

# RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND THE CRISIS OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper sets out to discuss the effects of religious extremism and how they breed insecurity in Nigeria. This is apt following the fact that over the years, little or no concern has been given to religion as a major causative factor of insecurity crisis in Nigeria. Today, in as much as the question of insecurity is not exclusively a consequence of economic, political or tribal crisis, religion, through extremists, has been identified as a major factor. Thus, necessitates why the question: What are the expectations from religion? What should be the primary force driving religion? In an attempt to address these questions, the paper shall, through the exposition on religious influences in the country, prove that religion is a causative phenomenon of insecurity crisis in Nigeria hence the effects of fanatic disorientation and the poor place of rationality in religious affairs. It shall also proffer solutions to these effects as it takes the discourse through comparative and expository methods in ethical and ontological dimensions.*

**KEY WORDS:** Religion, Insecurity, Extremism, Rationality, Philosophy, Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

Religion which is a means of socialization fundamentally, with every sense of oughtness, gears towards human welfarism of which security is a crucial aspect. Its activities are though physically carried out, but the effects go beyond mere physical activities to metaphysical realm of interaction where human spirituality and conscience are intrinsically engaged. But the rationale behind these series of activities all in the name of religion is the motivation behind this paper. It has been said that Africans (Nigerians on this context) are religious beings, people who cannot or do not know how to live without religion. The expression is only but a pointer to Africans' religiosity. However, it is no more a hidden fact that this religiosity has grown out of normalcy to portray religious fanaticism which has given rise to extremism bringing about threats to societal tranquillity and mutual living among the people, mental and physical development, etc. These instances of threats (insecurity) to societal peace are in various forms ranging from physical threats, emotional insecurity, insecurity of human freedom and rights especially to life, of free association, movement, and denial of some ingredients of democracy and gains accrued to a society governed under democratic institutions like the Africans', etc. This weary serves as the motivational point for this paper.

Having established this background, the paper argues the view that religious activities of some fanatics have influenced extremist perception of religion thereby creating threats to societal peace and insecurity of human lives and properties. In the process of this argument, the paper shall raise some critical questions as directives to this discourse. Hence the paper asks: How can rationality be entertained in religious affairs to curb fanaticism? How does religion relate to morality?

From the foregoing, it becomes important that the paper shall employ comparative and expository methods with considerations to ethical and ontological perspectives of the discourse. At the end of this paper following the methodological structure enlisted above, the paper shall prove that indeed, religious fanaticism has bred extremism in Nigerians' religious activities thereby facilitating both physical and ideal insecurity among the people. The paper shall also deepen more to proffer solutions to the challenging states of insecurity resulting from the people's religious extremism as it will propose that engaging faith with rationality will bring about a mild conception of and approach towards religion. Finally the paper shall reiterate that religion is only a facilitator to man for socialization, to live humanly for his welfare.

The paper shall be structured under subheadings to include the 'concept of religion' where an exposition of religion as a concept will be done. The next shall delve into the 'historical perspective of religious extreme' even as traced down to religious scriptures. We shall further dialogue 'religious extremism in Nigeria' after which the paper tries to employ 'philosophical perspectives to engage insecurity as posed by religion' and then the final heading is 'conclusion' where a sort of reiteration on each heading analytically discussed above shall be made.

### Religion as a Concept

The term 'religion' as a concept is conceived as a big shelter to divergent practices of various belief systems. Thus, the quality 'religiosity' is a universal one but under the influence of the creed that births the optimism referred to as religiosity. However, being religious is universal, but the point of concern is the driving force of one's religiosity (fanaticism). Fanaticism has been misdirected to negative side that has bred insecurity making it a point of attraction to humanity. Religion as a term etymologically implies ideas like 'to bind', 'to unite, to link together', 'relationship'.<sup>1</sup> There are derivatives from these implications. The first which means 'to bind' implies that in religion, at least two entities are 'bound' together. This act of 'bind' stands for the covenant aspect of religion which must never be broken, and it equally foresees its sacredness, commitment and sincerity of both parties that are involved in the act of religion. The second which means 'to unite, to link together' implicate religion also as an activity where at least two different or unequal beings get themselves united or linked up as a group or even an entity of sort, as it were. This implies that the sense of seriousness, patriotism and duty-bound-nature are central in the acts of religion. No wonder a source reveals that in its Latin origin, the term 'religion' inheres that sense of 'obligation, reverence' (*Oxford Dictionary of Current English*). The third which means 'relationship' implies a sort of reiteration that as the involved parties are now conceived as being bounded, linked and united forming a sort of an entity, they are now in a relationship characterized by commitment, sincere-openness, sense of morality, reverence and most importantly, 'belief.' Belief is the most essential phenomenon of religion. Put differently, without belief, religion has no essence, hence instead of reason or rationality as it is in philosophy, belief or faith is both the fundamental tool and

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<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Häring, *The Law of Christ*, Vol. III (New York: Newman Press, 1964), 111; Joseph I. Omoregbe, *Comparative Religion: Christianity and other World Religions in Dialogue* (Lagos: JOJA Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 2006), 3.

theend product of any activity of religion.Fundamentally, we can infer that religion is characteristically a relationship, link or bond that exists between at least two parties— man and the Divine.

There are several definitions of religion. However, following the fact of the involvement of the ‘invisible’ in religious affairs, definition according to creed and practices vary. On this view Metuh suspends his submission arguing that religious definition variations follow from the fact that “the object of religion is invisible and the spiritual beings who are not subject to observation are conceived in different peoples. Besides, the study of religion interests people with a widely differing interests as theologians, anthropologist, psychologists and sociologists, each of who see it from different perspectives.”<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, Omoregbe goes straight to argue that the term religion “has a specific meaning, and refers to a specific kind of activity which is in a category of its own. It refers specifically to that kind of activity which goes on between a man and a transcendent being (a deity) believed to exist.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, it is that “interpersonal relationship between a man and a transcendent personal being **believed** to exist.” On a similar scale, Cardinal Arinze has held subjective and objective views of religion<sup>4</sup> hence he writes: “subjectively, religion is the very consciousness of dependence on a transcendent being and the very propensity or inclination to ... worship. Objectively, religion is a complex of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent being.” This subjective and objective perception of religion present religion as an affair that involves man and divinity through faith and as a whole exercise, guiding-norms and traditions concerned in it (religion). At the extension of this definition, Idowu’s conception of religion comes very relevant. For him, religion entails the “belief in the existence of a supernatural ruling power, the creator and controller of the universe, who has given to man a spiritual nature which continues to exist after the death of the body.”<sup>5</sup> Religion could also be seen as not only the relationship between man and divinity through faith, but also the relationship between man and sacred items of religion. Ugwu and Ugwueye hold that religion could also be defined as “the relationship between man and what he regards as sacred. It is man’s recognition of a supersensible reality.”<sup>6</sup> Of course the recognition of this supersensible reality goes with a lot of piety and commitment having acknowledged their supernatural influence on man. Nonetheless, the point remains that religion is an engagement, medium through which two parties— man and the Divine, respectively inferior and superior— relate and bond based on faith/belief, commitment and sincerity. This informs the definition of religion as “the belief in the existence of a god or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them” or “one of the systems of faith that are based on the belief in the existence of a particular god or gods”(Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (8<sup>th</sup> edition)).

However, there are many scholarly definitions of religion based on the definer’s experience, background or profession. Some view it from psychological, sociological, theological backgrounds or even in accordance to the Marxist creed.<sup>7</sup>

But religion we must acknowledge is essentially part of man’s nature, even on daily basis. This is because man is naturally a moral man, and morality is universal and transcends all religion and peoples. Suffice it to say thus that the sense of good and bad is innate in man, this innatism or moral consciousness arouses the voice of conscience in man which reacts to the attitudes of man. The self-consciousness of religious engagements therefore proceeds from the self-consciousness of morality which inheres in man. Religion can help man to find engagements that lead to moral underpinnings, but it is neither the inventor of morality nor the initiator of its consciousness in man.

In concluding this session, it is pertinent to reinstate that religion as a concept is inherently good, however the creed inhered in its practice is a whole lot of concern. Supposedly, religion ought to play vital roles in reinstating humanism and ensuring human welfare. Giving his submission in view of this, Abbot has this to say:

From the various religions, men accept answers to the secret enigmas of the human conditions which deeply-troubled the human heart yesterday as they do today. Man’s nature, the meaning and end of our life, good and sin, the origin and aim of suffering, the way to reach true happiness, death, judgment and sanction after death, finally, the ultimate and ineffable mystery which envelops our existence where we came from and where we are going.<sup>8</sup>

Religion, as inhered in the above citation, plays a vital role in providing solutions to human existential challenges. Central to the concept is human welfarism. We must not forget that in religion, persuasion, psychological threats, or personal willingness following self-conviction of encounter of the superior being by the inferior being play huge influences.

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<sup>2</sup> Ikenga E. Metuh, *Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religion* (Onitsha: Imico Publishers, 1987), 13

<sup>3</sup> Omoregbe, *Comparative Religion*, 4

<sup>4</sup> Francis A. Arinze, *Sacrifice in Igbo Religion* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Bolaji E. Idowu. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition* (London: SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd, 1973), 58.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher O. T. Ugwu and Luke E. Ugwueye, *African Traditional Religion: A Prolegomenon* (Lagos: Merit International Publications, 2004), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Anayochukwu K. Ugwu, *A Philosophical Comparison between African Traditional Religion And Western Religions*, (Forthcoming).

<sup>8</sup> Walter M. Abbot (ed.), *Documents of Vatican II* (London: Godfrey Chapman, 1966)

## Historical Perspective of Religious Extremism as Inscribed and Espoused by Religious Forerunners/Fathers

It is however very unfortunate that the supposed role of religion has probably been, knowingly or unknowingly, exchanged for something very opposite. This is what we could refer to as the 'irony of religion'. Religiosity has been so much infiltrated by human influences and biases where egoism, deception, human degradation and discriminatory ideologies take the upper hand instead of the guarantee for the revival and safety of mankind. Africa has had its own portion of the effects of this negative exchange of the positivity of religion. Chirac being brave enough to write about them has this to say:

We blend Africa for four and a half centuries. We looted their raw materials, then we told lies that the Africans are good for nothing. In the name of religion, we destroyed their culture. And after being made rich at their expense, we now steal their brains through miseducation and propaganda to prevent them from enacting Black retribution against us<sup>9</sup>

The unthinkable is done all in the name of religion without raising questions about the moral justifications. By this, there arises the necessity of differentiating religion, or being religious from morality or being moral. The seat of religion is human-initiative, but that of morality is nature-oriented, therefore it is based on the consciousness of morality that the idea of religion emerges and should justifiably exist. Following this, the ideals of religion ought to take firm from the principles of morality, not from human initiatives. It is the big question today as men exist as 'religious', but not 'moral'. This is a very big deficiency in religion and has answered why the level of religious extremism seen prevailing today in the world. Religion is practised without morality. Through religious extremism, the positivity of religion were negated and the will of men prevailed, that is the irony of religion. In his *Holy Hatred: Religious Conflicts of the '90's*, James Haught laments that "a great irony of the 1990s is that religion— supposedly a source of kindness and human concern— has taken the lead as the foremost contributing factor to hatred, war, and terrorism."<sup>10</sup>

As terrible as it could, religious extremism had its historical background from the scriptures where in the creeds/beliefs of some of the major religions under our focus here, are written. It is this single act of extremism in the scriptures which are the sole guiding documents of religious under their different creeds, that make the idea of religiosity questionable or that brings the 'howness' of religiosity under critical questioning and of course in the light of morality concept. In the Christian Scriptures which include the Bible and other Christian religious documentaries, series of records of questionable acts from both God and man which are undeniably inhuman have taken place all in the name of religion and institutionalization of religious beliefs. Even many a times, after this, there was imposition of the religion of the conqueror on the conquered thereby making religion a concept now instituted on the principle of 'conquest'. Almost the books of Old Testament in the Bible were filled with bloody war stories among kings, kingdoms and tribes, many of whom were for Christian causes against non-Christians, or those tagged their opposition. In some of these wars, those for Christian causes even sought for clear sign of God's support for the war, and we read in the Bible that they got the divine approval and many a times, God's prophets blessed them for success— success and approval to kill fellow humans and destroy their properties, took them in war hostage (war slavery), abuse humanity and even claim their land. The historical story of the returning of the Israelites from the land where they were enslaved to the promised land was filled with war incidents of high records of massacre, the case of Gideon against the Midianites, the case of Samuel (the high priest and prophet) and Saul's kingship over Israelites and also the case of Joshua all against the Amalekites, the Israelites against the Edomites at Mountain Hor, among many instances. All these portrayed God, the Christian God— the Father perhaps— as a God who derives joy from blood shedding and devastating atmosphere. There were causes of religious extremism behind all these.

As a religion founded by Christ Jesus though rooted in Judaism the original religion of the Jews, the victims were the Jewish and the traditional religionists as the most affected. This is because every society had had its own peculiar way of divine interrelationship (religion), conceiving things and of religion, etc. When this became the situation, the struggle intensified between the traditional religion adherents and the invading or perhaps conquering invented religions like Christianity and Islam. This was the clear scenario in the ancient Roman Empire. Roman Emperors took the cause and ensured the continuity of this religious extremism which has corrupted the throne of the Empire. And so, when the seat of power is overtaken by a traditional religionist emperor, he oppressed the 'opposition' religious adherents and when the table shifted to the opposing side, the opposing adherents would collect a share of their own.

As time went on, the Middle Ages came to be. In this respect, it is impossible to forget in a hurry the activities in the Judeo-Christian Antiquity, the activities of the Crusaders which saw for the emergence of some religious organisations (like the Knights, etc.) in some Christian churches/denominations especially Catholic. After this time, many die-hard fanatics of high religious and political positions took on the cause. The fore-fathers of the church through series of Councils, Synods,

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<sup>9</sup> [www.theblackpeoplematrix.com](http://www.theblackpeoplematrix.com)

<sup>10</sup> James Haught, *Awake* (August 8, 2001), 7.

Policies, Edicts, etc have purposely called on secular powers to “exterminate the Jews”<sup>11</sup>— their ‘conceived enemies’. From other scholars, it is written of some ills of the fathers of the church:

Crusades propagated by the 1<sup>st</sup> ever Christian Roman Empire, Anti-Semitism rooted in the words, beliefs/teachings of some high ranked religious intellectuals for that matter, the Spanish Inquisitions made by Pope Sixtus IV in 1477 and nurtured by Dominican monks like- Miguel de Morillo, Juan de San Martin, et al, the Milan Edict of 313 A.D which aimed at favouring Christianity to the destruction of Judaism and synagogues, and the Holocaust operated and manned by Hitler but rooted and intrinsically supported in the church’s Policies, Edicts, beliefs and teachings, are all derivatives or offshoots and in alignment with the intellectuality of the Fathers of the Church<sup>12</sup>

Making a reference to Anti-Semitism of the Christian religious fore-fathers from which many contemporary religious extremists have drawn momentum to carry out inhumanity and insecurity to man, Hagee has this to say:

Anti-Semitism has its origin and its complete root structure in Christianity, dating from the early days of the Christian church... Anti-Semitism is a synonym for hatred. Christianity is a synonym for love. (Therefore) show me an anti-Semitic Christian, and I’ll show you a spiritually dead Christian whose hatred for other human beings has strangled his faith... Anti-Semitism in Christianity continued with the writings of the early-church fathers, a poisonous stream of venom from the mouths of the supposed spiritual leaders<sup>13</sup>

These instances of Christian institutionalized extremist movements were so bloody that as at the time, the Jews among other religious denominations suffered them most. Christian founders were engrossed in biases over other people. For instance, John Chrysostom labelled the Jews “Christ killers.” Talking of the Jews, Justin Martyr says: “The Scriptures are not yours, but ours,” and the Lyon Bishop (Irenaeus) declared that the “Jews are disinherited from the grace of God,” and in his treatise, *Against the Jews*, Tertullian proclaimed that the Jews are now forsaken by God for the Christians. For Hilary of Poitiers, the “Jews are a perverse people accursed by God forever.” For Bishop of Cappadocia (Gregory of Nyssa) “The Jews are a brood of vipers, haters of goodness.” The Christian significant figure (St. Jerome) described the Jews as “serpents, wearing the image of Judas, their Psalms and prayers are the braying of donkeys.” We must not forget that the Alexandrian Bishop and Patriarch- Cyril “expelled the Jews and gave their property to a Christian mob.” As an effect, in “Easter, the Christian clergy would enflame the passions of the faithful until the saints would race out of the church with clubs, run to the Jewish quarter, and beat the Jews to death for what they did to Jesus on the cross. It later became an annual custom at Easter to drag a Jew into the church and slap him on the face before the altar.”<sup>14</sup> As fierce as it could be, sometime:

This ceremony was sometimes carried out with excessive vigor; on one occasion, recounts a monkish chronicler... a distinguished nobleman who was taking the part of chief celebrant ‘knocked out the eyes and the brains of the perfidious one (disbelieving Jew), who fell dead on the spot’... his brethren from the synagogue took the body out of the church and buried him<sup>15</sup>

At this juncture, “following the anti-Semitic teachings of the early church fathers, the Roman church, in an attempt to take control of Jerusalem, declared it was the will of God.” No wonder then why Hitler says: “I am only continuing the work of the Catholic Church”<sup>16</sup>by killing fellow humans after all, they are Christ’s killers and sub-humans. Mission now accomplished, he exclaimed: “I am now, as before, a Catholic and will always remain so.”<sup>17</sup>In concordance to the Church’s teaching that the Jews are the Christ’s killers, and the enactment of the “Final Solution” to annihilate these killers (Jews), after bombing Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Hitler ordered that the “killings (of the Jews) should be done as humanely as possible” for it goes in line with “God’s injunction to cleanse the world of vermin” being convinced from “the Catholic teaching that the Jews was the killer of God.”<sup>18</sup> The killing “therefore, could be carried out without a twinge of conscience since he was merely acting as the avenging hand of God.” To ensure collaboration with the church to gratefully achieve this heinous aim, Hitler made a treaty with the church which surfaced in the policy of the church and the Nazi where the “non-

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<sup>11</sup> Guido Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 203.

<sup>12</sup> Anayochukwu K. Ugwu and Leo C. Ozoemena, “The Irony and Reality of Humanism,” *International Journal of Integrative Humanism*, 11(1), 2019, 39; John Hagee, *In Defense of Israel* (Florida: FrontLine Charisma Books, 2007), 17-26, 125-35

<sup>13</sup> Hagee, *In Defense*, 17, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Ugwu and Ozoemena, “The Irony,” 40; Hagee, *In Defense*, 20, 130, 32, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1985), 51.

<sup>16</sup> Dagobert D. Runes, *The War Against the Jew* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1968), 114.

<sup>17</sup> John Toland, *Adolf Hitler Vol. 1* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 326.

<sup>18</sup> John Toland, *Adolf Hitler Vol. 2* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 803.

human and soulless Jews” were given their position.<sup>19</sup>In line with this, we must not forget the Nuremberg Trials interview of a German General regarding the massacre of at least six million Jews by the Germans, and he replied: “I am of the opinion that when for years, for decades, the doctrine is preached that Jews are not even human, such an outcome is inevitable.”<sup>20</sup>Talking about Luther, Inge writes: “The worst evil genius of Germany is not Hitler, or Bismarck or Frederick the Great, but Martin Luther” whose 95 Thesis nailed to the Cathedral Door and his “Concerning the Jews and their Lies” served and motivated greatly, the eradication of the Jews. Buttressing more on Luther, Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 3, records this:

Let me give you my honest advice... their synagogues... should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honor of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians... their homes should be broken down and destroyed... they should be deprived of their prayer books and Talmuds in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught... their rabbis must be forbidden under the threat of death to teach any more... passport and travelling privileges should be absolutely forbidden the Jews. Let them stay at home... they ought to be stopped from usury... let the young and strong Jews and Jewesses be given the flail, the ax, the hoe, the spade, the distaff, and spindle, and let them earn their bread by the sweat of their noses as is enjoined upon Adam’s children. We ought to drive the lazy bones out of our system. If however, we are afraid that they might harm us personally, or our wives, children, servants, cattle, etc., then let us apply the same cleverness (expulsion) as the other nations, such as France, Spain, Bohemia, etc., and settle with them for that which they have extorted from us, and after having it divided up fairly let us drive them out of the country for all time. To sum up, dear princes and nobles who have Jews in your domains, if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free from this insufferable devilish burden- the Jews<sup>21</sup>

On a critical note, did Jesus in the Bible truly refer to the Gentiles when he talked of ‘dogs’ and the ‘unclean creature’ saga led down from heaven in the sheet? In bewilderment, we may be justified to hold that “Christianity is strange; it bids man to recognize that he is vile and even abominable.” However, on a reconciliatory note after much suppression, excommunication and oppression of the church to visionary thinkers of the old, in 2009, Catholic church through the then Vatican Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone called Galileo— one of the most persecuted— a Man of Faith; and Pope St. John Paul II also apologized to the world on behalf of the church for the direct and indirect sins of the fore fathers as documented by Luigi Accatoli. Many actions of the fore fathers of the church were completely inhuman and aimed at denying humanity intellectuality (worst sin) by hiding the truths from the world especially as they contradicted the doctrines of the church then. All these elaborate analysis on the acts of the church (Christianity) are clear and undeniable instances of religious extremism.

From Islamic side as a religion, same scenario of conquering and institutionalizing the religion of the conqueror could also be told of Islam. It is even more inherent in Islam and has become the method it has succeeded and conquered nations originally practising either traditional religion or have been ‘Christianized’ through conquest and imposition as propagated as a Christian-obliged-cause by the Crusaders— Knights— especially in the Middle East region. According to an account, when Mohammed was excommunicated by the (Saudi) Arabian traditional authorities having attracted their attention by his religious movement in 622 A.D, some of his followers fled to *Abissinia* while he together with “his lonely band of followers” fled (Hejira) to *Yathrip* which was later to be renamed *Medina* meaning the ‘City of the Prophet’. After this, he fortified himself more spiritually, militarily and otherwise and returned and fought Mecca for eight years and finally conquered and then had the golden opportunity to institutionalize his religious codes and inscribed them into the government documentations for legality.

Both Christianity and Islam are of Abraham. Historically, the ancestorship/foundation of Islam is traced to Ishmael (the son of Hagar Abraham’s maid, hence Abraham’s illegitimate son), who was naturally violent. Ishmael’s illegitimate sonship to Abraham is a root factor to be considered in the level of violence Islam, as a religion, commands. This illegitimacy alone might have had a lot of psychological turbulence on him whenever remembered, and so, may explain why he was naturally violent. However, whether his Abrahamic illegitimacy saw for his violent nature or his violence was not a factor from his Abrahamic illegitimacy, the point remains that these two factors about his life may answer as to why Islam is inherently violent and worst still encourages it as we shall expose even from the Islamic scriptures in the course. Nevertheless, beyond these ‘speculative positions’, still arguable though, the facticity of reality being two-faced may have answer as to why life-experiences even as we analyze those of religions, are both inherently evil and good. The both qualities make up the perfection and holism of reality conceived.<sup>22</sup>This violent nature might have had a huge influence on Mohammed, his conception of what Islam should be as a religion and how he chose to institutionalize it as a religious way of life.

<sup>19</sup> Johann E. Scherer, *Die Rechtsverhältnisse der Juden in der deutsch-österreichischen Landern*, (Leipzig, 1901), 39-49.

<sup>20</sup> Malcolm Hay, *The Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism* (New York: Freedom Library Press, 1981), 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica*, (Vol. 3), (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1978), 103

<sup>22</sup> Anayochukwu K. Ugwu and Leo C. Ozoemena, “Reality Explained from Parmenides to Heraclitus: An Insight into the Nature of the Christian God,” *Oracle f Wisdom Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 3(1), (2019), 97-108.

In the history of the institutionalization of Islam, the violent nature of Mohammed as shown in the process is never hidden. Mohammed, the Islamic last messenger from Allah, did not only instil violence in Islam, he also encouraged/commanded it. He motivated and advised the followers that anyone who refuses to relinquish one's faith should be killed for it has "been ordered by Allah to fight with people till they testify there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger."<sup>23</sup> For more instances of the inherent extremism in Islamic religion, it is written in the holy Quran (9:5) thus: "Fight and slay the Pagans (non Muslims— the infidel) wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war)." 'Pagan' here implies the 'infidels', the 'non-Muslims' even though the term 'pagan' in its Latin origin portrays 'a person who dwells in and still observes the core village and cultural ways and manners of doing things'. Again, it is recorded in another place:

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter<sup>24</sup>

Referring to social relationships, it is succinctly stressed how the Muslim and the non-Muslim relationship should be. The Muslims are advised to deal very severely and bloodily anyone who rejects Allah as his God and Mohammed as His last servant/messenger. This is justified because such a person is an enemy, the infidel. "How are they (Muslims) to deal with the enemy (non-Muslims)?— by crucifying them, or cutting off their hands and feet on alternative sides, or banishing them from the country" (Quran 5:33). Read this. "Oh ye who believe, take not the Jews and Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is one of them" (Quran 5:54). In another place, a similar piece is rendered again: "Believers (Muslims) do not make friends with anyone other than your own people (fellow Moslems). They desire nothing but ruin. Their hatred is clear from what they say, but violence is the hatred which their breast conceals" (Quran 3:118).

On a similar tune, listen to this Quranic advice: "Leap ye then, light and heavy and FIGHT the infidels (the non-moslems) with your wealth and persons in Allah's service. This is your good if you do understand" (Surah 9:41). Killings and using hard earned wealth and personal influence for *jihad* is Allah's service! What a terrible service! Further, the Muslims are encouraged: "Fight against such as those who have been given the scriptures as believe not in Allah nor the last Day" (Surah 9:29) for they deserve nothing less than death and if eventually they die on the process, their reward is nothing either than paradise- the one that is Islamized really. In other words, "Oh ye who believe, take not the Jews and Christians for friends" (Surah 5:51) for they are your enemies. No wonder experts have given out a moderate number of Islamic jihadists lying in wait to waste infidels any time anywhere. Hagee puts it thus:

Experts say that 15 to 20 percent of Muslims are radical enough to strap a bomb on their bodies in order to kill Christians and Jews. That means there is an Islamic force of approximately 300 million radicals who are willing to die killing you (as enemies, unbelievers, infidels). We cannot be ignorant of this fact or the recent history that foreshadowed it<sup>25</sup>

At this juncture, we must have seen reasons to accept that inherently, Islam and Judaism (Old Testament) among others, encourage violence and inscribe ideological conceptions which have bred unhealthy relationship between members and non-members. Christianity of course is not exclusively exonerated in this, but the only amendment which has shaped it is the New Testament version where the ills of the Old Testament are addressed. But the New Testament has encouraged coldness in the blood stream of Christians to a huge fault. Hence, the blend of some aspects of both the Old and New Testaments serves best as the mean point.

Critically making juxtaposition, in his five chaptered book, Ngwoke did a highly commendable analysis of Islamic religion and how it has bred dangerous extremism in Nigeria, but at last, his result sent us back to all the odds found in not only Islam, but Christianity as well. Posing a question: 'What should the Muslims do in Order to Promote Nigeria Unity— an Attempted Reply from the Qur'an?' he said: "Our basic reply to this serious question is: An honest and practical Re-education on and a return to the Spirit of the Qur'an."<sup>26</sup> The simple implication of what he has just said is that all his efforts pointing out the ills of Islam even as rooted in the Islamic scriptures is all in vain because returning to the spirit of Qur'an is to return to the inherent violence encouraged by Islam and even as enshrined in the Old Testament of Christianity as it is the one of Judaism. This radicalism inhered in Islam has been the backbone behind religious extremism perpetuated by radical Muslims and leaders who have ruled many Islamic nations. It is an Islamic obligation to ensure that the minority is optionlessly victimized and subdued to Islamic faith. It happened in the Middle East whose Islamized countries are

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.bibletopics.com/BIBLESTUDY/96a.htm>; <http://www.giveshare.org/islam/index.html>

<sup>24</sup> Surah, 5:33

<sup>25</sup> Hagee, *In Defense*, 67.

<sup>26</sup> Bernard IK Ngwoke, *Islam, the O.I.C. and Nigerian Unity* (Enugu: SNAAP Press, 1986), 42.

sometimes referred to as 'Koran-law countries'. Giving an insight into their ordeal, a French journalist Andre Poutard records: "Since the seventh century, the history of Christians in Koran-law countries had been nothing but a series of calamities and respites, or persecutions followed by periods of calm."<sup>27</sup> Non-Muslim population was the minorities and their fate was so pathetic that even to baptize a Christian or Jewish child for instance, the parents had to go for permission from the government. These minorities were referred to as *Dhimmis* (protected people) but their protection is invalid and worst even, depending on the tolerability of the Muslim ruler who ascended the government authority. "The minorities are basically vulnerable at every level— physically, politically, economically and religiously. Their status reflects the degree of tolerance or oppression of the ruling majority." Their life portrayed the state of the majorities and their level of religious extremism. Giving it a summary citation, Costa Luca has this to say:

From the birth of the moslem State to the fall of the Ottoman Empire fifty years ago (a period of about fourteen centuries) the Christians and Jews of the Middle East lived officially and in law, as second class citizens, tolerated sometimes, often abused, depending on the fanaticism of the Ruler, but never equal to moslems in rights and duties<sup>28</sup>

It is even more practical in the reign of Gaddafi of Libya who has earlier declared the Middle East region Islamic region where non-Muslims have no say regardless to the fact that there also is found the headquarters and mother home of world known religions like Christianity, Judaism, etc. Non-Muslims are infidels, and infidels should either accept Islam, accept leaving/exiling the region or accept life deformity and subsequent elimination. According to Hagee, "in many places (Muslim countries), these minorities have only two choices: convert or be killed."<sup>29</sup> In some of these sturdy Muslim countries, like Saudi Arabia "no Christian churches are allowed to be built while those built for the interest of foreigners are not allowed to be identified as churches." Non-Muslims have no mouth to talk or even practise their religion. They are not "allowed to make slightest alterations in churches or synagogues without the permission of the president of the country, which more often than not, is bluntly refused." This is unlike what is obtainable in the headquarters of Catholicism- Rome, where Muslims are allowed to build a mosque "estimated to cost \$20 million which is going to rival St. Peter's Basilica, also in Rome." "While other religions like Christianity wanted to convince non-believers of the truth of its claims, Islam employs political, economic and religious coercion." Islam portions out Petro dollars oil and doctrine to be used to "bring all nations under Islamic suzerainty."

This is how terrible the situation of Islamic intolerance is, and when we personally watch the Nigerian Television Authority Programme called 'Abrahamic Mission' which also has its Motto as *Abrahamic Mission for Religious Tolerance and better Understanding* shown on different days and times where a Christian and Muslim clergies/scholars are brought together to speak on the two religions, we laugh at their perspective of discussion. Nigerians are only told lies, the good part of the scriptures of both religions, but after studio presentations, we know what Islam really is. The moderator promised to bring clergies of other religions like Judaism, but the chief priests of the traditional religion are never remembered yet, it is a Nigerian programme and we claim we are going indigenous so as to return the values in our local makes and ways.

However, according to Hagee, "Islam not only *condones* violence; it *commands* it"; in other words, "not only does the Quran enforce an intolerant attitude toward non-muslims, but it constantly exhorts the faithful to begin a holy war against Jews, Christians, and other non-muslims... the muslims are commanded to fight non-muslims and anyone who rejects Allah and his servant Mohammed."<sup>30</sup> One may not, from an objective point of view, criticize these writers seeing what the Islamic scriptures teach the faithful as their cardinal point of creed. Muslims are encouraged to "fight those who believe not in God nor the last day..... nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth (even if they are) of the people of the Book, until they pay the *Jizya* with willing submission and feel themselves subdued." This has inculcated in the faithful the mind to enmity with non-Muslims.

And one may ask what the reward for such violence and intolerance taught to Muslims by Islam would be. They are equally promised the paradise and to marry plenty of virgins there if they uphold  *Jihad*  and its violence, blood shedding, intolerance and religious imposition in a high esteem. "Paradise is the reward for those who die in the way of God and the booty (stolen or robbed property of the infidels) is the reward of those who survive the war."<sup>31</sup> As an offshoot of Islam, the Wahhabism "preach a rigid, intolerant version of Islam that breeds radicalism. The pulpits of these mosques are filled with Wahhabi preachers spouting violence against America and all infidels (Christians and Jews)."<sup>32</sup> Experts have predicted that Muslims who are enlightened with such violent nature of Islamism without academic mediation, are doom-icons. "Islam not only

<sup>27</sup> John Laffin, *The Dagger of Islam* (London: Sphere Books Ltd, 1979), 83.

<sup>28</sup> Luca Costa, "Discrimination in Arab Middle East," *Case Studies on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, a World Survey*, I W. A. Veenhoven and W. Crum Ewing (eds.), (MartinusNijhoff: The Hague, 1975), 216

<sup>29</sup> Hagee, *In Defense*, 53.

<sup>30</sup> Hagee, *In Defense*, 66; Surah. 5:33

<sup>31</sup> Ibrahim Ishak, *Black Gold and Holy War* (New York: Harper Collins Distribution Services, 1983), 19

<sup>32</sup> Hagee, *In Defense*, 65.



condones violence, it commands it” and this answers why the *jihad* must be upheld by the Muslims. Even in conception, Allah, in religion and teaching contrasts Jesus Christ and Jehovah and the Christian and Jewish teachings.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, the sense of equity and holism demands that all the three major religions in Nigeria must be touched. Thus, from the side of the African Traditional (Indigenous) Religion, two things stand out: (1) that it is culture-emanated, or better still, nature-oriented unlike Islam and Christianity; (2) that it has no enacted documents as scriptures like the duo, rather nature is its scripture and that is why certain natural phenomenal and culturally significant objects stand as religious and sacred worth of reverence, things like *Ofo* and *Ogu* (justice, equity and uprightness symbolism), *Omu* (figure of sacredness), *Odò* and *nzù* (peace, tranquil unity and openness figure), etc.<sup>34</sup> All these are traditionally religiously significant phenomena which ensure human welfarism. There may be an argument though that had the traditional religion had documented scriptures, some similar ills found in the foreign counterparts could still be found in them. Yes, that is probably true; but regardless of being documented, some activities by some extremists have created insecurity in the society. The extremist act of employing masquerade to create chaos in society by some unscrupulous youth is one aspect of religious extremism in the traditional religion. Personally there have been scenes of such unwarranted extremism perpetrated by the traditional religionists (youths) like employing masquerade to beat aged people, people who are clearly sick or deformed and under aged persons or even using it to retaliate to women whom they hold grudges against. Some masquerading youths instead of recreating in their playful mood, some perhaps out of alcohol intoxication, would lose this sense of play and carry unnecessary weapons like axe, broken bottles, etc. around showing readiness for violence. Nonetheless, certain items like *Obejiri* (local iron sword) or the iron staff (*Oji* or *Arua*) held by many of the old and revered masquerades, iron bells and certain trumperies made of iron worn around the ankle, waist, hand, etc are allowed to be seen with masquerades, but utmost care must be set on him as regards to the full conscious management of the swords with which he collects gifts from people to avoid contacts as ‘spirit-beings’ and ‘human-beings’ interaction. Another angle to this perspective is that there have been series of fights, violence and some a times, severe injuries that led to eventual death among the locals- some of whom are towing the way of the foreign religions and others traditional religion. Some traditional religious extremist’s behaviours have posed free socialization and movement insecurities to some women folks especially widows who receive intimidations from the extremist-men against which some feminists have vehemently criticized. However, many a times, a critical follow up to the logical conclusion of some of these violent scenarios among the people shows that they, most a times, are caused by the foreign religious counterparts who now see anything religiously traditional as invalid, diabolic and unworthy hence fetish. In the intoxication of being blended and counted as Muslims and Christians, they forget the rights of others who are not in their religious creed. Some would even tag this antagonism a mission directed by the ‘Holy Spirit’ by going to the village and destroying some religious phenomena of the traditionalists and also forcing and intimidating them physically, emotionally, economically, politically, etc to their own religious creed. Instances of such intimidation and religious extremism occurred one day when a soldier commanded a masquerade to push a lorry owned and parked by Northerners along Ugwu Oba axis in Oji-River Local Government Area of Enugu State and when the masquerade turned to push he would use a *koboko* cane on his back, and it was turned ‘a laughing scene’. Again, today, in almost every community, the western religion (Christianity) has overtaken some traditional events like New Yam Festival, masquerade cultural festival and has punctuated the activities of the event to their own measures and to the intimidation and watering of the nitty-gritty of the event. Practically, they scrap some parts, order traditional religionists to register some activities and equally intimidate them with western establishment like police who would hurl them with assaults. It has become so common among some Nigerians to posit that Nigeria has only two religions (Christianity and Islam) to the neglect of African Traditional Religion, this utter exclusion is an extremist act. That was how Christianity and Islam conquered the States they dominate to the intimidation and total eradication of the religions of the locals. These intimidating instances are enough to stir up violence in the traditional religionists. Hence, while some common social acts that bred insecurity are caused by extremists of the foreign religions, few are caused by extremist traditional religionists.

### Religious Extremism in Nigeria: A Philosophical Interaction

Before deepening into this discourse, it is important to note that both Christianity or its root religion- Judaism, and Islam are foreign religions locally began in Israel headquartered at Jerusalem and in Saudi Arabia headquartered at Mecca. While there is no argument over the foundation of Christianity on Jesus Christ, or Judaism on Moses through the Mosaic Laws, among some Muslims, Mohammed was the founder, but to some, Allah (the Islamic God) was the founder, and to others, other beings, based on their own peculiar creed. Having narrated how these foreign religions, most of which are our focus- Christianity and Islam started and expanded, same story applies to how their expansion got to Nigeria. But the Nigerian

<sup>33</sup> George Jr. W. Braswell, *Islam: Its Prophet, Peoples, Politics and Power* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 44-8; Daymond R. Duck, *The Book of Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 152-3.

<sup>34</sup> Anayochukwu K. Ugwu, et al., “Heidegger’s Concept of Art and the African Concept of Art: An Insight into the Discourse of Being and Truth,” *Philosophy and Praxis*, 11(2), 2021, 39-48

problems have always been divided along tribal and political lines.<sup>35</sup> But for the sake of our focus and scope, we shall deal on the problems as they relate to religion and how they have been perpetrated by religious bigotry. Apart from the fact that religions are questionable as has been analyzed above following the violence tendencies in religious scriptures, Islam is the most practical violent. The cardinal practising of Islamism is violence itself. Practically, the Northern region of Nigeria has always existed with and in crisis perpetrated by religion- Islam particularly. Nigerian Muslims have never left practically the orientation of dominate, conquer and rule which has always been the Islamic method of expansion. Though, fears of the consciousness and knowledge of human rights have dowsed its intensity in developed countries unlike Nigeria where ignorance over these quintessential facts of life is still high and human right has not taken its central and existential position.

A point necessary to be put straight here is that, if it were not because of jihadism (a religious reformation propagation based on conquest and imposition of the conqueror's religious culture on the conquered which the Hausa Nation experienced, and the whole Nigerian peoples are today experiencing from the Fulani), the Fulani Nation and their Islamism would not have been a Nigerian nation today. The emergence of Fulani in the geographical entity called Nigerian was through a 15<sup>th</sup> century Senegalese immigrant scholar from Futa-Toro in the Toronkawa clan, called Muhammad Fodiye who was to become the father of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Islamic jihadist, preacher, reformer and conqueror of the Hausa Nation, Uthman dan Fodio.<sup>36</sup> Islam in Nigeria has always grown by the force of the sword and on the 'conquest and take over' orientation/mentality; and to seal this Islamic struggle in Nigeria, Dan Fodio conquered the then Gobir State and its capital city, Alkalawa, and from there, through the force of the sword, expanded to the other pure/real Hausa States (Hausa Bakwai) and to the other impure/unreal Hausa States some of whose Kingdoms dated from even the 11<sup>th</sup> century during the reigns of some Kings like Gunguma, and then institutionalized Islam therein, through imposition. And to sustain the structure and in allegiance to the ancestors, the Fulani Nation, the Caliphate and Emirate till today in Nigeria still maintain this ancestral institutionalized structure that no Hausa National can become the Sultan or Emir of any Islamic caliphate or emirate in whose land of nationality they are located. The caliphate in Sokoto is headed by the Sultan, a socio-religious position Dan Fodio assumed until his death and the Emirate in Kano is of same socio-political and religious position but headed by his son and these two cities take a place of pride in the Northern socio-political and religious affairs. Thus, the Fulani nation is not originally and indigenously a Nation within the region called Nigeria today, but by the virtue of religious conquest, has become a Nigerian Nation. They are currently, through the conquest religious mentality and as pre-encouraged by the Holy Quran, severely ravaging the whole Nigerian geography for Islamization agenda. What Nigeria as a political entity is going through today in the religiously encouraged/motivated fierce hands and sword of Islamic jihadists perpetuated by the Fulani nationals, was what many Middle East and some African nations that have, from *ab initio*, been religiously traditionalists but were later conquered by Christianity, suffered years ago in the hands and sword of Arabian Islamic jihadists before they were finally swallowed by jihadism thereby being conquered/forced to Islamic religious dominance.

Thus, it could be posited that the Nigerian 18/19<sup>th</sup> century experiences were full of religious conquest of both Christian and Islamic revolutions, reformations through which Christianization and Arabization, dominance of Arabic and western culture, language, and precisely, Islamic extremism/radicalism, discrimination and most of all domineering characteristic prevailed in Nigeria. Adding to this include commercial activities, cultural infiltration giving rise to interculturality, among other media, progressed the experiences the more. These Arabs are the Fulani tribe/nation that have today dominated Nigeria. They are the core Muslims in Nigeria who through the today geographical borders at Kanem Borno, and other Northern border axis with other African (Islamic) countries, infiltrated the Northern Nigeria, dominated it, conquered it and are now ruling it— be it religiously, politically and otherwise and are, in no near time, ready to allow the indigenes of the dominated territory to smell any position of rulership for it is religiously predestined that they shall always be the rulers. At their entry into the today Nigeria, they dominated, conquered the Hausa tribe and vehemently destroyed their culture, traditions, religion and even neo-colonized them through disorienting them about their original ways of life just as it is a fulfilment of the order guiding their Islamic creed— dominate, conquer and rule. The truism of this position was perfected and happily declared by Sir. Ahmadu Bello, the then Sardauna of Sokoto who, speaking to the media years back, once said:

The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the north as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over their future<sup>37</sup>

From this quote, among many others and other analysis in such reference,<sup>38</sup> it is deducible that the Fulani tribe is not originally Nigerian, and they are always at the fore front of championing Islamic causes. Thus, when Nigerians are forced to

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<sup>35</sup> Anayochukwu K. Ugwu, "Politics of Religion and Tribalism and the Fate of the Nigerian Nation," *Academia Letters Journal*, Article 3538, (2021), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3538>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.britanica.com> Usman dan Fodio / Fulani leader- Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed on 13/06/2022

<sup>37</sup> Benilily, 'Sir Ahmadu Bello's Statement' made in *The Parrot Newspaper* on October 12<sup>th</sup> 1960, Days after Independence. Accessed from <https://www.nairaland.com/1977382/sir-ahmadu-bellos-statement-made-2/10/2018>

be continuously ruled by the Fulani tribe and when they succeed and the government is hijacked (Fulanized); when Nigerians experience violence when a non-Fulani ascends on the Nigerian throne of governance; when Nigerians also lament on the level of playing ostrich with the issue of insecurity ravaging the country caused by Islamic extremists in their Islamization (which could also be referred to as Arabization) agenda and daring making it legal through official government documentations showing their core and traditional understanding of what politics and religion mean and imply, Nigerians should little wonder, for they are all at the core personality of who a Fulani Muslim ought to be.

But how does a core Muslim traditionally understand religion and politics? Traditionally, Politics and religion are intrinsically integrated that they are inseparable to a core Muslim. Being a religious ruler presupposes being a political ruler. Islamic religion needs the State/government so as to socially, practically and legally balance. It is a nature of religious absolutism inhered in it, but this nature of absolutism is a central nature in the Western religions (especially Christianity precisely Catholicism and Islam) unlike what is obtainable in the African Traditional (Indigenous) Religion (AT(IR)). One man at the apex of the structure is the overall figure (authority). It is this reason among others that prompted a German controversial catholic priest Hans Kung to criticize the church tagging it absolutist just like the Communist system. For him both the Communist system and the church (catholic precisely) are “absolutist, centralist, totalitarian— in short, enemies of freedom.”<sup>39</sup> For the Catholic authority, all these portray the characteristics of the mother church as one, holy, universal and perhaps apostolic.

From the level of critical exposure given to Islam in this work, one, especially a Nigerian should not ask oneself why the consistence of religious conflicts in Nigeria. Why the emergence of radicals which has today metamorphosed into terrorist groups as we see today and the subtle body languages of the authorities that should have quenched them at the early stage. The answer is simple: it is a subtle movement to Islamize Nigeria, and so, it is for the religious favour of the majority in power, and not just majority, but those in main, centre of power. This explains why many lives have been wasted in ‘North’, there reside or inhabit the Muslims among whom you find ten Islamic radicals out of fifteen people. It is the habitation of Muslims where among twenty people, fifteen are Islamic oriented and groomed radicals who are ever ready to waste lives and destroy properties. If the reality, experiential situation of crisis in Africa as a continent cannot explain the truism of this claim, that of Nigeria, or particularly Plateau State, can obviously and undoubtedly attest to the truism of the claim.

Further, one may not be wrong if one argues that Islam also encourages terrorism which has ravaged the world. Western education which Book symbolically stands for, must also be fought against. No wonder the name of the Nigerian terrorist group called *Boko Haram* which literary means (book- western education- is abomination, evil (and must be rejected and disrupted with every tactic)). This has a lot to say as why Africa has remained religion economy, immoral and corrupted economy and deeply underdevelopment economy even in the midst of natural resources with which God has blessed it. This is because Islam with its Islamization agenda and mercenary of ‘jihadism’ has taken over Africa and Nigeria in particular. It has been revealed that the Islamic great agenda is to subdue Africans, and Islamizeit, and the main target being Nigeria and Ghana. This is hopefully to be achieved by disseminating all over Africa, the Fulani jihadists extraction for the Arabization agenda. It is seriously ongoing today. That is what is perfectly working out in Nigeria and on a clearer ground even to a day old baby since 2015. Statistically speaking, every public and political office holder in every public and political sector in Nigerian as a sovereign state is headed by a Fulani Muslim. How possible could it be that haters of modern enlightenment and education would be on top of the people’s affairs, yet the people still expect modern development!

It is this unguided and misdirected fanaticism that the Nigerian society suffers its effects. In the history of the peoples of Nigeria, religious fanaticism has been displayed, many a times, in a negative way. This thus raises the question: How do the Nigerian peoples conceive religion? Certainly a do or die affair. From an objective point of view, even though the incidents of the effects of religious extremism have been experienced in every part of the country, they become domicile in the Northern part dominated by Muslims. The reason behind this position is drawn majorly from two factors: (1) their understanding of religion and politics; and (2) the level of engaging rationality in their religious affairs- very poor indeed.

Apparently, there have been instances of compliance to this belief orientations or ideologies. The enmity instilled in Muslims still characterizes their religio-socio-political and economic relationships with the non-Muslims. Except Muslims rule in Nigeria, Nigerians shall never experience peace. It is their birth right to rule, that explains why in the history of Nigeria, Muslims have always ruled. Even from the era of their ancestors like Sir Ahmedu Bello, etc, religious *cum* tribal allegiance is first and more genuine than what is called ‘national patriotism’ and allegiance in Nigeria. ‘One Nigeria’ Mantra has always been ‘One Religion’ Mantra. So, in tribalism (and by extension religious diversity) are our pretending unity, patriotism and joy of nationhood.” An instance is cited with Mr. Buhari who in August 2001 in a speech delivered at a seminar organized by the Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria says: “I will continue to show openly and inside me the total

<sup>38</sup> Anayochukwu K. Ugwu, “A Critical Approach to the Problem of Nigeria and the Struggle for Nation Building,” *Sociology Study* 10(5), (Sept-Oct. 2020), 240-42, 43-4. doi:10.17265/2159-5526/2020.05.005

<sup>39</sup> Hans Kung, *Maranatha Newspaper*, Interview with *The New York Times* (March 2021), 5.

commitment to the Sharia movement sweeping all over Nigeria... God willing we will not stop the agitation for the total implementation of the Sharia in the country.”<sup>40</sup> His conduct towards the election of the substantive Secretary-General of the Organization of African Union (OAU) during the 1985 Summit in Addis Ababa Ethiopia where he voted against a Benue Statesman (Nigerian) whom Julius Nyerere even lobbied for, Peter Onu for a fellow tribesman from Niger Republic, Ide Oumarou was amazing.<sup>41</sup> This single act portrayed Mr. Buhari, the first and only Head of State in the history of modern international relations to vote against his country in favour of his tribesman— Fulani.<sup>42</sup> Even among the so attributed ‘Nigerian Founding Fathers’, we see this core undivided allegiance to religion than national issues. In some core Islamic Northern States, Sharian Law and Islamic traditions are supreme and applicable on daily basis, than the almighty Constitution of the ‘Federal Republic of Nigeria’. Hear this testimony from a Northern figure: “Holding this country together is not possible, except by means of the religion of the prophet (Mohammed). If they want political unity, let them follow our religion (Islam).”<sup>43</sup> Putting it more succinct, Sir Ahmadu Bello says again: “These southerners who desire a united Nigeria should first embrace Islam as their religion.”<sup>44</sup> In other words, he concludes: “North for the Northerners, East for the Easterners and West for the Westerners.”<sup>45</sup>

Many Muslim dominated Northern States have disregarded the national constitution which forbade State religion and went ahead to declare themselves Islamic States with Islamic religion as their State religion where Sharia is supreme. The implication is as simple as saying that there is no freedom to other religions than Islam in those States. This answers why Christians and a fraction of traditional religions adherents are severely persecuted in those States. That is a clear instance of the extremism this paper is evaluating.

Strategically, from the North-East where terrorist Boko Haram is ravaging to North-West where banditry is rampaging down to the North-Central where herdsmen terrorism is massacring, it is deductible that at the fundamental cause of these crises is religious bigotry. Boko Haram is an Islamic extremist sect whose ideology or creed is to destroy western movement expressed in education and governance system. As a religious sect that exists in line with the principles of Arab Islamic Extremism, western way of life must be forbidden. As an organized group, the sect has reliably become entangled with the Islamic States of West Africa Province (ISWAP), and by extension, Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups of Islamic religion. Because of the Nigerian political style which is played along religious affiliations, electoral time is seen as religious tussle, in that, religious mercenaries (jihadists) from other countries are invited in, signifying war-readiness. Most often, the act fires back for when these jihadists could not be fend well, they turn against the government who now is conceived as use-and-dump government. The weapons they are equipped with for war if the religious opponent wins are never retrieved after the election. This very act is at the bottom line of causative factors that cause insecurity crisis in Nigeria and why the government attitudes of playing the ostrich when these jihadists strike. He who should fight them and prosecute them is the founder and funder, how would the prosecution be successful? It all boils down to the question of good governance and the religion of the rulers in the North.

For instance, traditionally, some Nigerian Northern States like Jos is a Christian State, but social crisis rooted in religious domination has erupted the State. Christians in the State have refused to be dominated, conquered, intimidated and ruled by the bloodthirsty Islamic religious extremist movement. This domination-refusal has been the bedrock of the rocking crisis. Extending this trend of crisis, Islamic creed of rulers in Northern Nigeria determines a lot in peace of Northern States. For instance, when a ruler guided by the creeds of Sunni Islam ascends to throne, all the States dominated by Shiites or any other Islamic creed brand suffer severely. The current happenings since 2015 show clearly that Islamization of Nigeria under the leadership of Fulani ethnic nationality is fast succeeding.

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<sup>40</sup> Ugwu, “A Critical Approach,” 243.

<sup>41</sup> [www.vanguardngr.com/2017/02/23/2017/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/02/23/2017/); [www.chxta.medium.com](http://www.chxta.medium.com)

<sup>42</sup> Ugwu, “A Critical Approach,” 242

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Kenny, “Christians and Muslims in Nigeria: A Case of Competitive Sharing,” *Nigerian Dialogue* 4(4), (1982), 33; Joseph N. Agbo, “Hundred Years of Britain’s Nigeria: A Historico-Philosophical Analysis of the Idea of a “Non Negotiable” Unity,” *Nigeria, Hundred Years After: Issues and Perspectives in Philosophical Discourse*, Martin. F. Asiegbu, and Jerry. C. Chukwuokolo (eds), (Enugu: Jones Communications Publishers, 2016), 47; Geoffrey C. Asadu, “Special Issue Ethno-Religious Conflict: The Bane of Nigeria Unity,” [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331071166\\_Special\\_Issue\\_Ethno-Religious\\_Conflict\\_The\\_Bane\\_Of\\_Nigeria\\_Unity](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331071166_Special_Issue_Ethno-Religious_Conflict_The_Bane_Of_Nigeria_Unity), 2018; Peter O. O. Ottuh, John A. Ottuh and Victoria O. Aitufe, “Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria: The Problems and Prospects,” *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3(2), (April 2014), 54.

<sup>44</sup> Agbo, “Hundred Years,” 47

<sup>45</sup> Bernard C. Nze, *Patriotism: A Cultural Emanation* (Onitsha: Veritas & Publishing Co. Ltd, 1994), 7; Ugwu, “A Critical Approach,” 243.

As an effort to give legal basis to the Islamization agenda in Nigeria, there have been series of attempts to give legal security to Islamic religion. A clear case of such incident in Nigeria, among many others, was the fight by a one time Islamic scholar, Justice B. Sambo during the 1979 constitution debate. Bringing out the Islamic radicalism against a western structured democratic government system, just as his counterpart in the Arabic world have done and instituted extremists who have overthrown government, Sambo fought tooth and nail to see that the Nigerian constitution was religionized so that Islamism would subtly be inscribed into the constitution for legality purposes and easy Islamization of Nigerian.<sup>46</sup>Reasons include: (1) there is no difference between the government (or State) and religion according to the Islamic traditional understanding; (2) the State/government has only one rationally justifiable reason to exist: to propagate and defend, at all cost, Islamic causes; (3) there is no difference between Islam and Sharia; (4) "Sharia precedes the State in time and prevails over it in authority"; (5) Sharia is the only way to the truth; (6) Allah alone is the true God and human institutions are the media through which Allah rules the whole universe and as such, all people must obey Allah and his appointed ministers and those invested with political authority among you the people.<sup>47</sup>This understanding breeds nothing but religious extremism, religious slavery, etc. Little wonder then Okpanachi would categorize ways of encouraging terrorism and fanaticism through religious instrumentality under political and non-political, State, militancy, ethnic, suicidal and religious means.<sup>48</sup> More often than not, they are ignorant of the fact that wisdom precedes knowledge, and so, should reasoning stand to justify faith. The justification of faith by reasoning presupposes that morality is above religion or religiosity. By this, man by reasoning ought to exist above religious ethics and dictates for many of these dictates inhere violence which signifies insecurity. This now calls up for the second factor.

How does a Muslim engage rationality in Islam? If the term 'rationality' could be anything to go by, then it is the creed of his religion. The 'wisdom' he thinks is inherited in his religion is all he knows as rationality. This creed is the absolute, unquestionable, the force and rationale behind his religious fanaticism. If rationality is understood secularly as philosophical criticality, posing argument based on reasoning and to questioning the reasonableness of his belief, then it is entirely scrubbed out and not allowed to be engaged in his religion. The Nigerian peoples who most imbibe by this are primarily the Fulani, and secondarily the Hausa who have been dominated and have become slaves to the cultures of the invader-Fulani. Hausa have assimilated the culture and religion of the Arabs (Fulani) that they have become helpless. Trying to now make a distinction between the level of religious extremism of the Fulani/Hausa peoples and the converts all over Nigeria, the distinction is: while cultures of the converts still have high impacts on the intelligence quotients of the converts, the former only express their own even subconsciously in religion. This distinction is clear as the Nigerian Muslim converts could be seen studying philosophy and critically interrogating certain aspects of their religious creeds, just very few 'civilized' core or creed inventors (Fulani/Hausa) undertake philosophical studies, and when this is the case, must never be so critical to the questioning of the rationale behind their religious creed. This explains why also in the North, just very few universities started offering philosophy as a course/discipline. That also explains why if one questions Islam or Islamic belief, one gets the 'deserved' reward which is to be burnt to death or stoned to death for that is simply a profane or blasphemy against Islam and Islamic beliefs. In a philosophy class on intercultural related course on the 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, a colleague told how in his very before, a lecturer at the University of Abuja, through the help and presence of other students which intimidated the Islamic extremist students, escaped meeting his death because he was being critical of religions and when it came to Islam, it became something else of profane against Mohammed—the last messenger of Allah. The recent cases of Miss Deborah Samuel, a 200 level student in Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, Sokoto State and that of a vigilante, Ahmad Usman by a religious extremist set at Tipper Garage, Federal Housing Estate, Lugbe District, Abuja, the capital city of Nigerian are just very few instances.<sup>49</sup> Today, the purity of the Nigerian land is crying for vengeance having been soaked with human blood most perpetrators are the Islamic jihadists both in Northern and Southern hemispheres. Worst of it all is that the Northern Nigerian political class would, out of religious enthusiasm, organize, instigate and equip them both materially and ideally, into action and finally stand in for their defence. That is the rationale behind non-prosecution of the just one percent apprehended population of these extremists and even when the class would cover national shame for this, they opt for being their prosecutors.<sup>50</sup>And rationality would ask what the fate of justice should be when both the prosecutor and the judge is one person! Many have come out to defend them saying that to touch these religiously motivated extremists under the disguise/extraction of herdsmen terrorism is to touch the North, and in a political follow, would reject power dissolution and restructuring for that is to hinder their ease to perpetrate Islamization agenda

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<sup>46</sup> Bashire Sambo, "Draft Constitution failed to Provide for Morality," *New Nigeria*, 7/4/1977, 7; Bashire Sambo, "Draft Constitution failed to Provide for Morality," *New Nigeria*, 7/4/1977, 4-10; Ngwoke, *Islam*, 13-6

<sup>47</sup> Noel J. Coulson, "The State and Individual in Islamic Law" *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, (Vol. 6), (1957), 49; James N. D. Anderson, "Law as a Social Force in Islamic Cultures and History," *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, (Vol. 20), (1957), 13; Henry Sigman, "The State and the Individual in Sunni Islam," *The Moslem World* (Vol. 54), (1964), 14; Sura IV, 59; Ngwoke, *Islam*, 11-2.

<sup>48</sup> Elijah O. Okpanachi, "Terrorism in Nigeria and the Question of Religion," *Aquino Journal of Philosophy*, 2(2), (2022), 128-37

<sup>49</sup> [www.sunnewsonline.com](http://www.sunnewsonline.com) 24/05/2022; [www.premiumtimesng.com](http://www.premiumtimesng.com) 05/06/2022

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.thisdaylive.com> or <https://www.dailytrust.com> or <https://www.allafrica.com> 27/11/2020

through the coverage of the federal might.<sup>51</sup> They even go as far as coming up with subtle bills like that of Ruga, Water Ways, etc., in the National Parliament to more reinforce and reinstall them in every Nigerian State. The type of politics Nigerians play is a tribalistic but more religious one that has encouraged religious extremist activities and insecurity, self-inflicted one so to say.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, Nigerians should no more bewildered beholding strange belief systems by the Muslims which have inculcated in them the tendency of extremism to the enhancement of insecurity. That equally says a lot in regards to religious freedom among Nigerians and how the prominent religions found in Nigeria have ensured religious liberty. In some Northern States, Christians have no right to exercise their religion. In fact, some churches, out of bias steering from religious bigotry, have been alleged to be creating noise pollution, others not sited on a supposed place, and consequently closed down. Whether these were true or not, the question is: are mosques in the same place void of such things which the churches were accused of and shut down as a result?

By and large, we can see thus that religion through extremists has created insecurity which does not start and end with physical violence and attacks but goes beyond this to include emotional, employment, economic, growth, education, agricultural, sports, spiritual, religious, freedom insecurity. Humanism and human freedom are ontological to man and found at the centrality of ethical principles, and must not be tempered with, not even by any religion.

## CONCLUSION

We have analyzed religion as a concept to mean the relationship between an inferior (physical being represented by man) and a superior (spiritual being represented by God) where the inferior largely depends on the superior for sustenance. By this perspective, by nature, every man is religious, because every man belongs to either a particular religion or creed, even atheists belong to atheistic creed. The concern for extremism therefore hinges on the effectiveness of the creed on the religious, hence religious problems are traced to the particular belief that guides a particular religion/creed. Hence being religious is inherently positive for it reinstates the believer's commitment and promise to the creed of his religion, but this religiosity ought to be rationally tamed to weed off certain elements of negativity that could inhere in the creed which is now the driving force of his religiosity. When rationality which philosophy advocates is misapplied in the affairs of religion, religiosity (fanaticism) of a particular religion becomes dangerous. This is because no ideology or orientation is more influencing and powerful than religious orientation.

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<sup>52</sup> Anayochukwu K. Ugwu and George O. Abah, "The Role of Philosophy in Insecurity and Good Governance in Nigeria," *Sociology Study*, 10(6), (Nov-Dec. 2020), 287-18. doi:10.17265/2159-5526/2020.06.004. Cf. Ugwu, "A Critical Approach," 223-51

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