the second angle was to the eastern end of the country through a sea port” (p.40).

In the third phase 1885, the researcher will intentionally choose the mission of the Irish Catholic missionaries in Onitsha, the Lower Niger Mission. This mission to Onitsha was providential in the sense that the primary destination of the missionaries was Lokoja in order to begin the

Upper Niger Mission. The missionary team was led by Father Joseph Lutz, a French Alsatian priest who had served previously for over ten years in Sierra Leone, a man of apostolic dynamism and experience. His colleagues were Father Johan Horne, a newly professed priest and two Brothers: “Hermas and Jean – Gotto, formerly of the station at the St. Coeur de Marie” (Metuh and Ejizu, 1985:12).

Encounter between A.T.R., Islam, and Christianity in Nigeria

Undoubtedly, some values, institutions and world views that are at variance with those of the indigenous religion are introduced into Nigeria through Islam and Christianity. These obviously, appear to create some serious conflicts with the already existing values in Nigeria. According to Danfulani (2001), “Islam and Christianity constituted a threat and a disruptive force to African tradition and custom” (p. 28).

It is observed that at the beginning, the propagators of both Christianity and Islam never saw anything good in African Culture and her religion. Those values and customs Nigerians guarded zealously from birth were all despised by the propagators of the new religion. They hated all their traditional religious practices. The Christian Missionaries, particularly condemned polygamy and other cultural custom of the Africans as akin to idolatry. They frowned at human sacrifice, the killing of twins, blood bath and other cruel aspects of African Culture (Iwe, 1979). This posture of the missionaries has some implications on the life of the African Christians who eventually became dissatisfied with the Europeanised Christian traditions, culminating in the founding of the historic African Independent Churches (AIC).

As it happened at the initial stage, Islam and Christianity really suppressed ATR, almost to the point of strangulation. But as time went on, there were some kind of give and take from each of the religions in Nigeria. For instance, in the predominantly Muslim area in Northern Nigeria, the Muslims’ ways of dressing have influenced the general mode of dressing in a way which seems to be the general culture of the Northerners. Islam has equally been infected with the traditional belief

and practice of magic and medicine. Christianity too has borrowed heavily from some of the traditions of the Africans.

Interfaith Dialogue

The nation Nigeria is deeply affected by religious identities and meanings. A peace process based solely on secular values will probably not be sustainable. According to the writings of several academics, the reconciliation must involve the religious believers and recognize the religiousness. An empirical research was published in 2007 called *Unity in Diversity – Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East*, where interfaith dialogue was studied in Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan. The study demonstrates the desire for interfaith dialogue in polarized society, and confirms that religion can be a source of peace instead of war and violence. Resulting from this study of Abu-Nimer, Khoury and Welty (2007), interfaith dialogue contributes toward conflict resolution because its concept of reconciliation, involves processes of confession, repentance, mercy, and forgiveness. These processes are drawing on religious resources as the basis for dialogue. Millions of residents in the Nigeria are motivated largely by religion. Bringing religion into the dialogue allows the participants to engage in the process, with their religious identity as their primary point of reference.

In times of conflict, religious believers from different faiths often find that they have more in common with one another than they have with non-religious people from their own background. Interfaith dialogue requires individuals to meet as equals in a process of giving and receiving information. Abu-Nimer, Khoury, Welty (2007 p41) suggest the following ground rules for making an interfaith dialogue as effective as possible. All participants should;

- be willing to share their views in the context of their own life story, and not presume to speak for the entire religious tradition
- recognize the complexities and varieties of the other faiths
- stand firmly in their own faith while remaining self-critical and open to new perspectives

- undertake a realistic view of their faith, and not focus on “defence” against others
- be considered to have equal status and importance
- commit to some basic ground rules for the meeting

Contextualizing ACTS 15:2-15 to Contemporary Nigerian Society

Early Christianity in Jerusalem witnessed a very controversial case that nearly rocked the unity of the church. It was dialogue that saved the situation. This section therefore discusses the relevance of the method adopted for resolving this crisis in the early church to Nigeria. There are several methods and strategies there are to solving a crisis. The method adopted in Jerusalem Council was identification of the problem, having understood the nature of the problem; it was extensively and freely discussed. This strategy involved dialogue, debate, tolerance, resolution, and recommendation. The resolution was given immediate implementation.

Different steps were observed taking by the council in resolving the conflict. Acts 15: 1-15:

- First, there was identification of the nature of conflict and the cause, and then a meeting was summoned for debate and dialogue.
- The issues involved were extensively discussed with open mind by listening to different opinions and suggestions.
- There was good understanding among the members of the Council.
- A practical positive step was taken to implement the resolution and recommendation arrived at by sending emissary with a letter for immediate implementation. It is to be noted that the recommendation was not put in a cooler and there was no begging the issue. A letter was sent and two people; Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brethren, as emissary to explain in detail the decision of the Council.

It is to be noted here that good understanding and workable agreement was reached that satisfied both parties in the conflict. This satisfaction confirms the statement or belief that conflicts are better settled or solved through dialogue and not in the battle field. Onaiyekon (2011 p.10) asserts that “Dialogue calls for understanding among the conflicting parties.” If two opposite parties understand each other, they would be able to settle their differences through genuine dialogue. This was the suggestion of Paul to numerous conflicts of interest in the Church in Corinth. It was the argument of Peter and James at the Jerusalem Council for a conflict that was capable of destabilizing the early Christian Church. (Acts 5: 6-21).

Conclusion and Recommendation

There is a peace-making force in religion that can help us to mutual understanding, joint efforts for peaceful coexistence and genuine humanity. The Gospel calls Christians, and the Qur’an calls Muslims, to be witnesses for God. Both the Bible and the Qur’an speak of a God who is merciful, just, sovereign and forgiving. If mission, Christian or Islamic, is in God’s name, it must be carried out in God’s way. This means dialogue, fairness, respect and the opportunity to respond freely. Moucarray (2001) asserts that God’s attributes in Islam and Christianity provide a basic understanding of the peace making force in religion. Moucarray (2004) explains that the first attribute to understand is what prompts God to be merciful. In Islam it is his goodness and his generosity, while Christians believe it is motivated by God’s sharing in human suffering and his compassion. Christianity perceives the need to be reconciled with God and to be saved by him. It is also important to understand the role of love in each religion. Moucarray (2004) emphasis that Love in Islam is conditional, while Christians understand God’s love in an overwhelming and personal way.

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CHAPTER FIVE

RELIGION AND HUMAN SECURITY APPARATUS IN OGBA, IKWERRE AND YORUBA TRADITIONS

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Executive Summary

Throughout the world, Peace is one phenomenon that no price can buy. Whether in religious, social, economic or political sphere, at any time any individual or group peace and security is 85isbehavior, such an individual or group will go to any length to defend himself or themselves. This paper discusses the concept of religious peace and security apparatus in Ogba, Ikwerre and Yoruba traditions. The study identifies certain institutions like the deities, secret societies, the age grade among others; as responsible for the maintenance of law and order whether in social or religious spheres. It identifies the various instrument of peace and security in these traditions and how these apparatuses are deployed to ensure social and religious security in the societies. The research 85isbehavio the

policing role of the ancestors in a bid to maintain society in equilibrium. The paper highlights the role religion has played in peace and security in the Ogba, Ikwerre and Yoruba land. The purpose of this research is to identify, highlight and explain how religious peace served as prelude to social peace and security in Ogba, Ikwerre and Yoruba traditions. The paper employs the historical and comparative analytical model in the discussion. The study observes that every human society has its own way of securing itself against threats. It concludes that traditional mechanisms for ensuring religious and human security should be revived as a way of promoting social development.

Introduction

Throughout the world the threat or perceived threat of extinction shakes every human society to its foundation. In the face of such insecurity, it is natural for humans to fall back on religion.

Religion whether as a national institution or the practice of a small-scale society, religion is always a rallying point in the face of adversity. According to Shaw (2011) religion at the national sphere, can be viewed from three perspectives: Religion as power, religion as policy and religion as desire. In this sense, religion can be used to moderate power at both regional and national levels, it can be used as a policy framework or as the way of life of a people (Shani, 2016).

The above is necessitated by the fact that religion is an important element of human existence that cannot ordinarily be underplayed (Osaji, 2016). Koberle as quoted in Shaw (2011) contends that “the desire for sanctification is first aroused in man when he has become conscious in some painful ways of his lack of peace and his erring recklessness of his life.” Under this circumstance, religion inevitably becomes his last option or solace. In corroboration, Tzu remarks “Know your enemy and know yourself, and in a hundred battles, you will never be in danger”. In the light of the above, religion helps to demarcate the

boundaries of acceptable behavior in order to ensure socio-religious security for both the individual and the wider society. Relating the above to the African context, Osaji (2016) notes “African traditional religion promotes security by not condoning stealing, injustice, immorality and dishonest attitude.” In the traditional setting, security stands paramount in their lifestyle. Therefore, they go to any length to safe-guard themselves and their society. To this end, they employ human and super human apparatus to mount surveillance over the people and the society.

There is global crisis resulting in Terrorism, ethno-religious violence, kidnapping, uprising, and until recently the covid-19 pandemic believed to have political undertone etc. Most of these crisis emanate from religion and ethnic conflicts resulting in insecurity and war apart from the health related crisis. As regard religious crisis, almost all religions preach peace. In Nigeria; the three major religions Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion all preach peace, security and hope to its adherents, yet there are almost daily upheavals within the nation as a result of ethnic or religion crises.

The purpose of this research is to identify, highlight and explain how religious peace served as prelude to social peace and security in Ogba, Ikwerre and Yoruba traditions. The paper employs the historical and comparative analytical model in the discussion. The study observes that every human society has different ways of securing itself against threats. It concludes that traditional mechanisms for ensuring religious and human security should be revived as a way of promoting social development.

The Concept of Religious Security in Ogbaland

Ogba society has a holistic view of security. Among the Ogba, the whole idea of security is embodied in peace. Here, a secured person or group is one that has peace with himself and the wider society. They hold that the security of one person extends to another and vice versa. Similarly, the security of one community is the security of another. In this regard, either as individual or group, whatever that threatens one

extend to all. This perhaps explains why Ogba people live in clustered household compound.

Every compound in Ogba usually has one major entrance and an outlet at one extremes of the compound. In most cases, only members of the compound will know the outlet. Among the people, this is a simple security mechanism. Usually, a man of valour will live at the major compound entrance to fore stall any threat or possible invasion. Inside the compound will host other households considered less aggressive. However, this is not to say that in the case of invasion, other members of the compound will not join. In any case, someone has to lead the way and this is usually the man who lives at the major entrance. Ellah (1995) in his analysis of the building pattern of Ogba people, notes that Onitsha and Ekpeye people also arrange their compound in similar manner to reflect their common history of origin.

In Ogba culture, the same security concern for the people is the same for the land. There is this understanding that for the people to be at peace, there has to be a cordial relationship with the supernatural (Obodoegbulam, 2019). In a bid to maintain Ogba society in equilibrium, the deities and other spirit agents who serve as under-pinnings of security must be constantly appeased. Ogba people 88isbehavi ritual pollution as one major cause of socio-religious insecurity. Religious pollution is attracted by many agents, human and non-humans. Natural disasters like drought, epidemics and pestilence sometimes cause religious pollution. Some human actions that cause religious pollution in Ogba include: Stealing, adultery, incest, breaking of taboo, murder, and abuse of trust. Some symbols of insecurity in Ogba include: the placing of the yellow palm frond on one's entrance, the camping of bees at one's compound, the presence of a tabooed animal or insect in the homestead among others. Some notable agents of socio-religious security include: Egbo, Ordu, Uku frima, Uku-abali and the ancestors as well as the age grade.

Some Security Apparatus in Ogba

The aforementioned security agents help to maintain socio-religious security in Ogba. Individually or collectively, these religious security agents supervise, direct, control and punish security outlaws in Ogba. Owing to the constraint of time and space, our focus will be on Egbo and Ali. Though, the security officers are many, these two will serve as good example for our discussion.

Egbo

Egbo is the symbolic eyes of the Ali deity who watches over the people and land. It is usually situated at the entrance of every community or compound. Egbo is made up of a crafted bamboo which is placed across the major entrance of the community or compound. It is placed on a two life sticks planted on either sides of the entrance. These life sticks are over 4 meters high. It is not just the crafted bamboo that makes up the object but includes other traditional materials are added to energize the Egbo. As it were, the items used in the preparation are not disclosed to young minds. Occasionally, rituals take place at the base. Similarly, the items used are held in secrecy. At the end of the ritual session, elaborate feasting concludes the ceremony. Probably, the dancing and eating are to indicate group solidarity. It is believed that the Egbo serves as a stopper, especially of evil from befalling the community and the people. Among the Ogba, Egbo as a security apparatus is surrounded with rules of prohibition. For instance, it is a taboo to carry a corpse, bundle of firewood across the Egbo. Menstruating women are not to cross the Egbo. It is equally a taboo to ride or drive any 89isbehavio object across the Egbo especially the one at the family compound. Anyone who wants to bring in or send out any of the forbidden items, has to use the escape route at the end of the compound. Violators are made to perform a ritual of restoration, which is usually expensive.

Ali Deity

Another security agent in Ogba is Ali deity. It is the symbol of community and existence. In Ogba, this deity is the principal security manager. Every other agent operates as subordinate to this arch deity. The overriding powers of this deity is so encompassing that every individual operates under its watch so long as the individual is within its confines. Even where an indigene of Ogba is outside Ogbaland, it is common to hear such exclamations as “Ali Ogba kweniam” – Ogbaland forbid.

The Ikwerre Experience

Ikwerre people are very religious and with a strong belief in the Supreme Being. Their religiosity according to Wotogbe-Weneka (1996) possesses a pantheistic view of the universe in which divinity is suffused with every aspect of their existence and endeavours, spiritual or material with Ali (the earth-goddess) as the paramount deity in their pantheon. In his words; “The divinities are believed to be instrumental in directing people on the part of moral rectitude. Certain days of the week and certain seasons of the year and certain periods of the day are regarded as sacred in connection with the worship of the various deities and violation is met with serious sanction”. It is therefore inconceivable to separate the people from their religious worldview and as Johnson (2016) puts it;

The religion of a people is hardly divorced from their culture, the religion and cultures of the Ikwerre people are interdependent that any separation would cause permanent injury on both parties, which invariable may bring disharmony and disparity in the social system.

Socio-Religious Apparatus for Human Security

The cult of Ali (The earth-goddess)

There is the Cult of Ali-earth goddess among the Ikwerre people which in itself is a complex phenomenon. Ali is often associated with the feminine gender as she is believed to have conceived the world in her womb and responsible for the procreation (Mother-earth) while watching over the activities of humans and their interactions with others

in society. The phenomenon is sometimes thought of as one and at other times as having a multiplicity of aspects through which it manifests itself. In any case, among the people of Ikwerre, Ali-earth is generally regarded and revered as the arch divinity and forms the basic matrix of all existential realities. It is in this realization that Wotogbe-Weneka (2015) notes that Ali-earth goddess is the origin of the people's morality, social cohesion and fertility. In his analysis of the cult of Ali-earth goddess in Ogba land of Rivers State, as it is among Ikwerre people, Obodoegbulam (2019) succinctly describes Ali thus:

The earth goddess keeps surveillance over everybody. In the event of any wrong doing, such as stealing, witchcraft, sorcery, adultery and other acts of pollution, the culprit does not go unpunished. In such a situation, the victim is inflicted with one form of illness or another to serve as a deterrent.

In any case, Ali among the Ikwerre people because of its potency is held in high regard and reverence. There are obvious serious implication for profanatory actions against the Ali at all levels. This may vary according to the abomination and the family or clan involved. The implications for defiling the Ali is usually grave and so not contemplated. The importance of Ali as the arch deity is best seen in the myth, rituals, taboos, belief, sanctions and emotional commitment that this worship engenders on the people. Ali is therefore seen as an instrument of social, political and economic control. Ali is invoked by Ikwerre people at all times especially while embarking on a journey (Ali durui) or an expedition and in danger it is invoked also (Ali ikwe).

The Cult of Ancestors

Ancestral veneration is the basis for solidarity and of submission to authority. The Ancestors are the departed members of the family or clan. They are the living dead (Mbiti 1969) as they are considered the source of life. An Ancestor in Ogba, as noted by Obodoegbulam (2019) "is someone who led a good life, has offspring, lived to ripped old age, died a good death and has all rites associated with his passage from this visible world to the invisible". Haven led good lives before their passage, they transmit to the underworld and are venerated by the living

as mediators and hence the existence of constant communion between the living members of the families and clans. Because of these pedigrees, ancestors constitute veritable source of norms, values and customs. That is why they are consulted, why prayers and offerings are made to them. They are believed to provide personal order and stability to the members of their families, communities, clans and ethnic groups since they commune more intimately with the divinities. By their force they are able to influence, reinforce, or sometimes punish the living. They are therefore seen to remain very intimately interested in every person that springs up in their line of family tree and their participation is very intensely felt. As collaborators with the divine, they are principal intermediaries to the divine in their work of protecting lives and empowering their living members. In another respect, Obodoegbulam (2013) refers to the ancestors as the policemen of the universe. The reality of the Ikwerre family as in most African cultures is that it is made up of both the living and the living-dead members. This goes to explain the importance attached to the dead members in order that they may fulfill their obligations of protection and as intermediaries. Be that as it may, death remains an infraction to the physical and the spiritual. The implication is that the death of a relation truncates the chain of existence that binds the family together. Hence, the importance attached to the elaborate rituals to make reconnection possible (Obodoegbulam, 2019).

Sacredness of Life

The emphasis on the sanctity of human life from conception to its enhancement, transmission and society continuity underlies its supremacy over other values. It is therefore unacceptable to take the life of another especially that of kinsman. Murder, suicide, abortion and all that threatens human life and existence were contrary to the vital principles that bind the Ikwerre society and were abomination and taboo. Causing the blood of kin to flow on the earth was tantamount to the desecration of Ali (the earth goddess) that required ritual cleansing and appeasement because of the unpleasant consequences on the individual and the community. This is because shedding of blood is

abhorred. People who were killed were those whose continued existence was a threat to the life of others and to the peace of the community. In such cases, the principle that it is better for one man to die than for all the community to perish is upheld as a form of justification, though as a last resort when all entreaty has failed. If a man intentionally killed another man within the community, he was killed himself. But if he killed a kinsman inadvertently, he was exiled for some long period. In any case any threat to human life is never encouraged and was dealt with decisively as it threatens the peace and corporate existence of the human society. Even the lives of some community totems are held sacred to underscore the value attached to life in general. In this light, an unborn child is believed to have life which begins at conception, held as sacred and to procure abortion on the contrary is anti-life and tabooed. Sources of life like some trees and animals believed to facilitate reincarnation are also sacred.

The Custody and Enforcement Values

The societal values and norms do not drive itself. For this reason, some socio-cultural structures are created to serve as gadfly for the observance of these values in order that the societal peace and order is maintained at all times. This structures while striving to maintain the social equilibrium, it is also concerned with its sustainability for the present and future generations. The common structures include the Council of Elders and Chiefs saddled with the responsibility of guiding the procedures for the appointment of the kings and their coronation. The Council serves as the final arbiter in matters of custom and tradition while the Chiefs assist in dispute settlements and in the supervision of the sub-groups and associations. The Priests (Nye-kwa-Ali) are usually appointed by the gods as their viceroy and regents. They serve in offering regular sacrifices to placate and appease the gods for their benevolence and against any perceived infractions. The women groups (Omuru-inyonya and Omuru-inyonya-di) and the Age Grade (Uku, Ebiri) are very vital institutions for the maintenance and the enforcement of social security. These groups serve as the check and balance against indiscriminate breaking of the norms and values of the society. The youth, men and women, from where the Age Grade is

formed constitute the larger demography and work force of the society. In the words of Ifemesia as clearly evidenced in Ikwerre cited in Iheanacho, (2013);

The age-set exercised considerable discipline over its own members... it performed a most important function in guarding public morality. It was careful of its own good name, and would not hesitate to punish those who would tarnish or disgrace it. Continuous 94isbehavior might lead to the ostracism of the offending member.

From the foregoing, with the age grade system in the community the stability and enforcement of law and order, the social equilibrium of the society is guaranteed.

The Yoruba Perspective

In Yoruba cosmology, Olodumare or Olorun – owner of heaven (Awolalu 1979) is the Supreme Being whose supremacy is absolute. He is acknowledged by all divinities as unique, pre-eminent, Omni-potent and omni-scient and the divinities called Orisa are his offspring's, regarded as ministers and functionaries in the universe (Emeagwali (ed.) 1999). The cosmology also consists not only of a supreme being and numerous divinities called Orisa but also a conglomeration of spirits, ancestral forces and psychic agencies.

The pre-colonial old Oyo Empire of the Yoruba Nation was a multi-ethnic religious society but through evolution and harmonious relations guided by the principle of fairness, tolerance and justice, it emerged into a peaceful and strong society where ethnicity and religion were put under control through diplomacy and understanding of one another rather than agitations and communal wars and violent crises to settle disputes, ethnic and religious misunderstanding.

Brief History

Amongst the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Yoruba land is located in the Western part of the Nation and traditionally regarded Ile-

Ife as the origin and cradle of civilization (Alokan, 2010). They speak Yoruba language generally, though with different local dialects in different communities (Mbiti, 1969) they have an organized political structure which is hierarchical in nature and a monarchical traditional system with the King top most and known as the Oba while next are the chiefs, priests, warriors and so on.

The Oba is next to Olodumare (God) and a fully blown Oba is a quasi-divine personage and meditates with the deities (Orisa) for the people's well-being. The Oba is the custodian of the entire land and delivers justice to the people (Gbadamosi cited in Aderibigbe, 1975).

In Yoruba land, the Oba is highly revered. Next in hierarchy to the Oba are the chiefs known as the Ijoye, who are the intermediaries between the Oba and the people, acting on the instructions of the Oba and concerned about the people's welfare in the community. The chiefs are called Warefa, Otunba, Iyalode, Basorun etc (Alokan, 2010). Next are the cult priests and warriors known as Awo-Ilu, Onifa, Ogboni, Olode, Apena, Balogun and Onilu etc. who see to the spiritual lives, security and peace of the community and the people.

Challenges

According to Oyeneye and Adenuga (2014); the Alaafin (Oba) of the Oyo Empire waged many battles even against many other Yoruba tribes but the wars had no ethnic or religious reasons, but rather to either prevent external aggressions or to maintain territorial integrity as the empire was surrounded by hostile neighbours of different sub-ethnic groups. Even at that, ethnicity was never the reason for agitations or war because each group had a semi-autonomous status and its own political head which was subordinate to the Alaafin – the King of Oyo Empire.

The 19th and 20th century was a period of crisis, conflict and violence in Yoruba land especially the first quarter of the 19th century due to the decline of the old Oyo kingdom.

Thus the multi-ethnicity was not divisive but unifying factor in time of challenges or external aggressions.

Conclusion

The pervading religious sense invested human security with supra-human source and sanctions. Human security was used to protect sensitive and strategic interests of the society which includes among others; the source and sanctity of human life, economic and socio-political life, the environment and even the sources of water supply. Thus such infractions against the visible and the invisible human communities as procured abortion, murder, suicide, incest, adultery and infertility/childlessness, cultivation and farming on sacred days, falling from a height and dying with face down, cutting the upper teeth, death with swollen stomach or foaming in the mouth, stealing, defecation at the streams were tabooed and required purificatory rites. These constitutes some of the practical codes of conducts of the Ogba, Ikwerre and Yoruba customs and traditions. These norms guide the personal and inter personal relations. The norms guide the people's lives from conception, birth and to the grave. Every aspect of life is taken care of by the customs and traditions of the people which were invested with religious authority and fortified with divine sanctions.

Some remedies associated with human security infractions includes libation and sacrifices, fines and levies, community service, naming and shaming, banishment and death.

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CHAPTER SIX

RELIGIOUS CRISIS AND MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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Executive Summary

Religious crisis has been a major challenge in Nigeria, every aspect of Nigeria namely; politics, economy, education, governance, ethnic groups, federal appointments and security departments has undeniably experienced the harm of religious crisis. Conflict expresses itself in various ways and diverse degrees and over every range of human contact. This religious crisis is dominant among Christianity and Islamic religions-the two major foreign religions in Nigeria. The crisis has taken different shapes virtually from the inceptions of the two religions. The damages are enormous ranging from loss of lives, severed relationships to damage of properties worth billions of Naira etc. It has showcased itself in fanaticism, intolerance, derogatory statements, political dissatisfaction and superiority complex. Nigeria has been faced with lingering religious conflicts devoid of lasting religious conflicts resolutions, especially between Christianity and Islamic religions. The findings of this paper totally disagreed with those who said that one of the causes of religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians is lack of the consciousness of the concept of African brotherhood and love, rather the major cause of conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is Fulani-Islamization and expansionism agenda in Nigeria. That without mincing words is the undertone play of all the religious conflicts in Nigeria. The purpose of this study therefore, is to investigate the causes of religious conflicts in Nigeria as a country and

to use the principle of conflict management techniques to call for a peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Data collection method for this research is mostly secondary data collection method. The research concludes with submission that proper application of Thomas-Kilmann conflicts management techniques portrayed the following concepts; collaborating, forgiveness, accommodating, dialogue, avoiding and justice as instruments of conflict resolution; and could be applicable to Nigeria situation.

Keywords: Religious Crisis, Management, Nigeria.

Introduction

Religious violence in Nigeria refers to Christian-Muslim strife in modern Nigeria, which can be traced back to 1953. Today, religious violence in Nigeria is dominated by the Boko Haram insurgency, which aims to impose Sharia on the entire nation. Nigeria was amalgamated in 1914, only about a decade after the defeat of the Sokoto Caliphate and other Islamic states by the British which were to constitute much of Northern Nigeria. The aftermath of the First World War saw Germany lose its colonies, one of which was Cameroon, to French, Belgian and British mandates. Cameroon was divided in French and British parts, the latter of which was further subdivided into southern and northern parts. Following a plebiscite in 1961, the Southern Cameroons elected to rejoin French Cameroon, while the Northern Cameroons opted to join Nigeria, a move which added to Nigeria's already large Northern Muslim population. The territory comprised much of what is now north-eastern Nigeria, and a large part of the areas affected by the present and past insurgencies. Following the return of democratic government in 1999, the Muslim-dominated northern Nigerian states have introduced Sharia law, including punishments against blasphemy and apostasy. Several incidents have occurred whereby people have been killed for or in response to perceived insults to Islam. Religious conflict in Nigeria goes as far back as 1953, and in the case of the town of Tafawa Balewa, to 1948.

The religious crisis is one of the main recurring problems in Nigeria, and it is often followed or preceded a hidden agenda of the Islamic sects in Nigeria. There are two primary religions in Nigeria which are Islam and Christianity; they compete with each other for centuries, causing intolerance and social-political crises not only in Nigeria. Ngene (2019) said:

It is evident that religion is a type of means that is called to unite people worldwide. However, rather often this matter is got involved in conflicts, being the most influential weapon in the hands of some leaders. Thus, as you see, the religious crisis is a disagreement between two groups of different religions that struggle against coherent existence without themselves. (p .1).

The disagreement between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria for a long standing period of time is not as a result of miniaturised geographical territory in which both religions are sharing. In the clashes between the two major religions there is a hidden agenda that Islamic adherents are commissioned to achieve in Nigeria. It is obvious. It is underground, Islamic agenda is trying to make the whole country a Muslim country.

If Christians have become targets at all, it is because Islam and those in power want to make sure the whole country becomes a Muslim country, and they are using Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen as veritable to achieve that objective. When Boko Haram first began to gain global attention in the early 2000s, they were more politically minded, and received political support from certain parties in order to advance into the founders' agenda. It was only a political strategy they wanted to use at the time, using Boko Haram for their personal, religious and political achievements, adding that it benefitted them at the time, but soon things got out of hand and they were unable to control the situation.

When former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, who held office from 2010-2015, was still in charge, he made a genuine effort to get things under control, but the system is so corrupt that the system did not allow him to achieve much. He was too polite to be in that political

position. This politeness would have been something positive for Nigeria, if the system had allowed him to use his polite nature to build the Nigeria he envisioned.

The Christian religion is, on another plane, a resistance to the Arab-Muslim expansionism and Islamization agenda in Nigeria which has menaced and ravaged the African continent for twelve centuries now. As early as the first quarter of the seventh century, the Arabs, a people from the Near-East, evolved Islam not just as a religion but as a cover for their insatiable territorial ambitions. By the tenth century they had overrun and occupied, among other places, Egypt and North Africa. If they had stopped there, Nigerians would not today be faced with the wicked and unholy collusion we are fighting against. On the contrary, they cast their hungry and envious eyes across the tribes and regions that repudiate their religion; and opted to use force to advance the course of their religion through jihad.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept clarification is centrally important to theory development. While often understood as a formula-driven task, concept clarification is really a process that engages critical thinking. Clarification creates multiple meanings through: (1) formulating purposes, (2) choosing, examining, and integrating data sources, and (3) representing a final conceptualization that can also be examined for adequacy. Within each of these processes, critical thinking is engaged as: (1) assumptions are identified and challenged, (2) the importance of context in creating meaning is revealed, (3) alternative interpretations are imagined and explored, and (4) reflective scepticism is cultivated. The central challenge in concept clarification is to understand how words create things. The kind of explanatory approach given to the keywords of the title of the paper informed the writers mind of the choice of the topic.

Religion

The term religion does not mean the same things among the religions in the globe. Sani (2007) said the following about religion:

Religion, unlike other disciplines like Music, Geography, History, Mathematics, Chemistry and a host of others, has no universally acceptable and satisfactory definition. Religion is looked at from different perspectives based on the angle which one understands it. It originates from the Latin words: *relegere* (to unite or link) and *religio* (relationship, bond). (p.12).

It therefore means a link or a relationship between man and a being that exists which is greater than man. Man and religion are inseparable in all human cultures.

However, according to Webster's Dictionary of English Language, religion refers to man's expression of his acknowledgement of the divine or a system of belief and practices relating to the sacred and uniting its adherents in communities. This shows that religion focuses on what is ultimate or absolute and taught of worship. Juergensmeyer (1972) therefore opined that, relationships between the transcendent and men demands total submission and an absolute obedience. (p.23). According to Adeniyi (1993), Religion also, is the consciousness of one's dependence on transcendent being and the tendency to worship Him. It is a body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent Being. (pp.12-18).

Similarly, religion is a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.

Religious Crisis

The terms religious crisis can be used synonymously with religious violence, religious intolerance, religious conflict etc. Having discussed religion, a crisis is a difficult or dangerous time in which a solution is needed and quickly. For example, the crisis caused by a natural disaster might inspire one and one's friends to make a donation. The noun crisis comes from the Latinized form of the Greek word *krisis*, meaning "turning point in a disease. Khaled and Tevhide (2018) defined crisis as, "the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes". (p.5). According to Obodoechina (2008), Religious crisis can be defined as a great difficulty or danger which arises as a result of different beliefs in the existence of God or gods. (p.2). A religious crisis is a crisis primarily caused or justified by differences in religion or religions.

Religious crisis briefly is described as the threat or actual implementation of acts which have potential capacity to inflict physical, emotional or psychological injury on a person or a group of persons for religious ends. The perpetrators of religious crisis often represent or act in the name of a particular religious cause. Wellman & Tokuno (2004) defined Religious crisis as, "a term that covers phenomena where religion is either the subject or object of violent behaviour." (p.291.). Religious crisis is, specifically, crisis that is motivated by or in reaction to religious precepts, texts, or doctrines. This includes crisis against religious institutions, people, objects, or when the crisis is motivated to some degree by some religious aspect of the target or precept of the attacker. Religious crisis does not refer exclusively to acts committed by religious groups, but also includes acts committed by secular groups against religious groups. A crisis is any event that is going (or is expected) to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, organization, community, or whole society. Crisis can bring huge amount of disruption and harm.

Further Definitions on Religious Crisis

Religious Crisis is a term that has been variously defined by scholars. These definitions are diverse and they all convey the single meaning of disagreement between the two or more religious groups.

Hornby (2006) defines Religious Crisis as a situation in which religious adherents are involved in a serious disagreement or argument with one another. This is a situation in which there is opposition in ideas, opinions, feelings and wishes.

Otite and Olawale (1999) sees Religious Crisis as struggle over values and claims to scarce resources, status and power in which the aims of the opponents are to naturalize, inure or eliminate their rivals. This definition very much suits, or reflects the conflict / crisis between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. A situation where Muslims are using national resources against Christians, because a Muslim adherent is in power.

Gyuse (2006) further points out that when two or more persons, groups, communities or nations seek to take possession or dominate a particular object of value at the exclusion of others, conflict/crisis ensues.

Nnoli (2003) asserts that the concept of Religious crisis contradicts the peace process arising from perceptions, behaviours, phenomena and tendencies.

Miall (1992) also points that the emergence of Religious crisis can be a situation where a clear contradiction exist or perceived to exist between the participants who view the outcome of such crisis as extremely important. It would seem that Miall stating that suspicion fuels the Religious crisis.

Gotan (2004) cited a traditional definition of Religious crisis as the conceive interactions in which two or more religious adherents engage

in mutually opposing action and use coercive behaviour to destroy, injure, thwart or otherwise control their opponents.

Aliyu (2004) sees Religious crisis as a process of social interaction involving a struggle over claim its resources, power and status, beliefs and other preference and desire.

According to Oyeshola (2006) Religious crisis is the disagreement, dispute or controversy in ideas or viewpoints held by two or more individuals, communities or religious groups. A Religious crisis becomes violent if physical or emotional force is used to hurt or kill people.

Gotan (2014) inferred that conflict is found everywhere in human interaction and it can occur in the family of the home, place of work, between different ethnic as well as religious groups as it is in the case of Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

Ayandele (2006) also postulates that Religious crisis is a universal phenomenon and it becomes problematic, open, confrontation and violent if appropriate measures are not taken to curtail it.

Of all the definitions above, one thing is common and that is, crisis is disagreement that arises from different belief that is inevitable in organizations and groups in a society. This assertion is explicitly seen in the definition of Obodoechina (2016). This has rightly informed us that the major cause of crisis between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria is rooted in their beliefs. It means by that definition what causes religious crisis is more religious than social, more religious than political, and more religious than economical and more religious than cultural. In the furtherance of this paper under the causes of religious crisis this will receive deeper attention or extensive explanation.

Crisis Management

Crisis management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently. It is the practice of recognizing

and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way. Crisis management refers to techniques and ideas designed to reduce the negative effects of conflict and enhance the positive outcomes for all parties involved. Crisis management is the process of identifying and addressing differences that, if left unresolved, could affect objectives. Crisis Management is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict. Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization or its stakeholders. Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization or its stakeholders. The study of crisis management originated with large-scale industrial and environmental disasters. It is considered to be the most important process in public relations.

Nigeria

Nigeria officially referred to as the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a federal state in West Africa. It borders Cameroon and Chad to the East, Benin to the west and Niger to the north. It also has a coast in the south that lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria is made up of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, where Abuja, the capital city is situated.

Nigeria has a lot of historic empires and cultures compared to other countries in Africa. The pre-history of Nigeria can be traced back to as early as 11,000 BC when a number of ancient African communities inhabited the area that now makes Nigeria. The greatest and the well-known empire that ruled the region before the British arrived was the Benin Empire whose ruler was known as Oba of Benin. Other tribes such as the Nri Kingdom also settled in the country, especially in the Eastern side. The Songhai Empire also settled in some of the country's territory. By the 11th century, Islam had arrived in the area called Nigeria now via the Hausa States. In 1851, the British forces seized Lagos, which was later annexed officially in 1861. In 1901, Nigeria was

made a British protectorate and was colonized until 1960, when the country gained independence from British colonialism.

The Root Cause of Religious Crisis in Nigeria

Many things have been said concerning what could be the causes of religious crisis in Nigeria. The causes of religious crisis in Nigeria according to Suleiman (2016) pinpointed the following to be the causes; the theological factor, religious intolerance, religious fanaticism, unbridled action of the press, aggressive or militant preaching/evangelism, poverty, wrong religious orientation, literacy level of religious adherents, selfishness on the part of religious personalities, and external influence in religion. I agree with every person that has the preceded opinions as what could be the causes of religious crisis in Nigeria, but the truth is far beyond the preceded listed points and that is what many authors and federal government of Nigeria have not given decisive attention. Discussing the cause of religious crisis devoid of extending attention to Arab (Fulani) Muslim Islamization and Expansionism agenda is a great omission (Kanu 2016 & 2017).

Pre-Inhabitants of Hausa Territory before Jihad

Hausa states, group of neighbouring African states, occasionally interconnected from the mid-14th century by loose alliances. Their territory lay above the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers (in present-day northern Nigeria), between the Songhai empire in the west and that of the Kanem-Bornu, or Bornu, in the northeastern Nigeria, eastern Niger. The seven true Hausa states, or Hausa Bakwai (Biram, Daura, Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Rano, and Zaria originally known as Zazzau). They pre-existed emergence of Fulanis and Islam in that geographical area. Nmah and Amanambu (2017) opined that:

Hausa Land before the Coming of Islam was largely a pagan oriented society. There were about fourteen independent kingdoms of Hausa states before the arrival of Islam. Hausa state was that of religious syncretism, worship of lifeless objects as well as misadministration

and misuse of powers. Therefore, the state of Hausa land before the arrival of Islam was purely an environment governed by traditional religion and culture. (p.51).

The indigenous people of Hausa were conquered early 19th century by Fulani, in whose jihad, or “holy war,” many Hausa peasants had voluntarily combined, they were organized into emirates. At the beginning of the 20th century, the British took over the administration of the former emirates, to which they attached Bornu to form the Northern provinces (subsequently the Northern Region) of the Protectorate of Nigeria. The Hausas specialized in blacksmithing, fishing, hunting, agriculture, and salt-mining. By around the 1500s, the northern city of Kano had become the most powerful, and was a major trading centre in ivory, gold, slave trade, salt, cloth, leather, and grains. Due to their lack of military expertise and a central governing body, they were regarded as loose alliances by the neighboring towns which made them prone to external domination. All the states remained independent until they were conquered by a prominent Islamic scholar, Usman dan Fodio, in a Holy Jihad (war) between 1804 and 1815, which created the Sokoto Caliphate. It was later abolished when the British defeated the caliphate in 1903 and named the area Northern Nigeria.

Arab (Fulani) Muslim Islamization and Expansionism Agenda

Attention must be drawn to this concept of Arab (Fulani) Muslim Islamization and Expansionism agenda. To the Muslims this goal of Islamization and expansionism must be achieved with Jihad. In the early 19th century, Islamic scholar Usman Dan Fodio launched a jihad, which is called the Fulani War, against the Hausa Kingdoms of Northern Nigeria. He was victorious, and established the Fulani Empire with its capital at Sokoto. Brief Stint on the Life and Teachings of Usman Dan Fodio. According to Nmah and Amanambu (2017):

Usman dan Fodio, of Fulani origin was born in 1754 in Marata, Gobir, to the Toronkawa tribe. Shortly after his birth, his parents and the rest of the family relocated to Degel. It was at Degel that Usman dan Fodio grew up. He

received most of his education from his parents and relatives because in Timbukutu tradition parents and relatives were the first teachers for any child. Again, Usman dan Fodio's descent has been traced to one Mura Jakolo, who had migrated to Gobir from Futa-Toro around the 15th century. His ancestors were also believed to have settled originally in Konni before they eventually migrated to Degel. (p.51).

The Fulani War of 1804–1808, also known as the Fulani Jihad or Jihad of Usman dan Fodio, was a military conflict in present-day Nigeria and Cameroon. The war began when Usman dan Fodio, a prominent Islamic scholar and teacher, was exiled from Gobir by the King Yunfa, one of his former students. Usman dan Fodio assembled a Fulani army to lead in jihad against the Hausa kingdoms of the north of Nigeria. The forces of Usman dan Fodio slowly took over more and more of the Hausa kingdoms, capturing Gobir in 1808 and executing Yunfa. The war resulted in the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate, headed by Usman dan Fodio, which became one of the largest states in Africa in the 19th century. His success inspired similar jihads in Western Africa.

At the time of Muhammad's death, Islam was primarily a local phenomenon. It was little noticed outside Arabia but within 100 years after Muhammad's death, it was the glue that held together an empire that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean and the Pyrenees in the west, and Himalayas in east, and was one of the greatest unifying forces in the history of mankind. While Christianity was spread around the world by missionaries, Islam was mainly spread by conquering armies. This was the case not because of something particularly vicious or warlike about the Arabs or Muslims but rather because the areas the Arabs invaded were either weak or sparsely populated.

Method of Expansion between Christianity and Islam

Nineteenth-century Christian missions exploded across the globe with the general expectation that the gospel would penetrate the whole world, and that the evangelism of the world would conceivably be completed within a century or so. That sense of optimism is not so

prevalent today, probably in part because of the decline of Christianity in parts of the world that were at one time the fountainhead of Christian faith. A review of the past century reveals that regions in which Christianity had at one time taken root have not always remained Christian for long (think some parts of Europe). In contrast, Islam's progress has tended to be more stable, rarely giving up territory once it has been claimed. Christianity also has the concept of winning the entire world to Christ as indicated in the great commission statement.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Matt 28:18-20 (RSV).

Teach all nations, the word rendered teach, here, is not the one that is usually so translated in the New Testament. This word properly means disciple, or make disciples of, all nations. This was to be done, however, by teaching them, and by administering the word of God. All nations mean the whole world. The gracious commission was the foundation of the authority to go to the Gentiles. The Jews had expected that the offers of life, under the Messiah, would be confined to their own nation. Jesus broke down the wall of partition, and commissioned his disciples to go everywhere, and bring the world to the knowledge of himself.

These two international religions –Christianity and Islam have the mission of evangelizing the world before the end of the age, but with two different approaches. Method of Christianity for evangelizing is preaching the word. -The young Timothy was advised by Paul to, preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. 2 Timothy 2:4. Another passage of the scripture that informs the method with which Christians evangelize the world is Colossians 1:28 which says; *Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ.* Christians

have never been encouraged by the scripture both in part and whole to use force as a means of conversion of the world around them. When one is presented with the message of Christ and he rejects or did not see any need to accept the message he is not seen as enemy that must die, but in the case of Islam death is the next at the refusal to adhere to Islam. One of the most frequently quoted Quranic verses is chapter 9 verse 5, which is as follow, *“when the sacred months are over slay the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them. If they repent and take to prayer and render the alms levy, allow them to go their way. God is forgiving and merciful.”* This verse is known as "The Verse of the sword." Muslim terrorists cite it to justify their violent jihad. Correspondingly, critics of Islam claim that it commands Muslims to act with offensive aggression towards the non-Muslims of that period, and contributes to Islam's final theological doctrine of aggression towards all non-Muslims of all times. In the preceding verse to Sura 9:5, that is Sura 9:4 a statement like, *‘Proclaim a woeful punishment to the unbelievers’* is written.

Therefore, the method of Islamic expansion genders religious crisis, this needs to be addressed to achieve peace in the environment that harbours Islamic religion and other religions. As long as, they use force to convert people there will always be crisis. People should be allowed to exercise their will power in other decide without compulsion a religion to belong.

Impact of Arab Expansion

The impact of Arab expansionism is always on the negative, it puts its conquered on the reverse and attacking style of living. It has never been a healthy experience to any people or society they conquered. The following as listed below are the abridged impact of Arab expansionism.

- i. The so-called Arab invasions in the 7th century were among the least destructive in history. The Islamic conquest was not only

speedy but permanent. Nearly all of the conquered territories remain Muslim today.

- ii. Wherever the Muslims went they also carried with them Arab culture. The cultures of the assimilated territories, which included places occupied by Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, were influenced by the religion and culture of the Arab invaders.
- iii. The Arabic language and Arabic culture was spread with Islam. But even so a concept of ethnic nationalism, with a common language, never really developed, nor did the notion of territorial nations defined by formal borders. What existed were mainly Muslim-ruled cities and their hinterlands.
- iv. The conquered people were subjugated politically but over time their culture, customs, administrative practices, arts and world view transformed their conquerors.
- v. In the early years it was common for non-Arabs to convert to Islam and at the same time become an Arab by forming a relationship with an Arab tribe. Later on converting to Islam and become an Arab became a separate process.

A look at Jihad

This segment is briefly looking at the violent method of the spread of Islamic religion in Nigeria. The literal meaning of Jihad is struggle or effort, and it means much more than holy war. In the early 19th century, Islamic scholar Usman dan Fodio launched a jihad, which is called the Fulani War, against the Hausa Kingdoms of Northern Nigeria. He was victorious, and established the Fulani Empire with its capital at Sokoto.

Muslims use the word Jihad to describe three different kinds of struggle as listed below:

- i. A believer's internal struggle to live out the Muslim faith as well as possible
- ii. The struggle to build a good Muslim society
- iii. Holy war, the struggle to defend Islam with force if necessary.

Merriam's Webster's Dictionary opines that Jihad is, a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty.

Nevertheless, Muslims today attempt to alleviate this fear of Islam by saying that non Muslims do not really understand the Islamic concept of Jihad. They will assert that Jihad is really the personal and individual struggle to overcome those things in one's life that Allah would have eliminated from their life. This assertion is true, but it is not the exclusive use of the term Jihad.

In the Qur'an, Jihad is used to describe the personal struggle to purify one's own nature.

Surah 29:68-69, (Al-Ankabut) introduces the idea that the Muslim will encounter many who are practitioners of error, and it is their duty to be alert to error and not succumb to it.

Surah 29:68 and who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against God or rejects the Truth when it reaches Him? Is there not a home in Hell for those who reject Faith? Surah 29:69 and those who strive (Jihad) in Our (cause), we will certainly guide them to Our Paths: for verily God is with those who do right. While the term "Jihad" or "struggle" is used in this sense, it is not so used very often.

Jihad is also used to describe an intellectual struggle with unbelievers.

In Surah 25:51-52 (Al-Furqan) Muslims are instructed to "struggle" against unbelievers with the Qur'an. This places the struggle in the realm of an intellectual struggle. Surah 25:51 Had it been Our Will, We could have sent a warner to every center of population, Surah 25:52 Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive (Jihad) against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the (Qur'an).

The Most Common use of Jihad in the Qur'an is to indicate Literal Warfare.

But before we analyze this aspect of Jihad, it is important to understand what Muslims believe about evangelism by Christians. Evangelistic activity by Christians is considered aggression against Muslims and Islam. This is demonstrated by Ahmed Deedat in his book, *Crucifixion or Crucifiction*. This concept is what drives Muslims to attack and kill Christians at any slight misunderstanding. According to Deedat (1984) "In the battle for the hearts and minds of mankind, "crucifiction" is the only card the Christian holds. Free him from his infatuation and you will have freed the Muslim world from missionary aggression and harassment." (p.9).

Any attempt to turn a Muslim away from Islam is considered aggression against them, and thus justifies a militant and physical response. Islam wants to employ all the forces and means that can be employed for bringing about a universal, all-embracing revolution. It will spare no efforts for the achievement of this supreme objective. This far-reaching struggle that continuously exhausts all forces and this employment of all possible means are called jihad.

The Problem of Misinterpretation

It is important to discuss this in short details. This is affecting both Christians and Muslims with others in other religions that are not Christianity and Islam. There are some fanatics that misinterpret the message of the holy books of their religion. There are religious fanatics in every religion that act beyond description. Whenever there is misinterpretation or exaggeration of anything especially when it has to do with the contents or the message of the religions' sacred books, it always results crisis and offensive actions. In both Christianity and Islam together with other religions, there are religious fanatics that have acted contrarily to the contextual messages of their sacred books which have resulted into crisis in the society of their host. There is need to encourage sound exegesis of both the Bible and Quran to the adherents, this if achieved will reduce the religious societal crisis attributed to adherents of both religions as a result of wrong interpretation of the message of their holy books.

Types of Conflict – Four Classifications

According to Sheriff (2014), Experience in human society has shown that there are degrees of variation in conflicts. Conflicts are in types. Psychology as a discipline has espoused on intra-personal conflict. Sociology identifies inter-personal as well as intra-group or intra-unit conflict, as well as inter-group conflict. Political Science and History have identified inter-ethnic or intra-state conflict as well as international conflict. Nicholson (1992) said, Conflict is an existing state of disagreement or hostility between two or more people. There are types of conflict which are easily identifiable in our contemporary times. Which include;

- i. Inter-personal Crisis
- ii. Intra-personal Crisis
- iii. Inter-group Crisis
- iv. Intra-group Crisis

- i. Interpersonal** crisis refers to a conflict between two individuals. This occurs typically due to how people are different from one another. We have varied personalities which usually results to incompatible choices and opinions.
- ii. Intrapersonal** crisis occurs within an individual. The experience takes place in the person's mind. Hence, it is a type of conflict that is psychological involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions.
- iii. Intragroup** crisis is a type of conflict that happens among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings among these individuals lead to an intragroup conflict.
- iv. Intergroup** crisis takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different organizations. It may be religious as in the case of Nigeria, it as well may be in secular organizations.

The major of the above crisis that tear Nigeria apart is inter-religious crisis. The main forms of inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria are between Muslims and Christians. According to Canci and Odukoya (2016)

The conflicts are sometimes so intense that they have turned into wars in different parts of the country, and they range from the Kano revolt (1980), Bulunktu Bizarre (1982), Kastina crises (1999), Samfara conflict, Kaduna revolt, Bauchi crises and Sokoto (1999). More recent examples are the Jos crises and the current conflict by Boko Haram against Christians and moderate Muslims. (p.7).

These are only a few examples of inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria, since not a year passes without three to four incidences of inter-religious conflicts. Since the return of civilian rule in 1999 following a protracted period of military rule, Nigeria has continued to experience recurring ethno-religious conflicts. Although some of these struggles are low-intensity contestations and rancorous wars of words, others have degenerated into bloody sectarian fights. Thousands of Nigerians have been left dead, wounded and homeless over the years due to constant religious strife putting people of different religions against each other.

Inter-religious conflicts are brought about by a number of factors. Major among the causes religious crisis Nigeria is Arab-Muslim expansion agenda, Muslims' quest to gain control over all the territory in Nigeria and to extinguish every other antithetical religions to Islam in Nigeria. Another cause of religious conflict in Nigeria is the clashing interests of those in authority. The ruling class has applied a number of processes to express their dissatisfaction with exclusion from important decision-making processes of the country. The methods employed include religious violence and military coups d'état. Falola (1998) said: A majority of the religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria are reported to be due to the large number of rich Southerners who reside there. Many Northern elites are hurt by the business inventiveness of the Southerners and employ religious calls to incite people to destroy property belonging to non-natives. The results are wars fought under the pretence of being religious.

There are countries in Africa that have survived inter-religious crisis through strategic and honest implementation of certain crisis

management methods. **Mali** Increasing violence across central and Northern Mali gained the attention of the international community in 2017. **Lake Chad Basin** Dubbed the most forgotten crisis of 2016, the Lake Chad Basin in West Africa showed very little improvement in 2017. **Sudan and South Sudan**, in Sudan the conflict has remained relatively stable; we have not seen a significant escalation in violence in those countries that are ravaged by religious conflicts. In Nigeria religious conflicts can be brought to a stop with the joint efforts of government and religious leaders.

How Can The Religious Crisis Be Solved In Nigeria?

Current religious crisis in Nigeria is possible to overcome. However, it requires the unity of the government, administrative organs, religious leaders, adherents and inhabitants of a country. Above that, it also requires honest application of some notable conflict management techniques. Some of these techniques had been proven to be workable both in social and religious bodies, but it requires that there must be honesty from both religious bodies that crisis had long existed in their midst. What had made crisis to linger in Nigeria is because there has been lack of honesty among the government, religious leaders and adherents, and lack of true commitment to the solving of religious crisis. Another reason religious crisis had lingered in Nigeria is because some of our political leaders and religious leaders had benefited from it, whereas some have seen it as a means of enriching their purse, while some have also used it as a veritable instrument of oppression and suppression of other antithetical religions.

Missionaries get into conflict with each other. Husband and wife can have crisis. Pastors and lay people get into conflict. Volunteers in ministry organizations find themselves in conflict. Human relations managers in businesses often find themselves managing situations of interpersonal or intergroup conflicts. How can we manage disagreements in ways that build personal and collegial relationships rather than harming them? Such disagreements or conflicts can occur between individuals or between groups of people.

Thomas-Kilmann Theory of Conflict Management

Because no two individuals or groups, whether secular or religious groups have exactly the same beliefs, expectations and desires, conflict is a natural part of our interactions with others. The Thomas Kilmann theory of conflict management if properly applied will serve as a means of managing religious crisis in Nigeria. Considering the fact that we as individuals have different points of view, there will always be instances when misunderstandings will occur among us as well as in religious beliefs. With the arising of these intractable conflicts comes the need for conflict management. Even in seemingly ordinary situations, conflict may be rooted by other non-apparent reasons. Understanding the other sides of the issue would allow those involved to come up with an ideal resolution to the problem. In dealing with conflict, there are conflict management styles to be followed. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, which is an assessment used globally in conflict handling, specifies five strategies used to address conflict.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) assesses an individual's behaviour in conflict situations, that is, situations in which the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible. In conflict situations, we can describe a person's behaviour along two basic dimensions: (1) assertiveness, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns, and (2) cooperativeness, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns. These two dimensions of behaviour can be used to define five methods of dealing with conflict. These five conflict-handling modes are shown below:

- i. Competing: win/lose
- ii. Accommodating: lose/win
- iii. Avoiding: no winners/no losers
- iv. Collaborating: win/win
- v. Compromising: win some/lose some

- i. **Competing** is assertive and uncooperative—an individual pursues his own concerns at the other person’s expense. This is a power-oriented mode in which you use whatever power seems appropriate to win your own position, your ability to argue, your rank, or economic sanctions. Competing means “standing up for your rights,” defending a position which you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.
- ii. **Accommodating** is unassertive and cooperative, the complete opposite of competing. When accommodating, the individual neglects his own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person; there is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode. Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person’s order when you would prefer not to, or yielding to another’s point of view which will either lead to lose or win.
- iii. **Avoiding** is unassertive and uncooperative; the person neither pursues his own concerns nor those of the other individual. Thus he does not deal with the conflict. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation.
- iv. **Collaborating** is both assertive and cooperative, the complete opposite of avoiding. Collaborating involves an attempt to work with others to find some solution that fully satisfies their concerns. It means digging into an issue to pinpoint the underlying needs and wants of the two individuals. Collaborating between two persons might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other’s insights or trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.
- v. **Compromising** is moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. The objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. It falls intermediate between competing and accommodating. Compromising gives up more than competing but less than accommodating. Likewise, it addresses an issue more directly than avoiding, but does not explore it in as much depth as collaborating. In some situations, compromising might mean splitting the

difference between the two positions, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground solution.

Each of us is capable of using all the five conflict-handling modes. None of us can be characterized as having a single style of dealing with conflict. But certain people use some modes better than others and, therefore, tend to rely on those modes more heavily than others, whether because of temperament or practice. The Thomas Kilmann Theory is designed to measure people's use of conflict-handling modes across a wide variety of group and organizational settings.

Religious Dialogue

The five techniques of conflict management proffered by Thomas Kilmann cannot work or be achieved in isolation. For them to work among conflicting religions there must be a platform for interreligious dialogue. What is Interreligious Dialogue? Interreligious dialogue is a challenging process by which adherents of differing religious traditions encounter each other in order to break down the walls of division that stand at the centre of most wars. The objective of interreligious dialogue is peace. Inter-religious dialogue, also referred to as interfaith dialogue, is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate with each other in spite of their differences. The term refers to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, (i.e. "faiths") at both the individual and institutional level. Each party remains true to their own beliefs while respecting the right of the other to practise their faith freely. Nmah (2012) has made the following suggestions on how religious violence can be solved in Nigeria:

Nigerians should imbibe the culture of religious tolerance, trust and dialogue in inter-ethnic relations. Federal government/Nigerians should promote patriotism among themselves. Mutual understanding should replace strife between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria to make Nigeria a great nation in the 21st century. (pp.125, 127).

Interfaith dialogue is not just words or talk. It includes human interaction and relationships. It can take place between individuals and communities and on many levels. For example, between neighbours, in schools and in our places of work -it can take place in both formal and informal settings. In Ireland, Muslims and Christians live on the same streets; use the same shops, buses and schools. Normal life means that we come into daily contact with each other. Dialogue therefore, is not just something that takes place on an official or academic level only –it is part of daily life during which different cultural and religious groups interact with each other directly, and where tensions between them are the most tangible.

Conclusion

Religious individuals and faith-based organizations, as carriers of religious ideas, can play important roles, not only as a source of conflict but also as a tool for conflict resolution and peace-building, providing early warnings of conflict, good offices once conflict has erupted, and contributing to advocacy, mediation and reconciliation. We can't ignore the fact that Religion, next to family, is the second oldest institution. It governs the social as well as personal behaviour of man by providing guidelines, laws and principles relating to his interaction with his fellow man. I believe that this was one of the strongest forces which used to maintain peace in the society.

One of the main aims of religion is to promote 'justice'. Since justice is one of the main pillars of peace, the elements of peace and religion are same. Peace can be achieved only when there is law and order, and a state of harmony and mental tranquility prevails. From the beginning of the world, religion has existed to help individuals, groups and communities to achieve justice and peace. If we look at history, we will find many examples where religion compels individuals, groups and communities to follow the path of peace and to avoid conflict. Johnston also identifies the attributes that religious leaders and institutions can offer in promoting peace and reconciliation as follow:

- i. Credibility as a trusted institution.
- ii. A respected set of values.
- iii. Moral warrants for opposing injustice on the part of governments.
- iv. Unique leverage for promoting reconciliation among conflicting parties, including an ability to rehumanize situations that have become dehumanized over the course of protracted conflict.
- v. A capability to mobilize community, nation, and international support for a peace process.
- vi. An ability to follow through locally in the wake of a political settlement.
- vii. A sense of calling that often inspires perseverance in the face of major, otherwise debilitating, and obstacles.

In addition, both major religions which are Christianity and Islam in Nigeria should curtail the activities of religious fanatics among them which stem from the misinterpretation of their holy books. Religious fanaticism is uncritical zeal or with an obsessive enthusiasm related to one's own, or one's group's, devotion to a religion, a form of human fanaticism which could otherwise be expressed in one's other involvements and participation, including employment, role, and partisan affinities.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

RELIGION AND HUMAN SECURITY IN AFRICA

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Executive Summary

Security is sacrosanct in the world. Decades had passed and the certainty of insecurity has become a global African phenomena despite millions of dollars spent on security issues in Africa. The global governments have spent much to ensure that life is not brutish and short in Africa to no avail. It has been discovered that the main debilitating issue in African security is corruption. African leaders are paying lip service to security as they squander monies borrowed for security purposes with their cronies and the result is heaping quantum debts for incoming administrations. The researcher employing Maslow's theory of corruption discovers that the only remedy to Africa's mounting insecurity is elimination of corruption in her polity. If this call is ignored Africa will remain a continent that is not safe and livable.

Keywords: Africa, security, continent, Maslow debt.

Introduction

Security in Africa is as old as religion. Religion is argued to be illusory by many pundits and security definitely is not Illusory. It is not just a concept but phenomena that has endured for ages. It involves all actions and inactions appropriated through arms and negotiations to ensure that life is not threatened and property lost to intruders. Armed warfare often occurs when there is inconclusive agreement on the moves to obtain peace. When armed conflict arises amongst states, the need to obtain peace starts arising and nations or states involved start to negotiate moves that broker peace.

Kegley and Blanton (2010) aver that in International relations, conflict regularly occur when actors interact and disputes over incompatible interests arise. Conflict like politics is activities aimed at getting another actor to do something. Conflict many be seen as inevitable and occurs whenever two parties perceive differences between themselves and seek to resolve the differences to their own satisfaction.

It is that idea and resolution of differences that brings to bear the issues of security. The term security is seen as the act of protection of a person, building, organization or country against threats such as crime or attacks by foreign countries. Inscribing United Nations view on security, Junkel (2001) says that in Polity terms, human security is an integrated sustainable, comprehensive security from fear, conflict, ignorance, poverty, social and cultural deprivation, and hunger, resting upon positive and negative freedoms.

Security therefore has come under different views but the underlying factor has remained that human security encapsulates those agencies and bodies charged with protecting human beings, countries, establishments and property from insurrection, attacks, plundering and extermination. This task has its certain vulnerabilities and weaknesses because it is an act though divine but handled by human beings. As human agency, security issues have bothered the global forum that the United Nations has one of its strongest arms as the Security Council.

One of the functions of the arm is the prevention of genocide. According to the U. N. Charter, prevention requires importuning responsibility and promoting collaboration between the concerned states and the international community. The duty to prevent genocide and mass atrocities lies first and foremost with the state, but the international community has a role that cannot be blocked by the invocation of sovereignty. Sovereignty no longer exclusively blocks states from foreign interference; it is a charge of responsibility where states are accountable for the welfare of their people. This principle is enshrined in article I of the Genocide Convention and embodied in the Principle of “sovereignty as Responsibility”, and in the concept of the Responsibility to protect”.

As a divine act, security speaks to mankind as God assures that He is the most dependable global security architect. Divine action in global security is seen in David song in Psalm 91 where mankind is reminded that God secures those who trust in Him. Many cases in the Bible underscores divine security for instance in Exodus 15, the passage through the Sea of Reeds protects God taking charge of the Jews and securing them through the middle of the sea and where the Pillar of fire and cloud acted as divine nearness. The Egyptians who were following them were drowned in the sea, while the fleeing Jews got away safely in the midst of the raging storm.

Throughout all ages, religion and security have been on the front burner of theological and social debates. The issue of religion being a major chunk holder in security and global defense has not been resolved. This could be seen in myriads of destructions occasioned by religious based bodies in several parts of African continent but most notably the almost institutionalized macaberic Massacre of ISIS, Boko Haram in South and North Africa. In Nigeria, the herdsmen (Miyethi Allah cattle breeders) and Boko Haram insurgency have rendered some states immotile and inevitable. This is despite governments claims of victory over the insurgents and most confusedly the national forgiveness of “repentant” Boko Haram insurgents and incorporating them into national life.

Religion (it seems) has not actually provided solution to issues of insecurity, insurgency and mass murder in Africa. The onus of this paper therefore is to draw the nexus between religion and security in Africa and establish that both are indomitable ingredients of the contemporary surviving humanity. Theories of security by Immanuel Kant and Durkheims theory of religion will be used as bases of discussion.

Theoretical Perspectives

Kant propounded the theory of “Freedom as the basis of the State”. In this theory, he states that “there is only one innate right”, “Freedom (independence from being constrained by another choice), in so far as it can coexist with the freedom of every other in accordance with a universal law”. Kant rejects any other basis for the state, in particular arguing that the welfare of the citizens cannot be basis for state power. He argues that a state cannot legitimately impose any particular conception of happiness upon its citizen. To do so would be for the ruler to treat citizens as children unable to understand what is truly useful or harmful to themselves.

This claim must be understood in the light of Kants more general claim that moral law cannot be based upon happiness or any other given empirical good. In the Groundwork, Kant contrasts an ethics of autonomy, in which the will (Willie, or Practical reason itself) is the basis of its own law, from the ethics of heteronomy in which something independent of the will, such as happiness, is the basis of moral law. Kant argues that happiness (the agreeableness of life when things go in accordance with ones wishes and desires), although universally bought by human beings, is not specific enough to entail any particular universal desires in human being. Further even there any universal desires among human beings, those desires would as empirical be merely contingent and thus universally of being the basis of any pure moral law. No particular conception of happiness is too vague to serve as the basis of a law. Hence “a universal principle of right” Kant offers is thus “any action is right if it can coexist with everyones freedom in

accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone freedom in accordance with universal law.

Durkheim (1912) on the other hand propounded the elementary form of religion theory. He reasons that religion is an independent system of beliefs and practices regarding things which are sacred, that is to say, apart forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite all those who follow them in a single moral community called a church” (P.21).

Pryer (2012) says that according to Durkheim, religion is a division of the word into two kinds of phenomena namely the sacred and the profane. The sacred refers to things human set apart; including religious beliefs, rites, deities or anything socially defined as requiring special religious treatment. Profane is just the opposite of the sacred, which is not sacred is called profane.

On the one hand, the sphere of the sacred is the area that pertains to the numerous, the transcendental, the extra-ordinary. Pryer maintains that in the other hand, the sphere of the profane refers to the realm of everyday utilitarian activities. When a number of sacred things maintain relations of co-ordination and sub-ordination with one another so as to form a system of the same kind, this body of corresponding beliefs and rites constitutes a religion.

Objects and behaviours deemed sacred were considered part of the spiritual or religious realm. They were part of rites, objects of reverence or simply behaviours deemed special by religious beliefs. Those things deemed profane were everything in the world that did not have a religious meaning but while these two categories are rigidly defined and set apart, they interact with one another and depend on each other for survival.

There is an intriguing part of the conviction between the profane, the sacred and the society. That is the fact that society creates religion by

defining certain phenomena as sacred and others as profane. Those aspects of social reality that are defined as sacred that is that are set apart and deemed forbidden form the essence of religion. The rest are defined as profane- the everyday, the common place, the utilitarian, the mundane aspect of life. The sacred brings out attitude of reverence, respect ,mystery, alive and honour. The respect accorded to certain phenomena transforms them from the profound to the sacred. The differentiation between sacred and profane is necessary but not sufficient conditions for the development of religion.

Durkheims theory in all things dismissed religion as a phenomena that will surely recede and wane and which will give rise to developed sociological thinking. To Durkheims, religious dwindling would give rise to scientific discoveries and which will shake the world and encourage positive sociological avenues to life. This feat has not being achieved. This assertion was heightened by Ingleheart and Norris (2014). According to them, the great nineteenth century social thinkers argued that the rise of modern industrial society entailed the decline of religion. Modernization has indeed involved the rise of rational-bureaucratically authority with that of the professional and technocratic elites. But in recent decades, a resurgence of religiosity and religious fundamentalism seems to have reversed the global trend toward secularization. Norris and Ingleheart explained that the experience of people living in weak and vulnerable societies heightens the importance of religious values, whereas the experience of people in rich and secured societies lessens it. Indeed, they find that in most developed countries, church attendance and the authority of religious figures have continued to decline (although the U.S, is a bit of lagged because social inequality and the massive immigration of people with traditional world-views). In contrast, poor countries are not secularizing and they contain a rising share of the world's population.

Religion and security intertwine in Africa. Ellis and Herr (2010) concur that:

Religion is of great importance in Africa in that most people engage in some form of religious practice from time to time and many profess some formal religious organizations, traditional, Muslim, Christian or otherwise. Many Africans voluntarily associate themselves with religious networks, which they use for a variety of purposes-Social, economic and even political- that go beyond the strictly religious aspect...Religious ideas typically govern relationships of people with a perceived spirit world (p.9).

Sociologically speaking, religion is a set of beliefs, symbols and practices (for example rituals), which is based on the ideas of the sacred and which unites believers into a socio religious community. Scotland and Marshall (1994) say that the sacred is contrasted with the profane because it involves feelings of awe. Sociologists have defined in a god or gods, because it makes social comparison possible: for example some versions of Buddhism do not involve a belief in a god. Religion is not just a social fact. It is strongly issue of security. The name of God portrays a security architecture. The Yoruba of Nigeria has several names for God. Elemii is one of the names they give. It means owner of life. According to Awolalu (1979), the name as applied to the Supreme Being suggests that all living beings owe their breath of life to Him. In other words, without the Supreme Being no creature can live. When the owner of life takes away the breath of a living soul, that soul dies. If man needs security of his life, he must trust in God who provides that security. Without God, it is impossible for man to live.

Turaki Quoting Styne (2020) opines that:

Life's essential quest is to secure power and use it. Not to have power or to access to it produces great anxiety in the face of spirit caprice and the regards of life. A life without power is not worth living... Power offers man control of his uncertain world. The search for and acquisition of

power supercedes any commitment to ethics or morality.
Whatever is empowering is right.

Life and security thus have something in common. Life subsists because there is an agent that ensures its worth and there is a system that sustains it. That system is security. When security is not functional in any state, or system, that organ will surely collapse because it is left at its own. In a Macrocosm, the state is created to ensure that life is not snuffed out. In other words, security is the sole purpose of creation of state. Actually, state is voiceless if life is not secured. The act of revenue generation is not feasible if security of life is not guaranteed. Here, Engels (1942) view is apt. viewing the state politically, he maintains that:

The state is therefore, by no means a power force on society from without; as little is it, the reality of the ethical ideas, the image and reality of reason that Hegel maintaining rather, it is a product of society at certain state of development. It is admission that this society become entangled in an ensoulble contradiction with itself, that is has split into irreconcilable antagonism, which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonism, these classes with conflicting economic interest might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggles, it became necessary to have power seemingly standing above society that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within bound of 'order' and the power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, is the state (p.153).

It is true that the state creates security and through constitutionalism empowers it to operate; the state all roundly depends on security to subsist. The apparatus that protects the state from crumbling is the anchor on which life revolves. The Military, Police, Navy and other uniformed apparatus are the wings on which state fly and the feet on which the state lands. They are the imagery figure of each state internationally. So, without security, it is solemnly difficult for state to

withstand external and internal aggression. With uncorrupt security apparatus, the state stands on its feet to face the world and forge a spawning economic environment. So it is a common place for any state to boast of a strong, viable and indivisible egalitarianism based on a strong security operative. Thus developed states like the United States of America, Canada, Russia, China and so forth can come out audibly before the global community and boast of impregnability against external disturbances and international confrontation. The reason is because their apparatus of security is not just dependable, they are sophisticated by all world's standards and they can even form allies against other non-secured and vulnerable states who live in fear.

Hence, the regulation of security and its apparatus in developing countries have suffered intractable losses many decades ago. The reason is that many African States lost out in purposeful and human oriented governance. Rather corruption has been ruling African governance and this has colored greatly the process of administration of human lives. The incidences of myopic leadership and insensitivity coupled with capricious ethnocentrism have reduced the process of human values in administration into religious cognition. Instead of religion being a base at which strong security administration of state will subsist, governments have introduced it as a facet of division and instrument of oppression amongst other members and citizens of the same state. One of the countries affected by religion-security politicking is Nigeria. One issue about situating Nigeria's intractable problem on issues of security and religion has defied appropriation and classification. Usman and Badmus in Albert and Olarinde (2010) posit that:

The study by the institute for peace and conflict resolution identified that many of the causes of (conflict) are essentially similar and can be explained in terms of ethnic, succession/dethronement of religious. However, over the course of time, their original causes have been lost and the conflicts manifested themselves around a single issue that had become a

focus of antagonistic and intractable attitudes. For example, the Ife-Modakeke conflict began as territorial dispute in 1835, but now has been situated in ethnic gone from one about eh environment. The pendant for attacking Nigerians from other parts of the country, particularly Igbo in northern cities like Kaduna and Kano, over religion that has little or no bearing to those being attacked defy logic. The crescendo with which Plateau State often regarded as the melting pot of Nigeria groups and religious is engulfed in crises suggests an undercurrent to this conflict hotspot (P.141).

The worry over this matter of security and religion has become so heavy that an academic enquiry has to be undertaken to uncover the mystery and solution. This worry was expressed by Soludo in Chiegboka and Utoh Ezeajugh (2012). He insists on a question of who will bail the cat. According to him, it is the current players in the political terrain, and perhaps even the beneficiaries of the current order who would be expected to change it. A constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria already exists, and this needs to b fundamentally amended. Under current power relations, a coalition of elected governors is the most dominant political force in the country. Soludo avers that “to amend the constitution, you require not only the National Assembly (atleast 24 out of the 36 states).....” (p.31). as observed by Basedau and Kehnert (2018), “The rise in religious discrimination in Sub-Saharan Africa has coincided with a rise in religious armed conflicts”. (p6).

With the Salvo recurrent on religion and security, it is apparent that researchers works reveals certain concurrent link with maladministration and copious ethnocentrism. The work will now focus on those vital ingredients that contribute to leakages in security and religion and how they can be overcome.

Causes of Insecurity in Africa

Before vital issues insecurity and religion in Africa are discussed there are vents to insecurity. Why are there so much occurrences and re-occurrences of insecurity in Africa and particularly Nigeria? Such issues like: poverty, religious/intolerance, lack of good governance, migration, international policies on wars and armaments, insatiable lust for power and fear of ethnic domination, will be discussed.

Poverty

When people do not found food to eat, they become vulnerable and could become a toll for all facets of violence especially against authorities. A common saying that “a hungry man is an angry man” could be understood in a clearer term. The incidence of hunger is captured by the F.A.O report actions through the agency of Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition. It was a downward trend and upward curve of food and nutrition fracas in Africa.

According to this ugly report:

The latest data shows that the deterioration has slowed, but there remain 256 million hungry people in Africa today. The upward trend in undernourishment over 2014 to 2018 period in Africa is confirmed by the rise in the prevalence of severe or moderate food insecurity, a complementary indicator of food insecurity introduced by FAO in 2017. This measure also shows that in addition to 277 million people in Africa who are severely food insure, i.e they do not have regular access to nutritious and sufficient food, even if they were not necessarily suffering from hunger (P.1).

This report revealed a dastardly decline on food security in Africa which is one of the worst scenarios of Africans poverty and governance. African countries record over 87% of citizens who live below poverty level (below one dollar per day). These are people who are farming the fields and harvesting from the scorched lands and can hardly find enough food to sustain them. Further analysis replays a grim reality for

the continent in the area of food value chain. The report claims and rightly so that:

Food insecurity has been rising in Africa in recent years and the continent is not on tract to eliminate hunger by 2030. The 2071, 2015 spatial inequalities, is essential to strengthening household resilience, laying the part for inclusive growth and reducing food insecurity and tackling the multiple forms of malnutrition (p.4).

This report makes far reaching suggestions on methods and models of tackling food insecurity in Africa. This suggestions is a ploy to governments in power in Africa of the continent must sail through in her bid to conquer food insecurity and thereby possibly reduce the incidence of impending mass action on government establishments which lie insecure as far as Africans' hungry masses are concerned. The model and methods is:

Addressing acute and chronic malnutrition also requires both nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive approaches that are multi sectoral in nature. Policies and interventions must focus on promoting nutrition sensitive food systems that can promote and sustain healthy and diverse diets. Policy makers should put particular emphasis on maternal and child malnutrition and health in the first 1000 days, both as a moral imperative but also as a high return investment (p.5).

There is no doubt that this report underscores a highly rigid political game of insensitivity over the plights of African Population by her rulers. High levels of hunger and despondency are highly noticed amongst the vast population of citizens who live in the Sahel regions of Africa where food and water are almost unreachable luxuries and where people drink their own urines and that of famished animals as water. The result of high incidence of food insecurity is high death and mortality rate and rising expectancy of mass action against politicians

from affected countries. Uchendu and Abolarin (2015) attributes this high level of food insecurity to corruption and ineptitude by the political authorities in the continent.

Religious intolerance

It is not news that religious intolerance has proved a strong indication of insecurity in Africa. From Nigeria to Senegal, from Burkina Faso to Libya and Kampala, Africa has had her toll of killings and blood lettings as a result of religious intolerance. Though highly political and sociological in out-lay, religious colouration has been the regular picture attached to this Malaise. Haldeem (2013) refers to Osaghae and Suberu (2005) that:

Nigeria is synonymous with deep divisions which cause major political issues to be vigorously and violently contested along the lines of intricate ethnic religious and regional divisions. Issues that raise the most dust are those regarded essential for the existence and the validity of state. Opposing and contending assemblages have a tendency to assume an exclusionary winner take all approach. These issues include the control of state power, allocation of resources and citizenship. As a result, states with such divisions are disposed to be delicate and unstable because almost by definition, they have very little in common with regard to convergence and harmony which are necessary to reduce the centrifugal forces that rip them apart (p.1)

It is a common place that religious intolerance has contributed its own quota to the displacement of the populace from their original settlements into new territories thereby forcing migration on the inhabitants. For instance, the influx of the Almajiris and the Almajirai from the North of Nigeria into the South South and South East of Nigeria was traced to internal conflict based on misunderstandings in that region. The almajiri school system according to Awofeso, Ritchie

and Degeling (2003) served as an instrument of radicalization for three important reasons.

First, it involves children been relocated or separated from their family and friends to the guardianship of Mallams in towns. Second, it is restricted almost exclusively to boys. Third, the curriculum of the schools is concerned primarily with teaching the sixty chapters of the Koran by rite memorization. Fourth, each school serves 25 to 500, from the ages of 6 to 25. These schools are largely autonomous from government oversight” (p8).

Being that the system does not support any lucrative or any useful knowledge; the common characteristics of the almajiri became domestication of radicalism in the young boys. Being taught the basic tenets of Islam and little knowledge or none at all of other religions and being deprived of basic life support systems, they resort to violence. Their targets have always being members not of their religion. The level of physical destruction of these young domestic radicals is beyond description.

The lack of understanding of the tenets of other religions in Nigeria has also forced up loathing of those attached religious to official kleptocracy. Moving up to outright religious stigmatization, many juicy positions even through justified constitutional rights were denied. Most countries in Africa and most especially in Nigeria have made official rejection of members of other religions a hallmark”. People lose their jobs or are threatened either to forcefully proselyte or are denied their rightful constitutional positions. Those who are sacked in this manner constitute national security risks to the country.

Lack of Good Governance

Lack of good governance has been a bane in most African countries. When governance lacks human face and the political administrators go all out to achieve personal and family oriented satisfaction and utility on the alter of public good, that administration is judged as having

failed. Many countries in Africa lack people oriented policies and programmes.

In most countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Somalia etc, the constitution or programmes of government may not actually be the issues, the issues become the political personal handling of policies and programmes of government. For instance in Nigeria,, the President Buhari immediately after his second term election flew to Germany in a conference and declared that his concern was not the 17% regions that did not vote him but the 98% that voted him to power. This singular executive assertion had posited him as an executive chairman who was already biased ethnocentrically against a part of his country. Most executives in Africa seen Presidential opportunities through the eyes and perspective of and ethnocentric and Machiavelian policy of “the winner takes it all”.

With such political mindset, some African countries like Nigeria has suffered under the hands of suffocating political gladiators with intense myopic political tenets and values. The direct effect of the actions are untold sufferings of both people favoured and those who are unfortunate to be in minority of political executive interest. Okechukwu & Duru in Chiegboka, Utoh-Ezeagugh & Ibekwe (2012) advocated that:

The World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) founded after the Second World War had grown so wide and influential that it has directly or indirectly affected the political colour of many countries. As international, financial, it has decided to attach good governance as a major prerequisite for a country to obtain financial assistance from her. As Agwu observed, it has identified three distinct indicators of good governance as (a) the form of political regime (b) process by which authority is exercised (c) capacity of government to discharge its responsibilities (P.134)

True to its accredited statement, the people of South-South and South East of Nigeria have had their “stories” that touch the heart” to tell as they grapple with inept and capricious handling of their regions under the present government.

Another effect is the “radicalization’ of pressure groups which its youths have continually posed dire assaults to government. Such groups as Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mobilization for Attainment of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta Boys, Amotekun in the South West, herdsman and farmers clashes, banditry, insurgence of Boko Haram and other internal facts have arisen. The country’s borrowing formula has arisen to about 68% of the total revenue thereby debts are the only instruments used in financing national budgets. These policies will only ensure national insecurity and eventual loss of lives and property if care is not taken.

International policies on wars and armaments

Wars across the world and production of armaments had affected African Security System in a large scale. As the international policies has not actually encouraged using third world countries as dumping grounds of war equipments and arsenals, many dictators had been encouraged by the countries producing these armaments to stage uprising through enactment of draconian policies that will negatively affect their citizens. The motive was for those countries to sell their weapons of mass destruction to the gullible countries. Skons (2014) agree that:

Many African countries depend to a significant extent on the economic development and security related activities of external actors. The life saving impact of externally supported example. However, external engagement presents challenges to African Security efforts. In order for African countries to best benefit from external activities, they need locally strategy for incorporating

external support civil society now has an opportunity to play a major role in shaping these policies (p.1).

Because African countries are prone to internal wrangling and secessionists tendencies (as result of bad governance), international actors are always invited to play the roles of peace negotiators, peace watch and mediators etc. over the past decade and half, international efforts on peace and security initiatives were borrowed from International Financiers thus forcing up Africa continental borrowings to about 46%. Skon maintain that:

Visible external security activities on the soft side, direct interventions by external military and security forces in conflict or post-conflict situations (either bilaterally or multi laterally) in the form of peace operations). Another visible form of external activity is the transfer of weapons, either legal or illicit; to African states and armed groups. In addition, external actors train military and security personnel; conduct joint exercises; and provide support for the reform of the security sectors (p.4).

Nigeria as a major peace keeping country has over the decade sent forces to Liberia on peace mission in ECOMOG operations (Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group) which was formed and started operation in 1993 to foster peace amongst warring groups in that country. One of the victims of that peace keeping was former President Samuel Doe. In Nigeria (1967-1970) was a period of interest when all peace negotiation had failed and most prominent was the Aburi Accord signed between Nigeria and Biafra at Ghana in 1967.

Some of such peacekeeping operations are still going on in Congo-Brazzaville, Sudan, Mali, etc. After those peace keeping operations, the arms race and arm deal lead to arms surrender by the conquered forces. The tragic affects of those surrender is the internal use unsundered arms for internal use by criminals and bandits who are not favoured by the government that and initially adopted as reperant soldiers. One of

the side effects of Nigeria Civil war was the criminal activities of soldiers who had fought in those wars and had not surrendered their armament.

Fear of Ethnic Domination

One of the major under-balance of African countries and their politicians has always being fear of ethnic group toppling another ethnic group in pursuit of top executive positions. For instance, before the independence of South Africa in 1984, the African National Congress (A.N.C) led by Nelson Mandela had battled with the Inkatha Freedom Party (I.F.P) led by Mongosuthu Buthelezi. In Nigeria, before the political independence in 1960 and 1963 republicanism, the fear of Hausa/Fulani oligarchy and Igbo ethnic group tussles had been the mainstay of political parties and associations. The effect of this fear led the formation of political parties that are more of ethnic associations with both parochial and myopic political manifestoes.

In fact, the only political party in Nigeria which had allayed this ethnic domination fear was the National Party of Nigeria (N.P.N) that produced both Mallam Shehu Shagari as the president and Dr. Alex Ekwueme as the Vice president. The bottom pot of national unrests in African countries had bred from sectional and ethnic interests in national affairs. Irobi (2005) discovers ethnicity (ethnic groups) “as a community of people who share cultural and linguistic characteristics including history, tradition, myth and origin”. (P.3).

Because an ethnic group feels like they are shortchanged in the share of the “national cake’ they compete for external and internal recognitions and participation have been identified as one of the major causes of conflict in Africa. Terrorists believe that competition for scarce resources is a common factor in almost all ethnic conflicts in Africa. According to him;

In multi-ethnic societies like Nigeria and South Africa, ethnic communities violently compete for property, rights, jobs, education, language and health care facilities,...

In the case of South Africa, Gehard Mare confirms that ethnicity and ethnic conflict appear to be a response to uneven development in South Africa, which caused ethnic groups (Xhosa, Zulus, and even Afrikaans) to mobilize to compete for resources along ethnic lines. It follows that multi-ethnic countries are likely to experience distributional conflicts (p.6).

External Conventions on Security and Religion in Africa

Right from 1888 when there was the “scramble for Africa”, the continent has been a volatile area seared by different religious beliefs, observations and values. This is coupled with also volatile political views of tribal leaders who wedged untold powers over the regions they ruled either through the kings, Obas, Obis and other designated office holders. Many of these countries which later became colonies to those Western nations that grabbed them have to face a new political and religious realities following either from their countries of their colonial masters or from the counties that has dominant religious (or even denominational muzzles). For instance Nigeria became a colony of great Britain who also was the parent body of Anglicanism. Painting a dominating feature of Anglicanism in Free Town and Nigeria, Okeke (2006). In his words:

The most important outcome of patriotism was the preservation of tribal languages. Each tribe endeavored to hand overt its language and culture to a succeeding generation. This language continuity eventually led to S. Koelle’s polyglotta Africana- a collection of vocabularies phrases, varies geographical and cultural information concerning over zoo African groups.

Against such syncretism, J.F.Schon complained and preached. Part of this religious continuum still persist in the Creole Awujo- a ceremony which origins ought to be traced to the cultural background of the liberated Africans .it is a ceremony of peace and blessing in which

the generations are telescoped and their influenced solicited (P.12-13).

The religious influences of these colonial masters are in so /many degrees positively influential on the scrambled people. For a race just recovering from intractable Atlantic slave trade and its vagaries the need for “fresh air” was rife. Change in values orientation and new political ideas were to wash away the wounds of oriental servitude those races and countries had suffered in the hands of the white supremacies who had rough handled them in more than one century years of slave dealing.

By the late 1930’s, the first and second wars had come and gone and the cold war of intellectualism and political advocacy. The formation League of Nations in 1919 and United Nations Organization in 1949 put up new political viewpoints which provided new guidelines on emerging religious and security situations in the globe. One of those arms was the Security Councils.

Kegley and Blanton (2012) advocated that : the founders of the U.N(United Nations) expected the security council to become the organization primary body, because it was designed to maintain peace and its permanents members were the victorious great powers that had been allied during the use of force. The General Assembly can only make recommendations (p.145).

In this guise, Gutierrez (2014) in conjunction with the security council made some recommendations that will help stem the tide of insecurity and violence in Africa. Some of these recommendations are grouped under “silencing the guns by 2020”. They are:

- Strengthening the legal regime also means bringing more precision to it. The international legal definitions of a mercenary is very narrow and therefore poses a challenge to effective investigations and prosecutions

- we need to increase bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

Cooperation on border management will be crucial in stemming the largely unhindered flow of weapons and foreign armed actors throughout Central Africa.

Such steps could include mixed border commission, joint border security monitoring mechanisms and regular intelligence sharing between national defence forces.

Cooperation will also be essential for building the capacity of national institutions responsible for justice, security and human rights to carry out these vital functions and to implement the relevant legal instruments.

A state must be able to exercise a monopoly on the use of force within its territory with armed forces capable of protecting people while upholding the rule of law.

There was need to also decipher that some of the provisions while limit international deals on arms and transfers they also empower internal usage of ammunition amongst African leaders and separatist/irredental groups. On referring to the weakness Harsch (2010) reports that in South Africa:

Yet in addition to those nations still affected by armed conflict, others remain politically fragile... They have weak institutions, Vulnerable economics and growing number of jobless youths. They face a new lost of new challenges ranging from transnational crime to climate change. If left unaddressed, such problems may lead to resumption of old conflicts or the outbreak of new ones. To avoid a resurgence of war, the secretary general argues a new report. "African countries and their outside partners need to provide the minimum

conditions for human sustenance and forge a security policy that has people, developmental *and social issues at its core*”(PI).

Panacea to security and Religious issues in Africa.

Many countries in African have been facing untold religious and political hardships due largely to both religious intolerance and insensitivity coupled with political radicalization of executive office holders. One of the compounding problems of African leaders o is paid government is using religious ethnic sentiments to whip-up political unrests. The gullibility of Africa citizens who are whipped with hunger and lost values give rise to this menace and greatly discourage political gladiators to use religious sentiments to acquire personal political gains and clanish ascendancy. It is important to note that most uprisings in Africa are just direct assault by those in power to flush out religio-political elements in service to entrench mono-based religious loyalists in positions of power. This has continued to encourage politico, nepotic administrative systems in African countries. In Nigeria for instance, this method has encouraged Fulani led oligarchic monopoly of political positions in the country and the feeling that have powers to instill themselves nepotically has been on the increase in the past four decades in the country. The removal of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015 elections did not come as a surprise. This is most evident in Adeniyi (2015) who vividly recounted how a sitting president lost out in an election Nigeria. That is first of its kind in Africa in many countries.

One ugly impact of religion-ethnic myopism is the country's debt burden. Nigeria with her soaring oil profile since 1956 would have been on line of credit nations, but that was not be. Between 1979-2000 Nigeria has continually been a debtor nation and her debt profile has risen significantly astronomic in the past three decades. Okonjo-Iweala and Soludo (2003) paint ugly and scary picture of this debt enigma like this:

After decades of dictatorship and misrule, Nigeria, Africans most populous country and potentially its

largest economy, has emerged as a nascent democracy, and its leadership is determined to start anew. However, the average Nigerian is poorer today than in 1972, despite the country's nearly US and 300 billion earnings from all exports between 1973 and 2000. Poverty is deep and pervasive with about 70% of the population in absolute poverty. Infrastructure decay is significant, corruption is endemic and accountability is grossly weakened (Pi).

Observing a colossal waste of general enterprise and political malfunctioning, it becomes evident that neglect of this gross political waste will not just spell economic doom for Africa. Nigeria will suffer both political and religious peril. One evidence is the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria states and the hardest hit area is Katsina in the North central of Nigeria. That is also the home state of the country's president. The fear of travelling between Abuja (the capital city of Nigeria) and the next sister state of Kaduna, one faces the most daring risk. Religio-Political assault on both religious and political institutions in the North of Nigeria has become scary faces for instance a Roman Catholic Ordinand was abducted and murdered in cold blood after a ransom of over twenty million naira (NM20) had been paid. One of the governors had only boasted that foreign observers who try to report cases of extra-judicial murders will be carried on "body bags" went viral on both social and government media. This is a daring assault on international intelligence. With all these on, there must be a respite and panacea to the impending security and religious breaches in Africa countries. One wonders what would be the panaceas to this obvious security and political anomalies in Africa. Here, few suggestions are put forward.

Balanced Religious Freedom for the Citizenry

One issue with Africa leadership is the inordinate ambition for one particular religion to bottle-hole others especially when such group finds itself in the vantage populous. The result is attempt to eliminate employees of other religions or at least to ostracize them to ignominy.

In order to do or achieve this task, official government communications pass through informal and unruly home avenues and deposited in unofficial gazette files. In some cases, experienced hands in offices are transferred to areas where they are not relevant and inexperienced and untrained hands are replaced on the after of religious or denominational caprices.

So, the issue of religious freedom is a “must” agenda for Africa and Nigeria state on true application of that policy will not just move Africa and indeed Nigeria forward, it will entrench a free society where everyone is free to practice this religion without fear. Notuce, Danji and Oladeje (2009) observed as they analyzed the religio-political landscape in Nigeria.

The Obasanjo administration presided over a constitution, which, despite the considerable experience of Nigeria with constitution-writing the country has had nine constitutions/ since the first [Clifford constitution in 1927], was somewhat ambiguous with regard to the role of religion in the state. This section 10 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria..... announces that the government of the Federation of the state shall not adopt any religion as state religion. However, Section 38(i) holds that every person shall be entitled to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his (sic) religion or belief and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or private) to manifest and propagate its religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance (P. 16).

The implication of this section of the constitution is secularization of religion in Nigeria. However, it impoverishes sections of their ability to practice their religion as it also empowered the majority to push others to the wall religiously. Because of what that law implies Imo (2008) opuses that despite heated about Sharia at the time of its

introduction, the boundaries in the struggles by religious groups and organizations over public space and recognition are filled.

Restructuring of political system in Nigeria.

The idea of restructuring lays credence to delimitation and devolution or powers of state to all aspects of development. It is the idea of seeing areas of need and assigning workable tools to facilitate reforms. The objective of restructuring is to steer mechanism properly and to give focus and locus to attempt at collective identity and distributive politics. According to Amuwo, Suberu, Agbaje and Herault (ed) (1998):

To think with political structures is perhaps suggestive whilst democratic practice may not yet have firm roots, the democratic idea has same form of expression. The importance of the latter idea in a federal system can hardly be over emphasized, particularly where there are not only actually existing feudalist movements but also nationalities being driven to agitate for separatist identities.

Two, political restructuring is intended to lay institutional foundation for a more just and equitable sharing of the political space by multinational groups cohabiting in a federal polity. The strategic objective seems to be the solidifying – or perhaps merely engendering – of a sense of a national community. Within this context, political restructuring is an indication that some spirit of political bargaining, however circumscribing does not exist notwithstanding whether or not the decision to restructure the polity by the ruling class or clique was voluntary or otherwise (B6)

Restructuring implementation and execution will eliminate in high measure the democratic fascism and the policy of cabalism that has bedecked Nigeria in the past ten decades or more. With collective bargaining amongst the religious that make up Nigeria, security apparatus will face reshuffle as well as other key agencies in Nigeria.

The result will be total elimination of insecurity and the rootization of safety and trust in governance and administration in the country.

Institution Workable Peace and Conflict Platform For National Peace Initiative.

It is imperative that without peace no system works. Many nerves have been strained both nationally and state wise. When men are at each others, throat campaigning for one position or the other, it is evident that such system is heading for the rock. Nigeria has fought a civil war from 1967 – 1970 and the impact of the war is yet to subside. It is true that the regime-change had declared “no victor, no vanquished”, but the underlining factor is that the nation still sees the South-East part of Nigeria as a conquered territory and so servitude affect that region. There was need for national reconciliation process in Nigeria that will assuage the hunger for peace which citizens from the minority and conquered regions have been clamoring for. Preventive actions will also be taken to combat future occurrences of bad blood and hatred amongst citizens of Africa and more especially in Nigeria. The effect of this is confidence building, national reconciliation and trust in governance. Gaya-Best (2006) offers that preventive action comprises many activities. According to him:

Preventive action therefore comprises a host of other activities ranging from confidence – building, national reconciliation and fact finding missions to preventive diplomacy, including mediation, negotiation and facilitation. It also includes peace initiatives, like the deployment of observers, verification or monitoring missions, the deeping of democratic values and institutions, the strengthening of accountability and monitoring institutions, the improvement of electoral processes and financial assistance (P. 199).

Without sustainable peace and trust in the government and governance in Africa, it is impossible to obtain a humane and administration.

Citizens must have reasons to revere their political and religious leaders and thus sustainable development will be ensured in Africa nay Nigeria.

Instituting the exemplary lives of religious stages

There is no gainsaying the fact that the founders of religious bodies have their lives and teachings buried in love and peace on the earth. Both Jesus Christ (the founder of Christianity) and prophet Muhammad (the founder of Islam) lived and practiced peace and taught same. Most of their disciple lived like them and moved on teaching baptizing and encouraging their followers to do the same. Even Moses the founder of Judaism taught the ways of Yahweh (though Yahweh was a man of war) also instructed Moses to teach peace amongst the Jews. But in his teaching to Christian listeners insisted on obeying the law and being subject to administrators both of his time and now as antecedent to peace. Bowen (1975) in discussing the word “Be Subject to” says that:

This word does not simply mean “obey”, though it may include the idea of obedience. Paul here used neither of the two Greek words which normally conveyed the idea of obey. The word he used means “submit to”, and it conveyed the idea take up your proper rank beneath...(P.176).

When there is peace in the polity, ineptitude and kleptocracy will be a thing of the past in Africa. Those in authority will copy the foot prints of these religious leaders by making peace through, negotiation and round-table conference. Those in authority will copy hook-line and sinker the uncorrupt and non-violence stance of founders of the religions. The effect of corruption has continually being evidence in any polity. Ampitan and Ige (2018) underscores the endemic// nature of corruption in these words:

Corruption in high places has no doubt brought the country /to her knees. Those who have had the opportunity of occupying the positions of authority somewhat abuse the position in collaboration with their cohorts. They connive with their cronies to defraud the country (P.8).

Both Jesus Christ and Mohammed lived lives of peace, sacrifices asceticism and love as they taught about God who will one day judge the world. If the African leaders will understand that death seals the destiny of man and that includes position, wealth and name, the footprints of religious founders will be their focal point.

Conclusion

Having at length discussed the issue of religion and violence in Africa, it has become clear that religion has served as a building block for peace. The issue in question is that African leaders have turned backwards and utilized it negatively. Integrating ethnicism, cabalism and myopism, the instrument of violence has served as a boost to achieve personal political ambition.

Religion was supposed to usher-in peace and unity, egalitarianism and understanding amongst people of divine and the same faith. Rather than doing that, religion rather serve as an umbrella for misunderstanding clannish sentiments and parochial desires. Religious leaders instead of copying the worthy lives of founders of religious became puppets and toys in the hands of political leaders to unleash untold terrors on the populace. Faith in Christ or Muhammed instead of unveiling the realities of heaven and vileness of the earthly riches rather becomes its boost. Politicians offer them juicy positions and undue political recognitions and convert them almost to card carrying members of choice political parties. The result is that prophecies meant to correct political anomalies turned to praise instruments for corrupt politicians. Teachings for universal love have become love for “members of my faith”. This has led to clannish feelings amongst faiths and insatiable lust for bloodletting.

The work concludes by saying that religion must be a vehicle of love in Africa and must not be counter-used for spreading of violence and misunderstanding. African leaders both religious and political must learn to speak the truth at all times and remove endocentric ideas in

pursuit of personal goals. This will set Africa on the pedestal of progress and sustained industrialization.

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CHAPTER NINE

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN PEACE BUILDING AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS IN NIGERIA

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Executive Summary

Today, Africa is faced with some of the most obstinate conflicts, most of them constructed from differences in religious and ethnic identities. Religious and ethnic nationalism has led to conflicts about control of state power, unequal allocation of resources, citizenship issues, state collapse, economic decline and ethno-religious clashes. Nigeria has been pushed hither and thither by recurrent crises of regional or state illegitimacy, often impairing efforts at economic transformation, democratization, national cohesion and stability (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005:4). With this continental background in mind, this research paper seeks to examine the relationship between religion, ethnicity and conflict in Nigeria, focusing mainly on issues in the North of the country. The question is: To what extent are conflicts emerging from ethnic or religious sources? This paper examined the notion of identity and how it explains the crisis of development and complexities in modern Nigeria.

Keywords: Religion, Peace-Building, Nigeria, Ethnic Groups

Introduction

Nigeria is synonymous with deep divisions which cause major political issues to be vigorously and violently contested along the lines of intricate ethnic, religious and regional divisions. Issues that raise the most dust are those regarded essential for the existence and the validity of the state. Opposing and contending assemblages have a tendency to assume an exclusionary winner-take-all approach. These issues include the control of state power, allocation of resources and citizenship. As a result, states with such divisions are disposed to be delicate and unstable because by definition, they have very little in common with regard to convergence and harmony which are necessary to reduce the centrifugal forces that rip them apart (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005:4).

Breakdown, breakaway, civil strife, civil war, minority nervousness, and violent clashes, all of which would typically be regarded unusual in normal states are common forces or actual occurrences in divided states (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005:4). Due to complicated network of politically silent identities, coupled with a history of protracted and seemingly stubborn wars and instability, Nigeria is high on the list as one of the most unstable states in Africa. Since its independence, Nigeria has been driven hither and thither by recurrent crises of regional or state illegitimacy, often impairing efforts at democratization, stability, economic transformation and national cohesion.

A peak of the crisis appears to have occurred during the civil war of the 1960's, which began shortly after independence (Okpanachi, 2010). Since 1999 when Nigeria transited into civilian rule, the country has witnessed a rapid increase in the number of conflicts. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between religion, ethnicity and conflicts in the country. It looks at the notion of Identity in an attempt to explain the crisis of development and the complexities of modern Nigeria.

A high level of corruption and the looting of state resources is another serious and 'pandemic' problem that makes all forms of conflict and

trouble worse in Nigeria (Dike, 2005). The country is ‘richly endowed with natural resources and high quality human capital’ (Ogbeidi, 2012:1), but corruption is one of the main reasons that affect the development of the country in a negative way. The appropriation of state resources by certain hands makes poverty and bitter anger inevitable aspects of daily socio-economic and political routine. In this sense, though corruption is not peculiar to Nigeria, many sources call it the ‘bane of the country’ (Dike 2005; Ogbeidi, 2012:21). Corruption is considered to be one of the main causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria (Nwankwo, 2015). Poverty and injustice caused by corruption weaken any sense of mutual tolerance, social solidarity or coexistence, while reawakening social hatred, radicalism and violence. For this reason, corruption is seen as one of the most important issues that have to be resolved in order to cope with ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria.

The Identity Factor

From a socio-political perspective, ‘identity’ bears a personal and a social meaning. Processes related to identity are ‘located at the core of the individual and yet in the core of his community’s culture’ (Erikson, 1968:57; Okpanachi, 2010). This, identity can be said to be an individual’s ‘sense of belonging to a group if it influences his political behavior’ (Erikson, 1968:57; Mary Anderson, 2010; Okpanachi, 2010).

Identity is built into an individual’s physiological ‘givens’ and in social roles (Erikson, 1968:57; Okpanachi, 2010). Identity is characterized by features such as an ‘emotive tie to a group’, ‘love and belief for a group’, ‘pledge to a cause’, and ‘commitments and duties to a group’ with which a person identifies (Smyth and Robinson, 2001:7-11; Okpanachi, 2010).

General studies in identity underscore the fact that identity implies similarity and contrast at the same time (Jenkins, 2004; Okpanachi, 2010). ‘For an individual, or for a group, there may be a plurality of identities. Yet, such a plurality is a source of stress and contradiction in both self-representation and social action. This is because identity must be distinguished from role-sets’ (Okpanachi, 2010). Oftentimes,

self-definition of identity overlaps with role expectations, but identities are more stable springs of meaning than those social roles. This is because identities establish the meaning, while social roles shape the functions (Okpanachi, 2010; Castells, 2010:7). However, identity is not uniform or stable among groups or individuals. Its strength and importance is dynamic and differs from group to group. While identities are somewhat stable, identity consciousness keeps on changing to reflect the fluctuating role of the identities and the swelling magnitudes (Jega 2000:11; Okpanachi 2010). This elasticity of identity avoids coming up with an all new identity for the particular role and circumstance.

Recent studies on religious identity have also underscored the positive function of religion in promotion of peace. On the other hand, however, mobilization of identity has been used to incite political groups to struggle; and religious groups to legitimize wars and various modes of brutal and violent acts (Alger 2002:101; Okpanachi 2010).

Politics of Ethnic Identity in Nigeria

Ethnicity is a social phenomenon that is manifested in interactions among individuals of different ethnic groups within a political system where language and culture are the most prominent attributes. The formation of dialects within languages was one of the ways in which ethnicity became fixed in Nigeria. Although there are over 400 languages in Nigeria, only three are considered ‘major’, while the rest are considered minor languages. However, the distribution of these languages is directly proportional to both political and socio-economic power, and therefore the language group to which one belongs defines his/her status in the society. Missionaries and local politicians created standard languages and hoped that they would homogenize language and ethnicity, and create more harmonious ethnic identities.

Ethnicity is natural in almost all societies made up of more than one ethnic group. This observation tends to offer the suggestion that the interaction between different ethnic groups within a single political set-up generates ethnic identity. An interaction of this kind can create ‘a

common consciousness of being one in relation to other relevant ethnic groups' (Eriksen, 1996:30). That in turn, results in the emergence of in-group and out-group confines which come to be guarded jealously over time. Based on this approach, ethnicity thus becomes a process through which ethnic identities are politicized (Eriksen, 1996:30).

Historically, identities have played a significant role in the Nigerian political process during the colonial period and in the post-colonial era. During the colonial period, the administrators allowed the emergence and aggravation of an 'us' versus 'them' syndrome, where Muslims were pitted against Christians, Northerners against the Southerners, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo against each other, and so on (Adefemi 2003:14; Okpanachi 2010). In this era religious and ethnic differences became prominent factors in instituting and executing socio-economic strategies and applications. Therefore, the differentiating outcomes of colonialism became the forerunner of the socio-economic disequilibrium among the different regions, and then this became an important factor in the stimulation of identity awareness so as to efficiently 'divide and rule' (Fearon and Laitin 2003:82; Okpanachi 2010). But, as a counter argument it must be said that internal factors are more determinant than the external ones in creating the cleavages in Nigeria. This is also the case in many other countries.

Ethnicity is seen as the most basic and politically salient identity of Nigerians. This argument is based on the premise that in competitive and non-competitive contexts, Nigerians tend to define themselves in terms of ethnic affinities as opposed to other identities (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:8). A survey conducted in Nigeria by Lewis and Bratton found that almost half of Nigerians (48.2%) labeled themselves with an ethnic identity compared to 28.4% who labeled themselves with respect to class and 21% who identified with a religious group (Lewis and Bratton 2000:27; Osaghae and Suberu 2005:9). This means that over 66% of Nigerians view themselves as members of an elemental ethnic or religious group. What is even more interesting is the fact that religious and ethnic identities are more salient than class identities (Lewis and Bratton 2000:26; Osaghae and Suberu 2005:9). However, this is not at all that surprising, especially if one considers that ethno-

religious formations are the most persistent behavioral units in Nigeria (Nsongola-Ntalaja 2004:404; Osaghae and Suberu 2005:9).

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the fact that ethnicity is the most salient, and the large number of studies conducted on this issue, the total number of ethnic groupings in Nigeria remains unknown (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:9). Some sources put it at 374 (Otite 1990:34; Okpanachi 2010), while some other sources count more than 250 different ethnic identities (Central Intelligence Agency 2016). However, the population percentages of the majority of these groups are small when compared with the seven largest ethnic groups constituting about 88% of the country's population. These are Hausa and Fulani (29%), Yoruba (21%), Igbo (18%), Ijaw (10%), Kanuri (4%), Ibibio (3.5%), and Tiv (2.5%) (Central Intelligence Agency: 2016). This population disproportion, when combined with the disparities in the political influence of individual ethnic groups roughly classifies the Nigerian population into two major groupings: the majority and minority ethnic groups. While the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo form the majority, the rest of the ethnic groups are fitted into the minority classification which in itself possesses different degrees of status relative to their size and political influence (Rakov 1990; Paden 2008:4; Okpanachi 2010).

The Hausa-Fulani and other smaller ethnic groups that inhabit the north of the country are Muslims while the Igbo and the other smaller groups residing in the South are mainly Christians. Groups lying in the middle comprise of a mixture of Christians and Muslims while the Yoruba found in the Southwest are almost half Muslim and half Christian. This Muslim North and Christian South cleavage enhances ethnic fractionalizations in Nigeria, especially in Northern Nigeria where Islamic identity plays a dominant role (Paden 2007:8; Okpanachi 2010). It is clear that nearly the entire Northern half of the country consists of states with Sharia law.

Of course, exceptions should not be overlooked for both parts of the country. There is a considerable population of Muslims in the South, especially in the Southwest, and a sizeable number amongst the Benin

in Edo State. Even in the Southeast, amongst the Igbo, there has been a rising number of Muslims, causing the governors of some Igbo-speaking states to introduce state programmes for Muslims. The same goes for Christians in the North, where the considerable number of Christians cannot be disregarded in any analysis of religious groupings in Nigeria.

Lewis (2007:6) attributes the historical prominence of Islam during the formation of Northern states in the early 19th century to the continued prominence of Emirs and religious authorities in framing identities in Northern Nigeria. Lewis argues that a number of principles of ethnicity are used by political leaders and others to frame their arguments as to how things should be accomplished. First, ethnic identity is the most important and consistent basis of social identity in the country. Second, ethnicity is seen as a way for collective action. Finally, ethnicity is presumed to be a destabilizing factor with far-reaching impacts on democracy. These principles breed a number of outcomes. Because political competition is played along lines of ethnicity, the resultant 'democratic' but authoritarian government ostensibly has an ethnic character (Lewis 2007:2).

Lewis states that civilian governments supposedly promote the creation of an ethnic politicization and political schism. On the other hand, non-democratic regimes like military rules are usually repercussions from the side of the political elite. In most cases, therefore, mechanisms of political governance are formed on the basis of ethnicity via custom-made patronage systems (Lewis 2007:2). For instance, in Nigeria the ethnic factor is seen when political parties are formed and during elections. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) was formed in the first Republic and it was a Hausa-Fulani party. Similarly, the Igbo belonged to the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) while the Yoruba prided themselves as members of the Action Group (AG) (Cohen 1968). These parties later transformed into The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian People Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) during the second republic (Edoh, 2001:87).

The third Republic had the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC), which were disbanded by annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections by General Ibrahim Babangida, due to suspected ethnic reasoning when it became clear that the Northern political hegemony risked losing out. Thus, here it is possible to detect that stimulation of ethnic awareness easily turns into a conflict in order to get more from scarce societal resources. And this situation provokes political tensions and cleavages among the ethnic groups. Nigeria is not the only country in the world where such things are experienced.

In recent times, socio-economic and political changes have taken place and transformed the delineations of identities and politics in Nigeria. To begin with, patterns of group mobilizations have shifted, in the traditional models of Nigerian ethnic politics, emphasis was on competition among the country's three largest groups – the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo. The minority groups comprising over 250 smaller ethnic groups have often been regarded as inconsequential in political contests. However, since 1999, Nigeria's political arena has been changing following political action by groups in the Niger Delta and the 'Middle-Belt' communities who have increasingly become vocal in national politics and economy (Soludo 2007). Ethnic solidarity has also faced opposition from religious mobilizations by the Muslims and the Christians especially in the Muslim North.

Since the restoration of democratic rule, ethnic identity and mobilization in the Nigerian political landscape has often resulted in political instability. Between 1999 and 2013, more than 11,000 deaths have occurred as a result of more than five hundred incidents of communal violence. Ethnic violence has been witnessed in almost all regions in the country but with particular frequency in the Niger Delta, the Muslim North and Northwest and along the middle-belt (Uzodike and Whetho, 2011:220). The level of insecurity witnessed during the post-military period is considerably higher than that experienced during the three decades of military rule that ended in 1999. It is often assumed that there exist stable identities in Nigeria and consistent group motives in the approach to ethnic politics (Rotberg 2002:88).

Religious Identity

Nigeria is the most crowded African country with a population of about 182 million by 2015 (World Population Prospects 2015:21). A majority of the scientific academic sources accept that half of the population is Christian and the other half Muslim. However, there is uncertainty about the exact percentages hence various sources give different figures. In a report published by Pew Research Center in 2010 the numbers from different sources are compared in the report's Appendix B. If we mention them chronologically for instance, the 1963 Census certified 36% Christian, 48% Muslim and 16% other. However, the Demographic and Health Survey gave 53% Christian, 45% Muslim and 2% other in 2008. Similarly, Afro barometer found 56% Christian, 43% Muslim and 1% other, also in 2008. And finally, Pew Forum declared 46% for Christians, 52% for Muslims and 1% for others in 2009 (Pew Research Center 2010).

Whatever the exact percentages are, it is clear that Nigeria is a country with very large Christian and Muslim populations. This situation makes this country a potential fault line between the two different identities and even civilizations. In this sense, Nigeria, with the largest Christian plus Muslim population in the world, can be defined as a 'cleft country' and then a 'test case' of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis (Paden 2007; Olojo 2014:7).

Although the general presumption is that ethnic identity is a more prominent and stable source of identity in Nigeria, some researchers have demonstrated that religion was more significant than ethnicity as a source of identity and conflict in Nigeria (Ruby and Shah 2007; Pew Research Center 2010; Green 2011). In fact, in the Hausa-Fulani North, religious identity is more pronounced than ethnic identity and only serves to stimulate ethnicity (Osagbae and Suberu 2005:10). Therefore, of the two major ethnic groupings in the country, the Yoruba are more likely to identify themselves with their ethnic group than are the Northern Hausa-Fulani (Lewis and Bratton 2000:20; Osagbae and Suberu 2005:11).

Nigeria has three major religious identities: Christian, Islam and traditional religions (Omorogbe and Omohan 2005:557). Traditional religions are the most politically inactive of the three groups, 'numbering several hundreds of ethnic groups and subgroups, villages, clans and kin groups; and, involving the worship of different gods and goddesses' (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:11). On the other hand, Christian and Muslim identities have continued to be the backbone of religious disparity and conflict (Lewis and Bratt on 2000:5; Osaghae and Suberu 2005:1 1). This differentiation underlies the North-South cleavage.

It is worth noting that, within the wide Christian and Muslim categories, there lie many sub-cleavages and intra-group conflicts that have either been active politically in the past or have a potential of being salient in the future. Among the Christians, sub-cleavages include the Protestants (Anglican 10%, Baptist 8%, Methodist 5%, and Lutheran 5%), the Catholics 15%, the Evangelical Church of West Africa 2%, Jehovah's Witnesses 5% and a myriad of other local (Aladura, Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial Church of Christ 20%) and Pentecostal churches 30% (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:11%)

The Pentecostal churches form the fundamental division of Christianity in Nigeria which has experienced rapid growth in numbers of followers in the last few years with the majority of adherents, especially the youths, joining the church from the older and more traditional denominations. The church has played an important role in civil society in anti-military struggles and democratization. This has been made possible through umbrella bodies such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PEN), and the Catholic Bishops Conference (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:11). However, politicization of Christianity has been reliant on moves by the Muslims and the interventions of the government. Still, Protestant-Catholic cleavages have continued to play an important role in elections among the Igbo communities living in the Southeast of Nigeria (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005:11).

Muslims also belong to a number of sub-cleavages that include Ahmadiyya 12%, Sanusiyya 5%, Tijanniyya 3%, and Quadriyya 8% which have in turn been in conflicts. As among the Christians, the Muslims also have umbrella bodies which aim at propagating different understandings of Islam. Notable among these organizations is the Jamaatu Nasril Islam (JNI) which was established by Sardauna of Sokoto in 1961. Following events in Iran during the Islamic revolution of 1979, radical fundamentalist activities increased among Muslim youths. These conditions resulted in the formation of fundamentalist Muslim factions such as the Maitatsine, the Isala movement, the Shiites, the Talibans and most recently the Boko Haram (Fayemi: 2011) which demanded the establishment of a purist Islam based on Sharia law, the abolition of unorthodox innovations, and the creation of an Islamic theocracy (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:11). These relatively new sentiments that depend on a unique and radical interpretation of Islam provoke conflicts with the traditional and/or more moderate understandings.

Ethno-Religious Conflicts

The fact that an average Nigerian is very religious was observed by some sources (Oluduro 2010:209; Athyo 2013:29). Religion plays a critical role in Nigerian society and has expressed itself as a potent force in the geopolitical development of the country. This force which has been used to unite Nigerians is the same force that has led to numerous conflicts in the country. Nigeria has been engulfed in numerous religious crises or conflicts between 1980 and 1994 (Warner 2012:38).

Due to their tendency to spread into other areas after an early stay in one area, ethno-religious conflicts have gained notoriety as the most violent crises in Nigeria. Most of these conflicts occur in the Middle-Belt and along the culturally borderline states of the predominantly Muslim North, and also take place between Hausa-Fulani groups and non-Muslim ethnic groups in the South (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:19). In conflicts of this nature occurring along the convergence of ethnic and religious lines, it is often very difficult to tell the differences between religious and ethnic crises because the dividing line between them is

slimmer than thin. Examples of such ethno-religious conflicts are the Kafanchan-Kaduna crisis that occurred in the 1980's and 1990's, the Kaduna Sharia riots of 2000 and 2012 (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:19). Several hundred lives were lost during the Kaduna crisis of 2000 and the Jos insurrection of 2001. The crises caused violent ripple effects that spread beyond Kaduna and Jos (E nukora 2005:633).

Other recent ethno-religious conflicts include the July 1999 conflict among the Oro cultists in Sagamu in Ogun state who claimed that the Hausa women had come outside when the cultists were outside with their gnomes. The result were arguments that finally turned into a full-scale crisis. Many Yoruba and Hausa people were killed before a dusk to dawn curfew was imposed on the Sagamu town. Even as the infamy was being put under check in Sagamu, reprisal attacks continued in Kano - a Hausa city - leading to deaths and destruction of property worth billions of Naira (Kura, 2010:33-34).

Another ethno-religious conflict that had far reaching impacts on the people of Nigeria was the October 2000 Lagos-Kano (Idi-Araba/Oko-Oba) conflict which was caused by a misperception between the Hausa inhabitants and the Yoruba living in Lagos over the use of a convenience by a man from Hausa. The mayhem resulted in the death of many Yoruba. As a consequence, the O'dua People Congress (a Yoruba militia) was formed and worsened the situation as the violence later spread southwards to Kano (E nukora 2005:633; Kura 2010:34).

Worse still, in September 2001, ethnic friction between the Tivs and the bunkums in the Plateau state reached fever pitch following what came to be referred to as 'mistaken identity'. 'What this means is that some Tiv took some nineteen soldiers to be bunkums in fake army uniform. The Tiv youths captured them and slaughtered them one by one' (Kura 2010:34-35). And then the Nigerian army embarked on devastating reprisal attacks in Zaki-Biam. According to some controversial members at least a hundred people died in the army attacks (Human Rights Watch 2001). Violence spread to Jos plateau especially after a Christian was appointed as a Local Council Chairman. By the time the menace was brought to a standstill, over 160 lives had been lost (Kura 2010:35).

A Case of the North: Boko Haram

Between 1999 and 2013, numerous conflicts have been witnessed in Nigeria. The most important among them is the Boko Haram crisis which is on-going. This group has started a bloody campaign to impose a sui-generis Islamic regime based on Sharia in the Muslim North of the country. Actually, it is hard to argue that Boko Haram is a religious or ethnic conflict. In the former case, it targets more Muslims than Christians. In the latter, it is mostly an ethnic Northern conflict. For this reason, though Boko Haram uses a religious discourse, it may be more appropriate to call it simply a terrorist organization. With regard to the numerous conflicts and the Boko Haram menace in particular, the country's stability is under constant threat Boko Haram has introduced into Nigeria's political and social life a level of insurgency never witnessed before. The insurgency became violent in 2008 even before the country could heal from previous ethno-religious conflicts (Shehu 2011:3).

Boko Haram was founded in 2002 by Muhammad Yusuf. It is formally identified by its members as 'Jama'at *ahlisSunnah lid Da 'waswal Jihad*', which means 'people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and jihad'. The name of the group 'Boko Haram' is loosely translated from the Hausa language to mean 'western education is sinful'. This meaning is extended to mean any western culture is prohibited. It is for this reason that followers of this outfit advocate for a government based on Sharia as opposed to a democratic one.

It is possible to count Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamic fundamentalism as the basic items of the Boko Haram's ideology. The group which was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri did not become militant until 2009 when its leader was captured and killed by the Nigerian army. Since then, the group has engaged in gun battles, arson, bombing and stabbing, in promoting their ideology (Warner 2012:40). Moreover, Boko Haram has captured a territory in and around Borno state in the Northeast part of Nigeria in 2014. However, the territorial control of the group has been removed by the Nigerian army in 2015.

Boko Haram can be examined in various ways. Firstly, it refers to a long history characteristic of Northern Nigeria and the continued radical Islamic movements. Secondly, the group has its foundations in the socio-economic marginalization of the country's northern population. Thirdly, Boko Haram is understood as seeking revenge especially in response to unacceptable behavior of the law enforcers. The fourth understanding is based on the perception that Boko Haram is utilized by the elites from the North to express their grievances over lack of interest demonstrated by the central government. Finally, the group can be understood as developing as an offshoot of the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and probably Al-Shabaab (Warner 2012:39).

It is important to note that apart from the group targeting national events, markets and churches, they are sometimes engaged in sporadic bombings in major towns in Northern Nigeria including Kaduna, Zaria, Jos, Kano, Maiduguri, and in Damaturu. During such instances, the fighters kill indiscriminately – Muslims and Christians alike. Despite everything, the group leaders have often stated that they are still fighting for justice and the Islamization of Nigeria (Roach 2012:4). The group has declared its allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), as has been done by a series of terrorist groups from various parts of the world. In this context, Boko Haram can be seen as yet another reflection of the religious looking international tenor campaigns now sweeping the globe scene.

Inter-Religious Conflicts

Inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria form part of the dynamics of identity politics. Political elites in Nigeria have always sought to reap advantages from the multidimensional identities, more so during electioneering periods, and this has resulted in conflicts and instability. This politicization of religious identities during contests for political office often lacks any sustaining unifying ideology. Somehow, politics in Nigeria are fashioned on the appeasement of religious motives. As a consequence, religion attains the level of deification that is difficult to challenge or overpower. In the quest to assume power and control state resources, the elites constantly modify patterns of political domination.

In this perpetually changing pattern of domination, fears and anxieties are bred that motivate an upsurge in struggle and intolerance (Ibrahim and Kazah-Toure 2003:18; Okpanachi 2010).

Since the return of civilian rule in 1999 following a protracted period of military rule, Nigeria has continued to experience recurring ethno-religious conflicts. Although some of these struggles are low-intensity contestations and rancorous wars of words, other has degenerated into bloody sectarian fights. Thousands of Nigerians have been left dead, wounded and homeless over the years due to constant religious strife pitting people of different religions against each other (Okpanachi 2010).

The main forms of inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria are between the Muslims and the Christians, The conflicts are sometimes so intense that they have turned into wars in different parts of the country, and they range from the Kano revolt (1980), Bulunktu Bizarre (1982), Kastina crises (1999), Zamfara conflict, Kaduna revolt, Bauchi crises and Sokoto (1999). More recent examples are the Jos crises and the current conflict by Boko Haram against Christians and moderate Muslims. These are only a few examples of inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria, since not a year passes without three to four incidences of inter-religious conflicts.

Inter-religious conflicts are brought about by a number of factors. One of these causes is the clashing interests of those in authority. The ruling class has applied a number of processes to express their dissatisfaction with exclusion from important decision- making processes of the country. The methods employed include religious violence and military coups d'état. A majority of the religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria are reported to be due to the large number of rich Southerners who reside there. Many Northern elites are hurt by the business inventiveness of the Southerners and employ religious calls to incite people to destroy property belonging to non-natives. The results are wars fought under the pretence of being religious (Falola 1998).

Major causes of Ethno-Religious conflicts in Nigeria

Unlike other forms of social conflicts, ethno-religious conflict entails different ethnic groups that belong to different religions. It is essential to advert that both religious and ethnic causal agents have always acted together in the majority of social conflicts in Nigeria. At different levels and times in the past, the Nigerian people have complained of religious and ethnic discrimination. Most ask for religious and ethnic rights within their state. Another cause of the conflicts has been the state's use of religion and ethnicity in political discourse or action. Therefore, it is clear that accusations and allegations of neglect oppression and domination are the major causes that fuel ethno-religious conflicts (Ikelegbe 2001:14; Kura 2010:35-36; Salawu 2010:348).

Nigeria, like many other countries in the world, lacks a consensus on how necessary changes and reforms are affected. This is caused by the fact that different religious and ethnic groups have varying benefits in which case some groups will have their interests met while others will not. This means that tension occur when individuals who feel that they are deprived attempt to increase their stake of power or wealth or to alter the central beliefs, values, norms and philosophies. In Nigeria therefore, there appears to exist a contentious interaction of politics, ethnicity and religions, which has resulted in an increased sense of belonging and militancy. It is important to note that the general outcome of this is the intensification of numerous ethno-religious struggles in Nigeria. And this intensification can be seen as the main source of ongoing discrimination, subordination and domination in this country (Kura 2010:36).

From one perspective, the failure' of the Nigerian political elite to enact good governments, promote national integration and foster good economic progress via thoughtful and pronounced policies has resulted in massive unemployment. This has in turn led to the rise of communal, ethnic and religious conflicts that are characteristic of the Nigerian politics. Since poverty and unemployment have acted as the mainstay for various ethno-religious conflicts in the country, an accumulation of pauperized people can end up acting as paid militants. This could be the

reason why any conflict in Nigeria is usually characterized by a large number of fighters (Kura 2010:36; Mu'asu 2011:19-20).

There is a correlation between ethno-religious conflicts and low standards of democracy due to protracted military interferences in politics. This appears to legalize the application of coercion and violence as tools for social change and for the achievement of anticipated desires and objectives (Kura 2010:37). Based on this understanding, it is common in Nigeria to observe that as a consequence or an aftereffect of a military period, the application of both force and intimidation as a means of settling a misunderstanding has become very frequent. When this is coupled with easy acquisition of illegal fire arms, violence erupts more quickly and there is more difficulty in negotiating peaceful settlements.

The absence of vehicles of social control that were characteristic of traditional African societies, such as kinship, religious and political systems concerned with the wellbeing of the community, has led to the escalation of ethno-religious conflicts. The failure of these institutions is partly to blame for the ethnic and communal conflicts witnessed in Nigeria today. Broken families and the inability to make ends meet in many homes have led to an increase in the level of immorality while at the same time providing a reservoir of youths who readily take up arms to execute ethno-religious conflicts at a fee.

Conclusion

This study in one sense has tried to look at the emergence of identities and their impact on the conflicts in the most crowded African country, Nigeria. From social and political perspectives, 'identity' has a personal and social meaning. Identity can be defined as distinct qualities, characteristics and beliefs of an individual or a group of people. And it is an individual's sense of belonging to a group which often has mi impact on his/her political behavior (Erikson 1968:57; Mary Anderson 2010). Identity has been a significant aspect of the Nigerian political process, during the colonial period and in the post-colonial era. Ethnicity is a social phenomenon that is related to interactions among

individuals of different ethnic groups within a political system where language and culture are the most prominent attributes. Both ethnicity and religiosity have emerged as the most basic and politically salient identities of the Nigerians.

In Nigeria, structures of political control are formed on the basis of ethnicity and religiosity via a custom-made patronage system. These identities have been a constant source of conflict and cleavage in the country. Since the restoration of democratic rule, ethnic identity and mobilization in the Nigerian political landscape has often resulted in political instability and constant conflicts. A number of uprisings and concomitant mayhem have been reported since 1999 and have resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and the destruction of property. In recent times, for instance, the militarization of Boko Haram has undermined Nigeria's stability and placed the country under constant threat.

Despite some exceptions, such as the Yoruba being made up of both Christian and Muslim segments, ethnic identities generally overlap with religious identities in Nigeria. For that reason, it is difficult to distinguish ethnic conflicts from religious ones in this county. However, it can be said that ethnic differences in Nigeria would not have been such a prominent cause of conflict if they had not overlapped with the religious identities, or vice versa. In other word, in many instances, religion provides a mobilization flame for conflict and this effect is amplified when religious and ethnic cleavages run parallel. And there is no doubt that inter-religious conflict in Nigeria form part of the dynamics of identity politics.

As stated above, while some sources (Lewis and Baton 2000) reveal the importance of ethnicity as a causal factor of cleavages, others (Ruby and Shah 2007; Pew Research Center 2010; Green 2011) underline religious identities as a more determinant element in the perception of difference. The diversity in the scientific findings and literature was probably caused by researchers focusing on different groups in Nigeria. Basically this means that for some groups ethnicity is more binding, while in others religion plays a dominant role in group identification

and a sense of belonging. Since this paper has been mostly concentrated on conflicts in the North, the religious factor might be highlighted – due to the decisive religious cleavages in this region.

Of course, there is much ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria, not only in the North and in the Delta, but also in the Middle Belt. However, the importance of the conflict in the North comes from its global origin. It is apparent that this conflict is a manifestation in Nigeria of religiously oriented global-scale violence. There are similarities between Boko Haram and other radical Islamist groups like Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Al-Nusra and the IS in terms of discourse and praxis. This makes the conflict in the North more interesting for the rest of the world and this is the main reason for the emphasis on the subject in this paper.

It is generally accepted that the inefficacy of politicians in Nigeria at the points of good governance, national consolidation and economic development has caused political cleavages, social disintegration and massive unemployment (Kura 2010:36; Mu'asu 2011:19-20; Ogbeyidi 2012:21). This, together with the absence of social control mechanisms and a high level of corruption, has stimulated ethno-religious

Finally, the nation-state model is in danger in Nigeria, as in many other so-called nation-states. Of course, globalization feeds this process, but the main reason is related to inherent features of the model. The majority of modern states consist of different groups and usually one of them tries to rule the system while provoking the objections of others. Consequently, the ethnic, religious and maybe ideological groups compete for dominance and this weakens the basis of any achieved unity. This is then seen as the inevitable character of heterogeneous nation-states (Gordon Anderson 2010:29)

This paper having examined all the factors which possibly may militate against peace, hereby recommends that:

1. There is the need for various religious and ethnic groups to have a form of dialogue whereby they can interface through discussion for a meeting ground.

2. The Christians represented by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and the Muslims represented by the Islamic Supreme Council (ISC) should regularly meet and dialogue for peace among the various religious
3. Various political parties as well as regional interests should be tackled to disabuse followers from self-centeredness (which often create conflict) in order to make way for peace among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER NINE

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AS INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL BARGAINING IN POST-COLONIAL NIGERIA

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Executive Summary

The study aims at establishing the relationship between religious identity and political bargaining in post-colonial Nigeria. The study adopts qualitative historical method which involve use of published and unpublished sources, official documents, internet sources, workshop documents, newspapers and magazines, research works etc. The study argues that the history of post-colonial Nigeria is replete with use of religious identity as a strong identity political tool to negotiate political power, political patronage, political appointments, as well as employment in both civil and public service institutions. The study further contends that this nexus between religious and political identity has profound implications in struggle for power, good governance, effective civil and public service delivery, transparency and accountability, as well as democracy dividends in Nigeria's fourth republic democratic experiment.

Key Words: Religious Identity, Political Identity, Post-colonial State, Political, Good Governance, Democracy.

Introduction

Nigeria's slide to the use of religious identity as a parameter for gaining access into the political space in terms of acquisition of political power, political appointments and obtaining employment into the civil and public service could well be traced to the era of colonial rule. The lopsided policy of divide and rule and religious centred segregation and spatial organization enacted during the colonial era laid a strong foundation for the postcolonial process of making religious identity as a yardstick for attaining positions of prominence in the political landscape of the country and in recruitment in the civil and public service in the Nigerian State. This paper is a testimony that apart from ethnic identity, religious identity is also a formidable aspect of identity politics in Nigeria which has contributed in no small way in determining who gets what political patronage and employment in the country. In view of the above religious consideration for employment into Nigerian public office space, good governance and effective service delivery are sometimes sacrificed on the altar of religious identity politics as recruitments and promotions, discipline and performance index are oftentimes based on religious identity. This paper therefore is an attempt to examine the extent to which religious identity is used as an instrument of political identity in Nigeria. In view of above, the paper revolves around the following themes: colonial buildup to religious identity politics; postcolonial foundations of religious identity politics; religious identity as yardstick for negotiating political power and patronage; religious identity consideration for employment in civil and public service; implication for good governance and efficient service delivery.

Colonial Buildup to Religious Identity Politics

The British colonial administration in Nigeria made some administrative overtures which set the stage for the subsequent use of religious identity for political negotiation. The policy that created

competition for the nation's resources by the two main religions – Islam and Christianity was the inability of the colonial government to foster even socio-economic development between the Muslim dominated Northern Region and Christian dominated Southern Region after the 1914 amalgamation. The colonial administration instead sustained the existing dichotomy due to obvious religious reasons thereby creating a serious lacuna that set the stage for politicization of religious identity. In the first instance, after the amalgamation of 1914, the British did not allow the development-oriented Christian Missionaries who had been creating social and economic institutions of development in the greater part of the Southern Region to penetrate the North, rather the best that was bestowed on the North was to adopt and adapt the Sokoto administrative system to the needs of British colonial rule by inventing 'indirect rule. By so doing, the British strengthened the adherence to Islamic system of administration. The reason for British adoption of Islamic administrative system could be traced to the era of subjugation of the Sokoto Caliphate. Upon the defeat of the Caliphate and subsequent incorporation into the British protectorate of Northern Nigeria, the conditions of subjugation included provisions that the British would not interfere with their religion, in specific terms in the intimate association between Islam and indigenous rule. In the end, by the time the amalgamation of the entire protectorates had taken place in 1914, Islam had been fully entrenched as a legal system of administration in Northern Nigeria (Gumi and Isiga, 1994).

The situation was the contrary in the Southern Protectorate where Christian Missionaries and subsequently the colonial Administration alike did not strike any accord with local political officials to respect traditional religious institutions. As a result the missionaries quickly entrenched themselves and developed basic social capital institutions and social services such as Western education,, provision of health services and institutions such as hospitals, orphanages for the outcast and downtrodden. Hence, many people openly embraced them with all their socio-economic developmental programmes (Gumi and Isiga, 1994). The British in an attempt to honour the agreement it struck with the Northern leaders, excluded the Christian missionary activities and

their social capital investments such mission-sponsored schools from the predominantly Muslim areas thereby creating a huge imbalance in westernization between north and south. Furthermore, the British discouraged any official political contact between north and south until 1947, when politicians from the two regions sat together for the first time in the central legislative council; officially promoted segregated residential settlement patterns referred to as *sabon gari* or strangers' quarters, institution of inflexible land tenure systems, both of which reinforced discrimination against migrant communities; and the lopsided recruitment of Nigerians into the army and police (Coleman 1958; Diamond 1988; Dudley 1973; Luckham 1971). By so doing, religion became intertwined with politics leading to the politicization of religion wherein religious identity became a passport for acquisition of political and economic opportunities (The Comet, 31 October, 2001.

From then on religion became a defining index for political and administrative patronage. For example, religious influence over politics reared up its head when the political elites started playing religious tunes. It could be recalled that the religious identity-motivated lopsided development as earlier mentioned, particularly the barring of the Christian Missionaries from bringing Western education in the Muslim dominated North saw the South dominance over the civil service; whereas the North was supported by the colonial administrators through the Northern Peoples' Congress, a dominant political party with mostly Islamic agenda to capture power at the centre. This led to intense competition and rivalry, suspicion and mistrust between the two regions. Thus, many of the elite in the Western-educated South felt undermined to be made to be subordinated under the neo-colonial oriented Islamic oriented leadership of the North; the Northern elite on their own part, felt it was unfair that the South should dominate the civil service, and by implication the economic base of the country (Ikeanyi and Enwere, 1995). Being under the dominance of the two religions – Islam and Christianity, each was embroiled with constant struggle for power in attempt to enlarge their gains and limit their disadvantages and gain greater foothold on the country's socio-political and economic

scheme. The above scenario set the stage for politicization of religion in the post-independence Nigeria.

Post-Colonial Era of Religious Identity and Political Bargaining in Nigeria

As stated in the previous section, given the intense competition that raged on between the two major religions, each religion preferred a situation in which its members occupy positions of power in the economic and socio-political milieu of the country; hence the quest for winning of converts became very important. While the Southern politicians saw independence as an opportunity to have a Nigeria ruled by its citizens, the members of the Hausa-Fulani Islamic ruling class on their own part saw it as an opportunity to rule by those either belonging to, or approved by the Hausa-Fulani Islamic ruling class. For instance, the National party of Nigeria in second republic effectively deployed a religious symbol to attain power at the centre in 1979 (Ikeanyi and Enwere, 1995).

In the first republic, for instance in 1963, in an attempt to consolidate political power in the Northern Region, the then premier, Ahmadu Bello launched a conversion campaign to Islamize the Christian and animist populations of the North and the Middle Belt (Ibrahim, 1978). For instance, according to Kukah (1994), the Middle Belter people were induced by cash, provided by Arab world and government coffers, as well as cloths produced by the government textile in Kaduna to convert to Islam. The converts were awarded Islamic titles which indicated their social and political advancement in the society. Through this strategy, the Sardauna was able to widen the political base of the NPC.

While the Nigerian constitution prohibits the formation of political parties along religious lines, political actors always seek and consolidate power by benefiting from and manipulating religious identities. Predominantly in the North, political actors and their rivals have continued to use Islam to mobilize support because the lives of the majority of people in the North revolve around Islamic practices (Falola, 2009). Both Islam and Christianity compete for space, converts

and political domination. Leaders of religious organizations use the style and language of politics, in their quest for propaganda, control of converts, and the prevention of one another from dominating the political environment. In the first republic, the Northern led government carved out the Mid-Western Region but denied same to Christian dominated Middle Belt which have clamoured for self-autonomy since the 1940s (Dudley, 1982; Iwara, 2004).

Religion, like ethnicity, is a source of mobilization for political actors. For instance, once a political candidate defines himself as a Muslim and his rival happens to be Christian, politics can acquire the coloration of religious conflict. In the North, many politicians have turned to Islam for power legitimization. There have been power rivalries with Christians and bids to impose the Sharia over a larger region. These attempts have prompted swift response from the Christian Association of Nigeria who resorted to contest all religious symbols and what it perceives as efforts to use Islam to dominate politics. In essence, Northern politicians have continued to take advantage of Islam by using its symbols as political ideology in order to unite the region against the South and to mobilize their different constituencies. This approach to politics has bred mutual distrust and fears, particularly the Christians have always been afraid of Islamic/northern domination. Thus, there is a pervasive fear that Islam might expand and gain greater influence, by using the resources of the federal government to advance its political objectives and interests (Falola, 2009).

Mobilizing religious groups has been an important tool in Nigerian politics. Although individual Muslims and Islamic groups are found throughout the country, they are most concentrated and religiously-politically active in the 19 northern predominantly Muslim states. For them, Islamic identity fosters a regional unity and maintains established privileges for the elite. The problem was compounded by the botched Orkar led coup of April 22, 1990 in which some Northern Muslim dominated states such as Sokoto, Borno, Katsina, Kano and Bauchi were excised from Nigeria. The leader of the coup, Major Gideon Orka was from the Middle Belt and attempted to contain what he considered

to be the Muslim threat. The coup was seen as as Christian-motivated, and a number of Christian leaders, hence many of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) were charged with unlawful assembly and illegal marching (Africa watch, October 1991). In a similar vein the presidential aspirant of the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) was credited with statements inciting Moslems not to vote for a Christian candidate in the 2003 election. Though he debunked the allegation, it however earned him the dislike of the Southern Christians. Apart from these overt religious controversies spanning the nations political landscape, there has always been covert attempts by the ruling class (es) to ameliorate the fear of religious domination by balancing the various political positions with members of the two dominant religions. At all times the chief executive and his second in command has always been drawn from the two religious groups- Islam and Christianity. In the first republic, the president in the person of Chief Hon Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was a Christian while the Prime Minister Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was a Muslim. The Ironsi administration that succeeded it had Babafemi Ogundipe as Vice, The Gowon administration was a balancing of ethnicity than religion. But military consideration held sway. Being a Christian from the North, his second in Command was first, Joe R.I. Akahan, followed by Iliya B. Bisalla, Hassan Usman Katsina, David Akpode Ejoor, and then J.E.A. Wey (Obianyo, 2008).

The administration that toppled him led by late Gen Murtala Mohammed was a Muslim but his second in command, Rtd Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo is a Christian from the South West. When Mohammed was murdered in the failed coup of 1975, Obasanjo took over but his second in command was a Muslim Northerner, Late Gen Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. The civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari - a Muslim which followed had Chief Alex Ekwueme as his Vice. The Gen. Buhari administration that ousted the Shagari regime did not think much about balancing of religion in the most powerful positions of the state as his second Late Major Gen Tunde Idiagbon was also a Muslim. The administration's primary aim of fighting corruption/indiscipline in the system did not leave much room for politicking, as many members of the political class at this period

populated the prisons in Nigeria over allegations of corrupt enrichment. The Babangida regime that succeeded Buhari had as the second in command Air Commader Ebitu Ukiwe, a Christian who was later replaced by another Christian Admiral Augutus Aikhomu. When Babangida stepped aside after the imbroglio surrounding the cancellation of the June 12 election in which a Southern Muslim was said to have won, the interim administration that succeeded him was led by a Christian, Chief Ernest Shonekan, assisted by late Gen Abacha who later ousted him in a palace coup to take over the reins of government. Gen Abacha was assisted by Major Gen Oladipo Diya a Christian from the South West. Following disagreements between the two he was replaced by Gen Jeremiah Useni, another Christian from the Middle Belt. The transition government of Gen Abdusalami was assisted by Michael Akhigbe, a Christian. Under the regime of Obasanjo, his vice was Alhaji Atiku Abubakar a Muslim from the north, Under the regime of Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua the vice president is a Christian from the minority South- South geo-political zone - Dr Jonathan Ebele Goodluck (Obianyo, 2008).

When Dr. Goodluck Jonathan became the President after the 2011 general election Architect Namadi Sambo a Northern Muslim from Kaduna State became the vice. In the present regime, President Muhammed Buhari picked a Yoruba Christian, Pastor Yemi Osinbajo as the Vice President. This in itself goes a long way to show the extent religious consideration determines the political positions in the country. In the public service, the minority Christians began an agitation which was motivated by 'Islamaphobia of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims due to the lopsided northernization policy' which favoured the Muslims and excluded the Christians. It follows that no matter the educational qualifications, status or merits the Christians had attained, they were not allowed to attain the upper echelons of the Native Authority in Northern Nigeria (Okwori, 2003). This same policy devise was extended to the national level. According to Horowitz (1985), during the period of northernization policy which was introduced in 1959, at the eve of Nigerian independence, there were virtually insignificant number of Northerners in the upper rungs of the civil service. By 1965 the number

of Northerners in the upper echelon of the civil service had outnumbered the number of expatriates and southerners respectively.

Kukah (1993) further revealed that in the early parts of national independence, the northern aristocrats established jama'atul Nasir Islam (JNI) to champion the course of Islam. With the northernization policy, Islam became a major factor for the attainment of social carried out through what was referred to as 'economic jihad' (Okwori, 2003). According to Ibrahim (1991), there is much evidence to suggest that Gideon Orka and his co-coup plotters and supporters alike were convinced that both political power and economic resources were distributed unevenly in favour of Muslims in the country. A study carried out by Ajayi (2009) revealed that the governments indeed oppress Nigerians who belonged to a different religion. The ruling elite, particularly Christians felt they were oppressed in the civil and public service when it comes to government positions and promotions. Most of the respondents in that study commented that government appointments to positions were based on religious and ethnic affiliations. The study found out that Nigerian government is deeply involved in religious affairs in terms of appointments and promotions, award of contracts and scholarships. On the whole, it was reported that the Nigerian government at the centre indeed gives the Muslims advantage over other religious groups in the country through overt and covert patronage.

Impact on Effective Governance

Both Muslim and Christian leaders have politicized their faithful's allegiance to mobilize and give dignity to marginalized constituents, demonize opponents, and gain power since "religion provides a legitimizing framework for violence that would otherwise be considered unacceptable" (Ostebo, 2012). Religion, then, is a fast, easy way to obtain and manipulate power in Nigeria—fighting over position and power rather than developing and delivering relevant policies and political platforms (Falola, 2001).

This regionalization of politics and public space in Nigeria has led to myriads of factors that inhibit the smooth functioning of governmental business such as collaborated corruption, enthronement of mediocrity in positions of authority, lack of transparency and accountability, religious conflicts, mutual distrust and sabotage of the governmental business. A key consequence in the use of religious identity to muster public positions is that of rise and institution of prebendalism in the system. Thus it is not uncommon to find religious identity groups supporting candidates to occupy the exalted position political and public offices after which the person (s) in question handed down a catalogues of demands of what is expected of him/her as contribution to the in-group while in office (Obianyo, 2008). The above is what Joseph (1999) describes as prebendalism.

According to Joseph (1999), the term prebendalism is:

one in which the offices of the state are allocated and then exploited as benefices by the office holders, but also as one where such a practice is legitimated by a set of political norms according to which the appropriation of such offices is not just an act of individual greed or ambition but concurrently the satisfaction of the short term objectives of a subset of the general population.

Thus the use of public office for personal aggrandizement or to sustain private loyalties (Obianyo, 2008) has led to corruption and protection of such public office holders from prosecution since the public office holder in question perpetrates such on behalf of the religious group in question. Ekeh (cited in Obianyo, 2008) presented an eloquent explanation on the overlapping of the public and private sphere in Africa in his theory of the two publics in which the civic public is marked by the two significant features, namely:

It suffers from endemic crisis of ownership, the people do not claim or identify with it as they do the primordial public. It is marked by an us versus the relationship, where the us is the primordial public whose ownership,

autonomy and sustenance is jealously guarded. The civic public is amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public. Thus, the individual feels no moral urge to reciprocate the benefits he receives from it and the behaviour that would be regarded as morally reprehensible in the primordial public, such as embezzlement of public funds is permissible here in so far as the larger group directly or indirectly benefits from the loot.

Thus, “the contradictory pulls and demands of simultaneous membership of the two publics is what underlie the pervasive problems of ethnicity, religious politics and state corruption that it engenders” (Osaghae cited in Obianyo, 2008). This religious identity aspect of influence and control of public space in Nigeria explains “why the state has continued to be an object of plunder and abuse by those who should protect it” and indeed the debilitating and crumbling of the norms of public service and the Nigerian economy.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship and influence of religion on political and public service system in Nigeria. It associated the colonial administration as the origin of the deployment religion to negotiate political and administrative power. The paper went further to examine the interplay of religion and politics during the various post-colonial regimes and substantiated the fact that religious identity has always utilized as instrument of politics by the elite, particularly the Northern elite who manipulate politics with religion. The effective use of religion include appointments, award of contracts, employment opportunities of which religious considerations were used as baits to become beneficiaries of such government patronage. The study therefore established that the consequences of these religious manipulation include corruption, mediocrity and incompetence and shielding of people from prosecution from the corrupt practices due to its prebendal nature. Based on the above, it is therefore recommended that the secular

nature of Nigerian constitution be respected and appointments, ascension to political power be done on the basis of merit and competence irrespective of religious divide and affiliation.

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CHAPTER TEN

RELIGION, POPULATION GROWTH AND VIOLENCE IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN NATION

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Executive Summary

With a population of about 190 million, Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation by double and fertility levels remain higher than most other sub-Saharan African nations. Throughout the last decades, the fertility gap between Christians and Muslims has widened with significant political implications for her nascent democracy. Since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, thousands of people have died in the wake of identity-based vicious, murderous and destructive violence mostly fought along ethno-religious lines. In 2009, a radical Islamist sect from north-eastern Nigeria, Boko Haram, started a campaign of terror that has so far intensified the schismatic and apprehensive religious atmosphere in the country. This had been preceded by the vicious Maitatsine sect of the 1980s. The formal institutionalization of Sharia law in the North in 1999 have also not helped matters. While the Boko Haram crisis cannot be said to be strictly religious, this paper will locate the group within the context of the mobilization and politicization of religion in Nigeria, which along with the heavy-handedness of Nigeria's conflict management processes, informs religious militancy and sectarian violence in the country. The paper argues that a process of transition from a killing society to a non-killing society is needed to provide an alternative perspective to the existing

pedagogy of religion, violence and population growth for which northern Nigeria is notorious.

Keywords: religious violence, politicization, Boko Haram, population growth

Introduction

Religious violence in Nigeria is vividly linked with the proliferation of uncompromising Muslim and Christian activism, a relationship that has led to a burgeoning culture of religious intolerance particularly in northern Nigeria. Prior to the advent of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria, African Traditional Religion, was the religion of Africans and during this time when Africans worshipped God the indigenous way religious violence was rare. The introduction of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria marked the beginning of religious violence as both religions struggled for supremacy. The concept of national security encompasses both military and non-military security such as economic security, energy security, food security etc. Security threats can come in any form. The present security threat in Nigeria is the Boko Haram terrorist attacks on the government and the country at large. Equally, religious violence is a threat to the well-being of the adherents of the religions in Nigeria.

Several political problems assume religious dimensions; manipulated by politics, poverty, illiteracy and ignorance in Nigeria. Violence predicated on religious affiliation and religious policies has indeed caused physical and psychological damage to several people, thereby legitimizing religious schism among Nigerians who simply have different religious affiliations. It is therefore paramount that we look at factors responsible for religious violence in Nigeria since the inception of democracy in 1999 and to find out how religion can bring about peaceful co-existence.

The 1980s witnessed an upsurge in violence resulting from the death of Mohammed Marwa, the leader of a sectarian group known as "Maitatsine". At about the same time, the former self-styled military president of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida, enrolled Nigeria in

the Organization of the Islamic Conference, OIC. This move aggravated religious tensions in the country, particularly among the Christian communities. Since the return of democracy to Nigeria in 1999, Sharia has been instituted as a main body of civil and criminal law in nine (9) Muslim-majority and in some parts of three (3) Muslim-plurality states. The then Zamfara State governor, Ahmad Rufai Sani Yerima is known to have started the push for the institution of Sharia at the state level of government.

In the 1980s, serious outbreaks of conflicts between Christians and Muslims occurred in Kafanchan in southern Kaduna State in a border area between the two religions, propagated by extreme leaders who were able to rally a young, educated group of individuals who feared that the nation would not be able to protect their religious groups. The leaders were able to polarize their followers through speeches and public demonstrations. The activities of some of these sects led to the loss of lives and properties as they moved about destroying government facilities which they saw as legacies or replica of western cultures in their various communities. These religious campaigns have seen an increase in sophisticated gun battles between the members of these sects and security forces with loss of precious lives witnessed on both sides.

Although direct conflicts between Christians and Muslims were rare from the outset, tensions did flare between the two groups as each group galvanized and radicalized. There were clashes in October 1982 when Muslim zealots in Kano were able to enforce their power in order to keep the Anglican House Church from expanding its size and power base. They viewed it as a threat to the nearby Mosque, even though the Anglican House Church had been there forty years prior to the building of the Mosque. Similar thing almost happened at the University of Ibadan when the Muslim worshippers demanded that a cross which had been there years before the mosque be pulled down because they faced it when praying. Christians stood their ground to protect the cross and tensions escalated. To ensure peace, a wall was raised between the cross and the mosque. Elsewhere, there were two student groups who came into contestation in Nigeria - the Fellowship of Christian Students and

the Muslim Students Society. On one occasion there was an evangelical campaign organized by the FCS that questioned why one sect should dominate the campus of the Kafanchan College of Education. This quarrel escalated to the point where the Muslim students organized protests around the city which culminated in the burning of a Mosque at the college. The Christian majority at the college retaliated. Twelve people died, several Mosques were burnt and a climate of fear and apprehension was created. The retaliation was pre-planned.

Exploitation of the media as a means of propagating the ideas of the conflict, have also contributed in radicalizing each force even more. Media was biased on each side so while places like the Federal Radio Corporation discussed the idea of defending Islam during this brief moment of terror, it did not report the deaths and damage caused by Muslims, thereby galvanizing the Muslim population. Similarly, the Christian papers did not report the damage and deaths caused by Christians but rather focused on the Islamic terror. Other individuals leading these religious movements used the media to spread messages which gradually became more toxic and intolerant of other religions, and because of these religious divisions radical Islam continues to be a problem in Nigeria today.

Religious conflict between Muslims and Christians has erupted several times since 2000 for various reasons, often causing riots with several thousands of victims on both sides. Since 2009, the Islamist movement Boko Haram has fought an armed rebellion against the Nigerian military, sacking villages and towns and taking thousands of lives in battles and massacres against Christians, students and others deemed enemies of Islam. The Chibok Girls saga and the abduction of Leah Sharibu are still very fresh in the mind. The thrust of this investigation is propelled by the ferocious and colossal eruptions of religious conflict occasioned by extreme display of religious fanaticism and intolerance and how it has impacted on the peace and progress of the populace.

Religious Violence

Among scholars, there is no acceptable definition of violence. Violence is viewed from diverse perspectives. Riches (1986:8) cited in Afolabi (2016) defines violence from an anthropological point of view as “an act of physical hurt deemed legitimate by the performer and illegitimate by (some) witnesses”. Riches’ definition according to Afolabi (2016) is compatible with “basic properties” of violence, which have cross-cultural validity, i.e. that the performance of violence requires relatively little by way of specialized equipment or knowledge, that the practice of violence is highly visible to the senses and that, therefore, violence as such is unlikely to be mistaken. Afolabi (2016) maintains that discrepancies in basic understanding amongst those implicated in the performance of a violent act are likely to be minimal. Nevertheless, violence is inherently liable to be contested on the question of legitimacy. Hann (2008) asserts that Riches’ incorporation of the concepts of legitimacy and illegitimacy in the definition of violence raises problems because it is unclear how the discrepancy in basic understanding amongst those implicated in the performance of a violent act can be ‘likely to be minimal’ when an act of violence by definition is deemed legitimate by the performer and illegitimate by (some) witnesses. In an attempt to introduce a more systematic, comprehensive analysis of violence, several propositions have been made for a more extended notion of violence which is defined in a more inclusive way.

Two examples of inclusive definitions of violence presented by Barak (2003) and Henry (2000) will suffice. Barak (2003) has made an attempt to be conceptually inclusive, that is, to take into account the full range of harms associated with a variety of interpersonal, institutional, and structural relationships and behaviours and to not exclude any form and expression of violence, whether they refer to individual acts, institutional arrangements or structural conditions as well as whether or not they are prohibited by law. To this end, he adopts a definition of violence as “any action or structural arrangement that results in physical or non-physical harm to one or more persons” (Iadicola and Shupe, 1998: 26; quoted in Barak, 2003: 26).

In a similar vein, Henry (2000:3-5,116) suggests that a more inclusive, integrated definition of violence is necessary, which replaces the term ‘force’ with ‘power’ and takes a more comprehensive view of harm. Violence is thus defined as “the use of power to harm another, whatever form it takes”. In this case, harm is not only physical pain and suffering. It can also occur along many dimensions beyond the physical to include psychological or emotional, material or economic, social or identity, moral or ethical, and so on. Within each dimension, the harm can be of two kinds: ‘harms of reduction’ and ‘harms of repression’ (Henry and Milovanovic, 1996:103). Harms of reduction remove something from a person’s existing status as a human being. For instance, physical harms of reduction produce bodily pain or loss (of blood, organs, limbs, physical functioning). Material harms of reduction threaten or downgrade some of the person’s economic status (property, wealth, money). Psychological harms of reduction have destructive effects on the human mind and weaken a person’s emotional or mental functioning (such as in posttraumatic stress syndrome). Social and symbolic harms of reduction lower a person’s social status (by violating their human rights, sexuality or social identity). Moral or ethical harms of reduction corrupt standards of concern for the well-being of others (as in hate, pressure to cheat, and the like). In contrast, harms of repression reveal how the exercise of power acts to systematically limit another person’s capability of achieving higher levels of accomplishment along any of these dimensions. Violence, then, is the exercise of power over others by some individual, agency, or social process that denies those subjects of their humanity either by reducing them from what they are or by limiting them from becoming what they might be.

After looking at the concept of violence from the perspective of inclusive and restrictive definitions, Hann (2008:29-33) came to the conclusion that depending on the contexts of discovery and justification, valid arguments are feasible for either inclusive or restrictive definitions of violence. Any definition of violence, however, should be considered as a temporary outcome of theoretical debate – an outcome which may or may not prove to be useful in future research.

Exploring diversity of definitions is useful in understanding violence from a religious perspective.

From these definitions, it can safely be deduced that “religious violence is a term that describes a phenomenon where religion is either the subject or object of violent behaviour. Religious violence is, precisely, violence that is motivated by or in reaction to religious precepts, texts, or doctrines”. It involves all forms of violence against religious institutions, persons, objects, or when the violence is motivated to some degree by some religious aspect of the target or precepts of the attacker. This phenomenon does not only refer to violent acts committed by religious groups, but it also includes acts committed by secular group against groups. Thus, it is pluralistic in its incidence.

Religious violence in Nigeria has caused not only physical pain but also psychological, emotional, material, economic and social loss. It has also caused harms of reduction and repression. Many people have been dehumanized, lost their wealth and sources of livelihood to intermittent religious conflicts in several parts of the northern states. Religious violence has weakened their emotional or mental proper functioning. The exercise of power and domination by Hausa-Fulani indigenes in the north on the settlers limit the latter from achieving their utmost potential. The violent and murderous activities of the Maitatsine sects in Nigeria between 1980 and 1985, and the present Boko Haram violence are few examples of sad situations religion has caused humanity.

The events of Abuja in 2000 and Jos in 2001 were riots between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Nigeria about the appointment of a Muslim politician, Alhaji Muktar Mohammed, as local coordinator of the federal programme to fight poverty. Another such riot killed over 100 people in October 2001 in Kano State. In 2002, the Nigerian journalist Isioma Daniel wrote an article that led to the demonstrations and violence that caused the deaths of over 200 in Kaduna, as well as a fatwa placed on her life. The 2002 Miss World contest was moved from Abuja to London as a result. The rest of the 2000s witnessed continuous

inter-religious violence in Jos and Kaduna. The reaction to the Mohammed cartoons brought about a series of violent protests in Nigeria. Clashes between rioters and police claimed several lives, with estimates ranging from sixteen to more than a hundred. This led to reprisal attacks in the south of the country, particularly in Onitsha. More than a hundred lost their lives. A woman was killed in Kano for her early morning ministrations which the Muslim youths considered as disturbance. Recently, Fulani herdsmen have been known to commit all manners of unrestricted violence in almost all parts of the country with reckless abandon.

Overview of Religious Violence in Nigeria

1. 01-Jul-99: Sagamu, Ogun State - Crisis between Yoruba traditional worshipers and Hausa groups as a result of the killing of a Hausa woman by the Oro Masqueraders for violating traditional rites.
2. 20-Dec-99: Ilorin, Kwara State - Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 Churches, properties worth several millions of naira destroyed.
3. 28-Feb- 00: Aba, Abia State - Religious crisis that led to the killing of over 450 persons.
4. February 21-22, 00: Kaduna, Kaduna State - Crisis over the introduction of Sharia, an estimated 3000 people died.
5. 12-Oct-01: Kano, Kano State - Religious crises, in protest to U.S. invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden. Over 150 persons were killed.
6. September, 7-17, 07: Jos, Plateau State - Religious crisis between Muslims and Christians. Mosques, churches and several properties were damaged.
7. 16-Nov-02: Kaduna, Kaduna State - Attack of Christians by the Muslims over article written by Isioma Daniel on Miss World, over 250 people were killed and several churches destroyed.
8. 14-Feb-04: Numan, Adamawa State - Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over location of the Central Mosque close to Bachama Paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed.

9. 18-Feb-06: Maiduguri, Borno State - Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over Danish Cartoon on Prophet Mohammed in Jyllands-posten newspaper. Over 50 persons killed and 30 churches destroyed over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalized.
10. 22-Mar-07: Gombe, Gombe State - Religious crisis over the killing of a Christian teacher for allegedly desecrating the Qur'an while attempting to stop a student from cheating in an examination hall.
11. 28-Nov-08: Jos, Plateau State - Religious crisis between Muslims and Christians over the controversial results of local election. Over 700 people killed.
12. July 26-30, 09: Bauch, Borno, Kano and Yobe States - Religious crisis unleashed by Boko Haram sect on Christians. Over 700 people killed 3,500 persons internally displaced, 1,264 children orphaned, and over 392 woman widowed, and several properties destroyed.
13. 07-Mar-10: Jos, Plateau State - Attacks by Fulani Moslems on Christians-dominated villages of Dogo-Nahawa, Shen and Fan. 13 persons killed.
14. 11-Jul-10: Jos South, Plateau State - Attack on a Christian village by Fulani herdsman. 3 houses and 6 vehicles were torched.
15. January 5-6-12: Gombe, Gombe State - Gunmen stormed a Deeper Life Church, shooting indiscriminately at worshippers. The Boko Haram Islamist sect claimed responsibility for the shooting.
16. January 5-6-12: Mubi, Adamawa State - Suspected Boko Haram militants stormed a gathering of Igbo Christians and shot sporadically, killing over 12 and injuring others.
17. May-2016: Padongari, Niger State - Religious crisis that left 4 persons dead.
18. 08-Jun-16: Kakuri, Kaduna State - A Christian man was stabbed for not joining Ramadan Fast.

19. 14-Mar-18: Abuja - Protest by Muslim Groups Rocks National Assembly on the Public Hearing over Amasa Firdus, Law School Hijab controversy.

Source: Adapted from Sampson, 2018; Sahara reporter, 2018; Apuwabi, 2018.

Factors Responsible for Religious Violence

Religious violence has become a defining personality of Nigeria and her politics since independence. Kukah (1993:9) argues that both Islam and Christianity are straddled across the Nigerian polity, each no longer knocking and pleading to be admitted, but seeking to take over the architectural design and construction of the Nigerian polity. Thus, religion has been politicized and politics has been religionized thereby making it difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the two entities. Religion that has bound us together in two strands has caused much damage than good in northern Nigeria.

Under the guise of religion, many religious fundamentalists and violent religious fanatics have frequently plunged the country into unnecessary wanton destruction of innocent lives and properties (Iwe 4). In Nigeria some Islamic fundamentalists and fanatics have in the guise of religion, knowingly or reluctantly, repudiated the spirit of Islam as a religion of peace and social justice, by their irrational and reckless destruction of the lives and properties of their fellow citizens and their defiance of constituted military and civil authorities. The intermittent outburst of violent destruction of lives and properties by ill-advised Moslem youths who sometimes surface from their Mosque or after a secret deadly resolution to impose catastrophe and havoc on their fellow citizens for flimsy and unjustified reasons is also another instance. These fanatics and fundamentalists, misguided by a wrong understanding and interpretation of the true spirit of Islamic jihad have often sought to provoke war and violence for selfish interests (James 143).

Several factors responsible for religious violence in Nigeria have been identified in literature (Omotosho, 2003; Gofwen, 2004; Iwara, 2006; Salawu, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Alao, 2019). Whereas most of these

causes conflate, emphasis in literature has been on the underlying socio-economic, political and governance factors that gestate not only religious conflicts, but violent conflicts in Nigeria generally. However this paper is focused on the immediate and visible factors that generate religious violence and how it impact on the population. Some of these factors include:

Personalization of religion

In non-western countries, people find it convenient to identify themselves through religion in terms of dressing, name or conversation. With the introduction of modernity, there was an increased amount of religious consciousness and personalization. In Nigeria, especially in the north, identity is based on primordial factors such as ethnicity, nation, race, language and religion. These primordial factors separate an individual from another. Religion, which is one of the most important primordial factors have led to personalization among the same citizens of different ethnicity, nation and language in Nigeria.

In the northern part of Nigeria, there are two distinct religions that are personalized, Islam and Christianity. The majority of the citizens are Muslims while the minorities are mostly Christians. This has generated discrimination by the majority against the minority. That is why Gurr (1993) argues that discrimination against an ethnic minority provides the basis for the minority to form an opposition to protest and terminate the perceived discrimination. Fox (2000) concurs with Gurr by stating that religious factors are capable of giving rise to discrimination and grievances, which can give rise to ethnic and religious conflicts. In a nutshell, religion personalization can lead to religious discrimination and ultimately degenerate to extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism. When religion is personalized, adherents tend to see their religion as superior to another which forms a strong mark in their mind to fight and die for their religious beliefs and use religion to justify the use of violence. This is the true picture of religious violence in Nigeria.

Extremism and Intolerance

Extremism is as good as fanaticism. Extremism on both sides is another important reason behind religious crisis in Nigeria. In most cases this extremism results from poor knowledge and understanding of the teachings of the religion being defended by the groups from the two sides. Religious intolerance means hostility towards other religions, as well as the inability of religious adherents to harmonize the theoretical and the practical aspect of religion. Intolerant devotion to one's opinions and prejudices especially the expression of intolerance and animosity toward persons of differing beliefs leads to violence.

Religious conversion

Religious adherents of both Islam and Christianity in Nigeria believe that their religion is not only superior but possess salvation for one's soul and the enjoyment of life after death. This is done by preaching religious conversion. Jenkins (2002) argues that the mechanism of religious conversion has the capacity to promote rivalry and shift the demographic balance between adherents of different religions within a state. Thus, religious conversion can bring about demographic shift and cause religious violence. Although, Boko Haram may not be able to account for religious conversion as a factor for religious violence because their activities have shifted from persecuting Christians to Muslims that they believe are not true believers of Islam. However, religious conversion is a significant threat to Muslims in the north who are dominant citizens in the area.

Depletion of Cultural Values

This is ramified in the fact that man no longer attaches the expected value to the sanctity of life. The African virtue of being our brother's keeper has been eroded.

Isolated settlement and heterogeneous state

Olomojobi (2013) asserts that Islamic faith is largely practiced in the northern region of Nigeria in sixteen States: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Jigawa, Nassarawa, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara. Three states, Benue,

Plateau and Taraba have a Muslim minority while Kano, Kastina and Sokoto are historically centers of Islamic education and missionary activities. He notes that commercial activities and the existence of profitable opportunities in agriculture and trade, including the railway system and the establishment of federal institutions across the north led to the increased influx of other ethnic groups from other parts of Nigeria to the north. Instead of the indigenes of the north to allow other ethnic groups to settle wherever they found space, they are stationed to a particular territory called Sabon Gari quarters (strangers' quarters) across the north. This is so because the practice of Islam which is based on Sharia law divides men into two groups: those belonging to the Umma and those outside the Community. This brings us to the issue of heterogeneous states. Wimmer, 2003; Fox, 2000 and Gurr, 1993 argue that the initial stages of establishing a democratic order in a heterogeneous state are likely to produce ethnic and religious conflicts. Nigeria, which is a heterogeneous state have witness more religious and ethnic crises since 1999. Thus, separate settlement and heterogeneous states give room for contention between the indigenous Muslim and the immigrants especially those that belong to non-Islamic faith.

Religious hegemony

Both Islam and Christianity adherents fight for dominance of their religious faith. However, Islamic religion does not only unite ethnic groups but also dominate the northern part of Nigeria. Along this line, Lincoln (2003) argues that religious conflict arises when the 'religion of the status quo' is used as a source of domination over 'religions of resistance'. This, in the long run, can result in religious conflict between the dominant majority and the dominated religious minorities. Hence, while Islam is the 'religion of the status quo', Christianity is the 'religion of resistance'.

Unemployment/Illiteracy

Youth unemployment and illiteracy are no doubt major problems in Nigeria, threatening its national security, considering the inability of the government to adequately engage the teeming youth population to be productive. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS),

statistics show that unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.9 % during the first half of the year 2011. In addition to the already daunting statistics of over 43 million unemployed youth, an additional 1.8 million people joined the long queue. This was attributed to fresh entrants to the job market and worker layoffs across all sectors of the economy in the year (Afolabi, 2013:2). Also, of the 100 million Nigerians living in abject poverty, those who can afford essentials of food, shelter and clothing — the majority reside in the northern states. The north-west has the highest poverty rate with 70% of its people living below \$1 per day. The north-east follows with 69% and the north-central with 59.5%. The three southern zones have no cause to rejoice either as poverty level there ranges between 49.8% and 58.7%. This shows the level of frustration of unemployed youth who have constituted a threat to the national security of the State because invariably, an idle hand is the devil's workshop. Hence, the alarming rate of youth unemployment impact on the level of insecurity in the country whereby youths are recruited into terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, theft and also as instruments for religious violence.

Poverty

Poverty is a worst and unpalatable situation which can make man to think of getting rich by any means possible without thinking of the consequences. Some of our religious and political leaders are deliberately creating situations of poverty among their adherents and followers and they capitalize on the opportunity offered by this ugly situation to employ these hungry youths in unleashing terror and threat to life. The almajiri system is a case in point.

Negative roles of some religious leaders

Obioha (2008) submitted that, the occurrence of these conflicts cannot be divorced from the activities of some religious leaders, both of Christian religion and Islam. According to him, some of them present their religion as the best, while others are no religion, or worse still, false religions. Some preach inciting sermons that encourages their followers to violence. Cases abound in Kano and Kaduna where Muslims would commence rioting from the mosque after listening

Friday sermons from their imams. It is such that people approach Fridays with trepidations.

Suspicion among the various adherents involved

It can be rightly said according to Alabi and Lateju, (2014) that, just as Christians are suspicious of Muslims, so also Muslims mistrust Christians. For clarification, Adeniyi, for example, blames Christianity for the violent religious climate in Nigeria. He explained that Islam and African religion co-existed peacefully until Christianity came in ten centuries later, with its evangelistic determination to wipe out Islam and African religions.

Religion and Population Growth in Nigeria

Literature confirms that Nigeria is the most populous nation in sub-Saharan Africa. But according to Adekoya (2017) and evidenced in Afolabo (2016) this rapid population growth is not an economic advantage rather it has become a looming disaster that politicians have either been powerless to stop or lacks the political will to control. A few years ago, when the “Africa rising” mantra was in full force, the continent’s population growth was touted as an asset, a comparative advantage over the rest of the world. While Western populaces, particularly in Europe, were aging and was predicted to shrink in the coming decades, Africa’s fast-growing and youthful population was expected to provide the dynamism and consumer base needed to power its economy and transform the continent into a global growth engine.

For Adekoya (2017), one country that personified this narrative was Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa’s most populous nation, which boasted between 7 and 8 percent GDP growth for much of the 2000s. Unfortunately, now that the global commodity slump especially in the oil sector has plunged Nigeria into its worst economic crisis in two decades, and pushed youth unemployment through the roof, it is evident that far from a dividend, the country’s demographics is now a disaster waiting to happen. And the time bomb is ticking faster than we feared. For example, Hausa youths are being stowed to the South as willing tools for violence. Back in 2017, Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics

revealed that the country's population was estimated to have surpassed 193 million, significantly exceeding the earlier U.N. projection of 187 million in 2016. Meaning that, the U.N.'s much-publicized forecast that Nigeria will overtake the United States as the world's third-most populous nation by 2050 will likely happen much sooner than projected. (Nigeria's fertility rate is 5.13 children per woman, compared with 1.87 per woman in the United States).

Part of the optimism surrounding Nigeria's population growth stemmed from the country's abundant natural resource wealth, which was expected to power investments in infrastructure, industry and education, among others. But with markets as volatile as they are, it is clear that oil and gas revenue - which accounts for 95 percent of export earnings and 70 percent of government revenue - is no longer enough to keep a country the size of Nigeria afloat. Indeed, since oil prices started to drop in mid-2014 to its current lowest, Nigeria's currency has depreciated more than 170 percent against the dollar while the country's GDP has contracted accordingly in dollar terms.

The 2017 national budget was the largest ever when measured in local currency, but at the then current market exchange rate - though not the official one, which has been largely fictitious - it amounts to a meager \$15 billion. The government of Kansas, population 2.9 million, has a bigger budget than Nigeria. In per capita terms, the situation is even bleaker. The government had just \$77 to spend on each citizen in 2017. A nation with a population fast approaching 200 million earmarked just \$290 million for education (including capital spending), less than a third of what Harvard University spent on research and development alone - meaning that many of the country's newest citizens were likely to join the 62 million Nigerians who are currently illiterate and most of them from the North.

In other words, a large percentage of Nigeria's rapidly expanding population will have few or none of the skills needed to secure decent-paying jobs, build sustainable businesses, or otherwise contribute to a globalized 21st-century economy. Many are likely to join the already

30-million-strong army of unemployed youths aged 15 to 34. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, more than 45 percent of the country's 69 million youths are either unemployed or underemployed — and this is a conservative estimate. With such grim employment statistics, it's little wonder that violent crime, including kidnappings and armed robberies, is on the rise while ethnic tensions, never far from the surface in Nigeria, are growing.

So what can be done to defuse this ticking time bomb? Various Nigerian governments have attempted to promote family planning, but these programmes have had limited impact due to their modest scope and inability to change deeply embedded cultural and religious sensibilities that encourage large families and unbridled procreation through polygamy and multiple marriages especially in the North. Pushing birth control is not easy in a society where children are widely regarded as “blessings from God.” Human interference in such heavenly matters is considered arrogant and presumptuous especially by the Catholics. Economic calculations also drive the desire for many children, especially in rural societies. In a society lacking a social safety net, parents rely on their children to provide for them in old age. The more future caregivers you have, the brighter your retirement prospects.

There is also a pervasive cultural belief, perhaps reinforced by the “Africa rising” narrative, that Nigeria draws strength from its numbers. A large and growing population is one of the two main pillars supporting Nigeria's vaunted status as the ordained “Giant of Africa” (the other pillar is the country's significant natural resource wealth, the value of which most of the population overestimates). It is partly for this reason that family planning campaigns, perceived as driven by foreigners and especially white people, are often viewed as a conspiracy to weaken Nigeria and Africa in general.

Given these entrenched realities, it makes sense to turn to the only people capable of changing minds on issues as sensitive as family planning: religious leaders. Most Nigerians are fiercely attached to their religious leaders, be it the imams and mallams in the predominantly

Muslim north or the charismatic pastors of the mostly Christian south. In a society where the corrupt political class has been thoroughly discredited, religious leaders are *the* authority figures. If enough of them could be persuaded that the country is heading for disaster if population growth is not curbed, they might be willing to support a broad-based family planning campaign. Traditional rulers could also be engaged in such an exercise, since they also retain significant authority at the grassroots level.

This type of cooperation between religious and political leaders has succeeded in promoting family planning in other deeply conservative societies - post-revolutionary Iran, for instance - and the basis for it is already in place. Nigeria's politicians and religious leaders have long enjoyed a symbiotic relationship: Politicians rely on religious leaders to bolster their legitimacy and in return provide generous funding to build mosques and churches. This quid pro quo is especially pronounced in the northern Muslim parts of the country where sharia, or Islamic law, is practiced, religious authority is especially strong, and birth rates tend to be higher than among southern Christians.

The latest population figures must serve as a clarion call for the Nigerian government and its international partners to come up with policies, programmes, and campaigns aimed at slowing down the birth rate while also providing better opportunities for those already born. The country's demographic explosion should stop being presented as an opportunity or an asset; it is a disaster waiting to happen for a nation with Nigeria's limited resources.

Effects of Religious Crisis in Nigeria

Critically speaking one does not need to be soothsayer, fortune-teller or a prophet to appreciate the fact that religious crisis has colossal negative effects on the socio-moral and economic growth of the society. Religious and ethnic crisis affects the foreign direct investment (FDI) flow into Nigeria. FDI has positive relationship with economic growth as the more FDI flows into the country the more jobs are created, the higher the per capita income and the higher the standard of living. This

is buttressed by Onwumah (2014) who posited that in economic terms, religious and ethnic crisis damages resources and facilities which took time to acquire. No foreign investor will like to invest funds in a country that is divided by communal, religious and ethnic crises (Ayinla, 2003). The basic aim of foreign investment is to make profit which is not possible in an environment of crises. The resources invested already will definitely go down the drains.

Mechanism for Peace in Religious Violence

Paden (2005) argues that the first step in conflict resolution and mediation is to analyze the nature and dynamics of the grassroots conflicts, then to assess the human resources available for the conflict mitigation, including the capacity of traditional civic cultures to adapt to new conflict challenges. This is an important mechanism of bringing peace in religious violence due to the fact that conflict is fueled with resources which can be used to bring sustainable peace and development in the society. However, it is important to note that strategies used in curtailing conflict differ from one culture to the other. Moreover, resources should be distributed evenly across the country. Nigeria is too rich to be among the poorest countries in the world. The wealth of the country is more concentrated in few individuals and this lead to abject poverty of large percentage of Nigerian citizen where the gap between the rich and poor is wide. One of the root causes of religious violence is the poverty level in the country, most especially in the north. The poor in the north are the unemployed youth, miscreants, the *talakawa* and the *almajirai*. Olomojobi (2013) argues that in northern Nigeria, the root of religious clashes could be traced to class struggles and resources control. In social terms, the lack of economic independence for the young generation leads to denial of economic welfare such as housing and the lack of access to justice. This leads to the lack of education, producing disadvantaged adults, which leads to the tendency to commit crimes.

In addition, the government should reduce the level of illiteracy by providing education to the teeming youth, most especially in the north where there is high rate of illiteracy. Also, they should imbibe the culture of accountability, good governance and bring the dividends of democracy

to the grassroots by improving their quality of lives through economic empowerment. More importantly, they should be alert to early warning signals of conflict so as to prevent it early enough before it escalates. Moreover, religion can bring about peace where religious violence thrives by stressing the importance of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence. Though this might not go down well with some Muslims who view such tolerance as sacrilegious, but this can be done by various religious leaders in teaching their followers that both Islam and Christianity accommodates plurality of religious faiths. The government should take the responsibility to orientate the populace while the press should use their resources to curtail conflict by promoting inter-faith programmes and revealing areas of inter-faith harmony.

Conclusion

Although religion has been portrayed as a source of worry to humanity due largely to the vicious, violent and murderous activities of some religious zealots and fanatics; misconceptions and selfish interests of religious leaders which negates the spirit of religion, it can safely be deduced that religion as institution, play enormous role in the lives of a people. We can therefore conclude that, there is a need to understand the etymology of peace which is derived from the Latin word *pax*; meaning agreement or contract.

For peace to reign there is a need for agreement or contract between and among diverse religions, ethnic groups, languages, race and political parties etc. It is the people that would determine when and how they want peace in a given society. In a nutshell, if the spirit of true patriotism is instilled in the heart of every Nigerian citizen through transparent and exemplary leadership in political and religious practices, the rate of religious violence would be significantly reduced to a minimal level. It is important to conclude by affirming what Olomjobi (2013) said in suggesting that the basis of the ongoing religious crises in contemporary Nigeria is deeply rooted in the country's ontological and historical inheritance as a state. Also, it is due to perceived grievance in respect of ignorance, economic stagnation,

youth unemployment and disempowerment in the northern part of Nigeria.

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