

HUMANITY AND THE SCOURGE OF RELIGIOUS CRISES-NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The level of violence and crises that Nigeria is experiencing presently under the auspices of religious crises brings to question, the initial tenets of religion in terms of guaranteeing and preaching of morality, tolerance, accountability, sympathy for one another and good neighbourliness which are the essential ingredients of peaceful co-existence. Thus, the growing incidence of religious holocaust in the country keeps on unleashing untold effects on the citizens culminating in all sorts of human abuse with attendant effects on the nation. Consequently, this study attempted a retrospective examination of religious crises and human abuse in Nigeria. Attempts were made to underscore the genesis, factors, incidence, trend and effects of religious crises on human beings. Recommendations were made to forestall occurrence of such crises in Nigeria.

Introduction

An elder statesman, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania in the wake of independence among African countries once argued that political independence without economic independence is but a sham. This contention seems to haunt most African countries, Nigeria inclusive till the present time. Reason for this ugly situation may not be far-fetched. Despite the country's richness in natural resources, the country still lack concomitant manpower capable of bringing the best out of the said resources that can be employed in bringing about appreciable growth and development economically. This is with no thanks to a number of problems the country is grappling with, chief among which are unemployment, security threat and gross abuse of human rights among others. Among the life-threatening problem confronting the country is religious imbroglio that is seemingly on the increase and unabated across the country.

Religious issues in the proper perspective are expected to be an instrument of peace and tranquility. This is capable of moving the nation forward and launches it in the pedestal of economic development. Confirming this stance, Omolade (2009) rightly observed that religion guarantees and preaches morality, tolerance, accountability, sympathy for one another and good neighbourliness which are essential ingredients of peaceful co-existence. However, this has been arm-twisted since inception of religious holocaust that keeps on eating deep into the fabrics of the nation and seemingly unabated in the present dispensation.

Buttressing this fact, Adekunle and Osibodu (2011) argue that if religion breeds morality, tolerance and other essential ingredients of peaceful co-existence, then, the practicality of religion should not have borne domination, oppression, impression, terrorism, killing of fellow human beings as

well as ethnic clashes in the name of religion and riots of different forms. In each of the said situation, human being has always being at the receiving ends culminating in all sorts of human abuse ranging from injury, permanent disabilities and wanton death in some cases. Confirming this stance, Olu-Adeyemi (2006) asserts thus:

ethic of religious issues are part of the most recurring issues in Nigeria's body polity. The issue has permeated the landscape since the colonial period up till the present time, there seems to be no solution insight to the accompanying conflicts of ethnic rivalry and religious intolerance. The different religious worldview clashes at the slightest provocation (p.2).

As such, a good number of people that could have contributed significantly to the economic development of the nation have been cut-off or subjected to partial or permanent disability and could no longer be part of the needed man-power for the country.

Consequently, this paper examines incidence of religious crises in Nigeria and its attendant implications for human beings and the nation at large. As such, a retrospective approach is adopted in cataloguing series of religious crises that has bedeviled the nation in the time past to the present and the attendant effects on human beings and the nation at large. Among others, the study x-rays factors influencing religious crises and its trends while way forward for curtailing the monster are proffered.

Conceptual Clarification

Religion on a general note constitutes beliefs in the existence of a Supernatural Being.

This Supernatural Being is held in awesome and professed in different faiths culminating in religious groups and sects. It is a phenomenon that pervades human societies, actions and in-actions generally. Anyawu (2004) posit religion as that which has to do with human interaction with the supernatural being for the purpose of coping with life crises. Hence, Balogun (2011) affirms that religion is the force behind man's action or in-action.

Subscribing to religion as a force behind human actions, Ukachukwu (2006) contends that:

Religion of all sorts and in Nigerian context, namely Traditional or Indigenous religion, Islam and Christianity, to just name the rather popular faiths in our environment constitute one of the living springs of human life which have influenced and continue to direct the course of peoples lives in diverse ways (p. 1-2).

Thus, religion tends to intoxicate its adherents, the more reason why Karl Marx described it as the opium of the masses.

Furthermore, religion in the words of Abioye (2001) entails perception of the infinite in its face value, 'recognition of our duties as divine commands', something having its centre in a reality that is quite distinctive and compelling. Sebiomo (2001) quoting Udo sees religion as man's effort in satisfying certain emotional needs through establishment and maintenance of cordial relationship between himself and the super-sensible i.e. the Supreme Being and his fellow man. Thus, religion can be seen as a system of belief about individuals' place in the world that provides order to such world and the means of existence therein.

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Religious crisis, a product of prolonged conflicts and unresolved issues is a manifestation of certain perceptions in some religious parlance. Since crises constitute a time of great danger, difficulty or uncertainties, a sort of unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending especially one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome (Adekunle & Adegbaibe, 2010), religious crisis thus, is a period characterized by dangers, absence of peace, war and distractions. The said situation was alien to Nigeria until 70's and has assumed greater proportion in the present time. Commenting on the advent of religious crisis in Nigeria, Oladiti (2003) write thus:

historically, the three prominent religion groupings in Nigeria...have been co-existing without generating brawl and as such, religious intolerance was then a distance issue rearing up in areas such as Lebanon, Ireland, Palestine. With time, differences of religion began to register among the adherents generating to deeper divisions within the community of religions which thus degenerated to bigotry, intolerance, the product of which are crises and tension and of recent assumed higher degree of panic, fear and terror of the highest order (p. 185).

The situation has been described as 'evils that are always around us which tend to always stretch the bounds of unity to a potentially snapping point' (Jega, 2002; Salawu, 2010). To this end, Adekunle and Osibodu (2011) opine that crisis in religious circle is a highly pronounced social phenomenon which has been a menace intimidating Nigerian citizenry.

The word, abuse is a relative term. To abuse is to use or treat someone or something wrongly or badly especially in a way that is to ones own advantage. In this wise, human abuse is an infringement on the fundamental rights of human being. In the context of religious crisis therefore, human abuse constitute subjecting fellow human beings to all forms of dehumanizing situations such as restriction of movement, deterrence of faith professing, injury, killing and destruction as well as displacement in some cases. Confirming this stance, US Report on religious conflict and intolerance worldwide indicated that Nigeria along with other nations like China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Pakistan, Sudan, Vietnam and North Korea are guilty of directly violating the religious freedom of their citizens. This of course is a form of human abuse.

Buttressing further on religious conflicts as basis of human abuse, Akintayo (2007) affirms thus:

In most countries of the world we have occurrences of religions conflicts. Conflict is the state of disagreement or assignment between two religion parties when each of them claims to have monopoly of truth regarding religious beliefs. This often generate into hot argument...The next thing coming after this could be physical combat fight, hostilities, scramble, scrimmage, scuffle, quarrel, war, squabble...Such has led to destruction of lives and properties (P. 3).

The foregoing constitute human abuse generally which tend to have a lot of implications for individual, society and the nation at large.

Incidence and Trend of Religious Crises in Nigeria

The history of religious crises dated back to the post independence era. However, prior to this period, there have been skirmishes of religious intolerance in this part of Africa, but not as volatile as what obtains presently. Attesting to this fact, Jekayinoluwa and Egbetola (2010) write that:

Several cases of religious intolerance leading to religion insurrection and disturbances in different parts of the country have threatened the corporate existence of the country. The history of religious crises in Nigeria could be dated back to the period before independence. And because there was non-partisan approach by those in position of authority at that different times before independence, the conflict never posed any major threat---but shortly after independence the approach to resolve religious crises, anytime it occurs always look political (p. 525).

The assertion of Jekayinoluwa and Egbetola is a clear indication of the trend of religious crisis in the Nigeria of today.

Buttressing further on the trend and occurrence of religious crisis in Nigeria, Olu-Adeyemi (2006) opines that religious issue among others has permeated the landscape since the colonial period till the present time which has defile solution in terms of intolerance where the different religious worldview clash at slightest provocation. To this end, Ayantayo (2005) reiterates the U.S. Commission on International Religious freedom's observation that Nigeria, Iran, Sudan, Vietnam, North-Korea and China are the nations where religious conflict is rampant. Reason for this according to Omotoye

(2010) is because religious intolerance and violence has become international problem being used by unscrupulous adherent of world religion to achieve their selfish and parochial interest.

Religious crisis has in many respects affected the opportunities of diversity that Nigeria as a diverse nation supposed to be enjoying which according to Ayantayo (2005), is the ugly social relationship existing in African states presently which were in the past cherished and envied in terms of the sense of brotherhood. Hence, destructive conflicts, chiefly among which is religious have turned Africa, the most diverse of all the continents of the world into a continent unable to turn its trend of diversity into opportunities for development (file//A:/contemporary conflicts in Africa htm).

It is instructive to note that prior to the advent of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria, religious violence was a rarity and Nigeria is seen as a traditional society where (Harvey, 1988) disagreements over religions are alien and religious toleration is a way of life. Sequel to the coming of the so-called imported religions, the country started experiencing religious intolerance culminating in crisis and war in some respect. Today, religion according to Alana (1993) has become an important weapon of manipulating and dividing the people, misuse of which has led to ugly riots and loss of lives and property. The two notable religions-Islam and Christianity have been found culpable of the said situation.

Reiterating this fact, Adekunle and Adegbaïke (2010) opine that the infiltration of Christianity and Islam into Nigeria

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brought about hostilities resulting from diversity of opinion held by adherents of both religions. Balogun (2011) also corroborates the said stance by saying that, of all the three popular religions, only adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR) which Islam and Christianity despised as idol worshippers scarcely engage themselves in religious crisis as most religious conflicts recorded in Nigeria had been between the two imported religions. However, this is not to say that the ATR is free of perpetrating religious crises in the country as there are skirmishes of such recorded in some parts of the country. For instance, mention can be made of Oro fraternity cum Muslim crisis in Saki, Oyo state; Sango worshippers and oro fraternity clashes with Christian in Oyo Township in the past, to mention but a few.

Though, a number of religious crisis has been recorded in Nigeria in the past especially in the post-

independence, claiming many lives and property, the Fourth Republic has been noted for high rate of religious crisis with a record of about 40% of such crises (Mohammed, 2005; Salawu, 2010). Also, the Northern part of the country recorded high rate of such crises presently (Adekunle & Osibodu, 2011).

As religious crises increases, the issues become more complex, leading to wanton destruction of lives and properties. It is also associated with the use of more sophisticated weapons. A case in point is the issue of suicide bombers of the raging Boko Haram insurgency. To have a firm grip of incidence and trend of religious crises in Nigeria, catalogue of events in this respect between 1980 and 2012 is presented as follows:

Table 1: ***Chronicles of Crises in Nigeria***

Year	Type	Place	Remark
Dec.1979-1980	Muslim Students society rioted	Kaduna and Zaria	Inclusion of Sharia in the constitution or split the country.
1980	Maitatsine	Kano	4,117 lives lost
1982	Islamic fanatics	Bulukutu Maiduguri	400 lives lost
Feb. 1984	Maitatsine group	Jimeta-Yola	763 lives lost
March 1984	Religious riot	Yola	700 lives lost and 5,913 persons displaced
1984	Boarder conflict	Fier and Mangu boarders	No lives lost but injuries sustained
April 1985	Muslim fanatics	Lagos	6,000 armed Muslims dispersed by 9th mechanized Brigade Ikeja
March 1986	Muslim fanatics	Ilorin	Prevention of Christian March of palm Sunday
May 1986	Religious fanatics	University of Ibadan	Wooden sculpture of Jesus Christ destroyed
March 1987	Religious uprising between Christian and Muslims	College of education kafanchan	Misinterpretation of Holy Qur'an by Rev. Abubakar Bako
March 1988	Riots at Kaduna polytechnic	Kaduna	Christian's chapel burnt
April 1991	Muslim riots	Tafawa Balewa and	Muslims scolding a Fulani boy for

April 1991	Religious riots	surrounding village Kaduna Katsina and sokoto	buying suya from a Christian trader. Over publication by daily times on a reformed prostitute
Oct. 1991	Religious riots	Kano	Izala Against Rev. Reinhard Bonke
1992	Muslim riots	Tafawa Balewa an d surroundings	Over use of Abattoir
1992 to date	Economic conflict	Delta Rivers, Bayelsa	Many lives and property lost
1992-1995	Boundary disputes	Bokkos and Mangu boarders, plateau state	Ownership of land
1993	Maitatsine	Funtua	Maintatsine 'kalakato' sect struck in.
1995	Islamic fundamentalists	Kano	Gideon Akaluka beheaded for using a torn page Qur'an to pack excreta
1993-1994	Ethno conflict	Between	Andoni and Ogoni of Rivers State
1996-1997	Ethno conflict in Taraba	Between	Karim and Lamido
1997	Ethno-conflict	Between	Berom and Hausa Fulani at Buruku Georo Road
1997	Mangu-changal	Conflict	Overland
1998-2000	Ethno-political conflicts in	Okitipupa area of	Ondo state
1999-2000	Ethno-conflict	Mushin, Ketu, Ajegunle and Agege	Many live and property Destroyed
1999-2001	Ethno-conflicts	Shagamu	
2000	Ethno-conflicts	In Aguleri	And Omuleri areas of Anambra State
2001-date	Economic, and political conflicts	Delta Rivers Bayelsa states	Kidnapping, killing, destruction of property by the movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)
2001	Ethno-conflicts	Gwantu Kaduna state	Many live lost
2001 sept.	Religious	Jos and environs	Blocking of road during Jumat prayer and a Christian woman violated it. Heavy loss of lives and property.
2001, 2004 and 2008	Ethno-religion conflicts	Wase, Langtang South, kadarko, Duwi	Live, property and animals destroyed or displaced
2001	Ethno conflict in Osun	Between Ife State where lost	And Modakeke lives and property
2004	Religions	Yelwa, Shendam garkawa	Murder of Christians in the church at Yelwa many lives and property lost
2007	Ethno conflict	Namu	Claim of ownership of Namu town, by Geomai and Kwalla nationalities
Nov. 2008	Ethno-religious riot	Some part of Jos North	Worst riot in the state capital of Plateau state. Many lives and property lost
Nov - Dec. 2008	Ethno conflict	Kadarko wadata Arewa	Ownership of land in Kadarko by Tatok and Kwalla nationalities.
Feb. 2009	Religious conflicts	Bauchi town and surrounding	Many churches and destroyed
December 25, 2011	Christmas Day	Bombing in Madalla, Niger State	About 50 people died
January 5, 2012	Church Attack	Gombe State	Six people died
January 6, 2012	Christ Apostolic Church	Yola Adamawa State	17 people died also 20 Igbo people were also killed
Janaury 22, 2012	Two Churches destroyed	Bauchi State, Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area	Two military personnel, a DPO and eight civilians also killed

Source: (a) Folaranmi A. A. (2010) *The Role of Traditional, Political and Religious Leaders in Conflict Resolution for Sustainable Development in Nigeria*; (b) *Tell Magazine* February 6, 2012 pp 44-45.

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Revelations from Table 1 indicated that the issue of religious rancor that started as rife, envy culminated in conflicts and in the course of time, degenerated into violence and crises, thus, leaving scars in the country. For instance, Mgbeokwere (2010) affirms that since 1999, Kano, Kaduna, Gombe, Bauchi, Maiduguri, Jos has turned into theatres of horrendous killings and arson. This further confirms the claim of Adekunle & Osibodu (2011) that examples of religious crises were highly recorded in the Northern part of Nigeria in the recent years. However, this is not to say that other parts of the country are free from the said onslaughts as rightly observed by Salawu (2010) that many parts of Nigeria have become theatres of war characterized by an increasing number of ethnic and religious crises.

Factors Influencing Religious Crises

The spate of religious crisis in the country is growing at an alarming rate. This might not be unconnected with a number of factors which keeps on fuelling the embers of discord culminating in crisis. To start with, the structure of Nigerian nation, a paradox of the unwholesome marriage of amalgamation of 1914 of the Northern and Southern protectorates with differing characteristics accounts for a number of conflicts and crises reigning in the colonial and post-colonial era till the present time. Reiterating this view, Clark (2005) writes that over the years, many events in Nigeria have led to the politicization of mistrust, intolerance, violence and acrimonious relations between the mainly Moslem North and the Christian South of Nigeria. This is due to an unfortunate insertion of ethno-religious discrimination and incompatibility in the structures of the Nigerian state since the colonial period. Clark's view is an indication that religious crises and other

crises in Nigeria have historical antecedents in the country.

An associated factor of religious crisis is the stance of successive leaders in the country. For instance, Nigeria among other nations have been accused of being guilty of directly violating the religious freedom of their citizens or allowing regional or local governments to restrict religious freedom or ignoring inter-religious violence in their country. Another related factor is the misconception of freedom in certain quarters. With this, citizens under the guise of fundamental human right, associated with democratic dispensation tend to fuel religious crisis across the nation. Commenting on this, Salawu (2010) adduced that the increase in the spate of crises rocking Nigeria especially in the fourth republic is due to freedom provided by democratic rule. This accounted for about 40% of such crisis in 4th Republic alone.

The multiplier nature of the causes of religious crisis can not be over-emphasized. As such, the fear of domination, ethnicity and selfish interests among others interacts to bring about the spate of religious crisis in Nigeria. For instance, the emergence of ethnic militias and the deep divides between the various ethnic groups contribute to religious intolerance that has become more violent and bloody characterized by devastating results. It thus constitutes evils that easily stretch the bounds of unity to potentially snapping point. Associated with the foregoing is the issue of fears of political domination of one ethnic or religious group by the other culminating in rivalry, resultant of which is religious violence and crisis (Olu-Adeyemi, 2006; Salawu, 2010; Jega, 2002).

Selfish interest of individuals and groups also account for the spate of religious crisis in Nigeria. With this, certain

individuals from some quarters that benefits at the expense of other citizens and state do fuel religious crisis. To this, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2001) posits that numerous actors have a stake in the promotion of ethno-religious conflicts for the fact that arithmetic of numbers underpinning such conflicts translates into jobs, contracts, the ration for local governments and states as well as representations in the National Assembly. Little wonder, Salawu (2010) lists among others, accusations and allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry as major causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. There also exist interplay of politics, ethnics and religions leading to rising nationalism and militancy of various ethnic and religious movements. The end result of such situation is religious conflagrations in the country. Mention cannot but be made of government policies with regards to the causes of religious crisis in Nigeria. Government in-actions in formulating and implementing policies capable of fostering economic development, unity in diversities and national cohesion go a long way in bringing about religious crisis. Attesting to this, Salawu (2010) argues that the failure of the Nigerian leaders to establish good governments, forge national integration and promote real economic progress through deliberate and articulated policies has led to mass-poverty and unemployment. In the event of the situation, a number of communal, ethnic, religious and class conflicts ensued in Nigeria.

Again, promotion of force and violence as instrument of change especially as witnessed during the military era has translated into arm conflict in the country presently. This is seen in the indiscriminate use of weapons in enforcing changes. As such, the proliferations of various militias characterized by wielding of sophisticated arms and ammunitions have become the order of the day in Nigeria. A point of reference is the Niger-Delta volunteer forces holding the region by jugular before the extension of amnesty by the Federal government. The ongoing Boko Haram insurgence taking terrorist style is smearing the nation in the face. The sect who professed to be Muslims according to Kassim Ibrahim (Tell, February 6, 2012 p. 44) is unleashing attacks on fellow human beings.

Another fundamental factor underpinning religious and other crises in Nigeria is the issue of institutional breakdown. A number of social institutions that formed the nucleus of social control especially in African settings are fast loosing their initial identity. Such institutions according to Salawu (2010) include family, education law, religion as well as political system since most of them have failed in taking care of the well-being of the citizens. Also, religious crises can also be linked to the operations at the international arena. The politico-religious development in some other parts of the world is having its toll on Nigeria. Confirming this, Albert (2005) attests that developments in the Middle East do spur religious crises in Nigeria. Thus, end of cold war and replacement of communism with Islamism since 1980s has led to the phenomenological rise in religious crisis the world over. The same thing underlies the

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increasing waves of terrorism across the globe presently (Cordesman, 2003; Booth and Dunne, 2002).

A number of foreign influences have been recorded in Nigeria sparked up by foreigners such as the Maitatsine riots of 1980 anchored by Marwa, a Cameroonian nationality. Also, there has been involvement of non-indigenes in a number of urban insurgencies with active participation of such foreigners in conflict periods. Influence of foreign preachers also account for a number of religious crises in the country (Albert, 2005; Salawu, 2010). The implications of the foregoing is the fact that religious crisis is being caused by multifarious factors ranging from historical, psychological, national to international one.

Religious Crisis and Humanity Interplay in Nigeria

Having discussed so far on the phenomenological issue of religious crisis in Nigeria, it is pertinent to highlight the interplay of such crisis on human being who most of the time, are the recipients of the aftermath of such crisis. Such analysis could therefore serve as an eye-opener to the depth of abuse such is having on human beings and the nation at large. Crisis of any sort definitely is a wind that blows no one any good. It is only when such is at the level of conflict and disagreement that can be resolved amicably, that some 'wrongs' can be 'right' or corrected. The moment it escalates beyond conflict, it becomes violent, result of which is crisis, war and general breakdown of laws and order. When such happens, it leaves scars in terms of injury, death, disability, displacement, psychological trauma, economic crunch and disillusion. In such cases, the 'power in man' culminating

in productive being is thus hampered in such an individual. This portends grave consequences for the nation at large.

A close scrutiny of Table 1 brings into the fore the extent of the ills of religious crisis generally. In all the cases, human beings are always at the receiving ends. For instance, Salawu (2010) reiterates that Nigeria with more than 400 ethnic groups shared among Christianity and Islam. The crises between the two major religious groups since independence have recorded the loss of nothing less than over three million lives coupled with unquantifiable psychological and material damages. All these took place as a result of incessant disturbances of religious and ethnic rivalry. It is instructive to note again that Nigeria has lost no fewer than 2,000 lives between July 27, 2009 and January 26, 2012 to Boko Haram insurgence (Tell Magazine of February 6, 2012)

Buttressing further on the ills of religious crisis in Nigeria, Sebiomo (2001) enlists among others, effects of religious violence to include problem of national unity; killing and maiming, looting and destruction of properties, increased social vices, hatred and enmity as well as hampered economic development. Religious intolerance has become more violent and bloody with more devastating results in the present time, thus, increasing the rate of abuse to human personalities. Similarly, religious crisis as a violent issue taking the form of riots, sabotage, assassination, armed struggling, guerilla warfare and secession bids is of great implication for the political and economic development of the country. The impact of religious crisis on the overall general security of the nation is also grave due to its phenomenological increase across the nation which goes a long way in affecting

the citizens. Mohammed (2005) attests to the foregoing by saying that ethno-religious crisis has claimed in Nigeria so many lives and properties.

Another form of abuse to which religious crisis has subjected human being to is displacement of all sorts. Displacement here may take the form of residence, property, economic activities, religious practices and other means of survival. In such situation, people are being extracted from their original settlements. For instance, Salawu (2010) notes that as a result of civilian administration of the fourth republic and the attendant religious and ethnic crisis in the country, many people died and properties destroyed to the tune of billions naira. Also, Kano residents of Southern extraction who had lived all their adult lives in the ancient city of Kano had to return to their native land to count their losses.

More so, religious crisis do impact on the nation as a whole since the issue of religious and ethnic crisis is posing challenges to development of democracy, nation building and national integration. This is why Olu-Adeyemi (2006) opines that ethno-religious crises have become a clog in the attempt at nationhood in Nigeria despite her democratization. In like manner, the effect of the crises on the economic relations of the country with other countries of the world is enormous. Foreign investors and other multinational companies find it difficult to pitch their tent in Nigeria because of incessant conflicts, violence and crisis in the name of religion and ethnicity. The foregoing has a lot of implications for the development of the country and thus, affects the citizens in no small measures.

Conclusion

Attempt has been made in this work to underscore religious crisis in Nigeria and its attendant effects on human being cumulating in human abuse. From the analysis, the bulk of the burdens of religious conflicts and other crisis generally are borne by human being. Thus, many cases has led to loss of lives, displacements, psychological disturbance, physical assaults, maim, injury disruption of economic activities and means of livelihood. A number of such disturbances have cut short the aspirations of promising citizens. The implication of this on the development of the nation is enormous. Thus, man power supply of the country has been seriously affected thereby hampering economic and sustainable development of the country.

In the light of the foregoing, it is pertinent to find lasting solutions to the issue of religious crises in Nigeria. A problem revealed is a problem solved is a true axiom in this respect. Many of the factors identified earlier on and many others ranging from individual to institutional ones must be adequately addressed to curb continued existence of religious crisis in the country. All historical antecedents in the country need be addressed and utilized for promotion of national integration in Nigeria. To this effect, all forms of prejudices and bigotry must be eschewed among adherents of different faiths.

Having the right perception of individual human rights and avoidance of denial of such to other citizens becomes imperative especially in the democratic dispensation. Thus, forcing ones religious faith on others is but an infringement of their fundamental human rights, how much more

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of terminating others lives under the guise of religious fanaticism. Thus, there is need for forums where necessary clarifications of opinion could be made to prevent outbreak of conflicts among religious adherents. Tolerance is very essential here to avoid jumping into hasty conclusions which in most cases, fans the embers of religious discords.

Similarly, all forms of accusations and allegations of oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination and all sorts must be jettisoned to embrace unity in diversities. Again, the unholy romance of politics, ethnicity and religion must be severed in the Nigerian polity. This would go a long way in bringing transparency and sanity issues in the discharge of duties under the three sensitive issues in the country. The institutional framework of the country must be put in the proper perspectives. Institutions such as family, education, law, religion and political system which are vehicles of social control should be prevented from breakdown as this will assist in performing their functions. This will thus prevent breakdown of law and order that breeds conflicts of all sorts.

More so, government as an institution has a lot of roles to play in surmounting the problem of religious crisis. There is therefore the need for good leaders who could bring about good government. By this, a number of policies capable of reducing actions and in-actions of people will be put in place which will thus prevent them from engaging in conflicts and violence generally. In addition, government need to maintain to the letter, the policy of secularization of which the nation is noted

for. As such, government should desist from deliberately supporting a particular religion through certain policies.

Also, government should diversify her strategies of coercive and judicial methods on conflicts employed in the past and look outwards for more effective measures. Hence, more integrated and articulated programmes of conflict resolutions and prevention must be vigorously pursued. Thus, to ensure prevention, government need to be more committed to the provision of adequate and effective security outfits in the country to curb any slight insurgence of crisis. Also, effective and functional platform need be put in place for religious leaders to come together to chart the course of peaceful resolution of conflicts. This will greatly reduce religious crises in the country.

In addition, institutions such as Public Complaints Bureau must be strengthened through appropriate legislations while programmes of re-orientation of the socio-political aspects of the citizens must be put in place. Non-governmental organizations' activities must also be enlisted in a bid to finding solutions to religious imbroglio in the country. In like manner, it is instructive to note that the role of Western Nations in imposition of their ideals and policies on nations is of direct influence and the resultant spill over of international terrorism to Nigeria. Hence, it is pertinent that proper attention be paid to the issue of high rate of illiteracy and indoctrination especially in the Northern part of the country to engender lasting solution to religious crises in Nigeria.

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