

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Governance

Department of Law

George Ahulo Idikwu

**ABANDONMENT OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS**

**AS THE BANE OF RELIGIOUS CRISES IN NIGERIA**

Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Holger Mölder

Tallinn 2017

I declare that I have written the master's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

George Ahulo Idikwu ..... Student's code: 156491

Student's e-mail address: georgeahulo@gmail.com

Supervisor: Professor Holger Mölder

The thesis conforms to the requirements set for the master's theses

..... (Signature, date)

Chairman of defence committee: Permitted to defence

..... (Title, name, signature, date)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
<b>1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WHAT IS AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION?.....</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1. A Birds Eye View of the Concept of African Traditional Religions .....	13
1.2. The Value of Human Life in African Traditional Religions .....	14
1.2.1. The Advent of Foreign Religions .....	16
1.2.2. Brief Overview of Religious Situation in Nigeria.....	17
1.3. Origin of Islam in Nigeria .....	18
1.4. The Origin of Christianity in Nigeria.....	20
1.5. The Growth of Islam and Christianity in Sub-Sahara Africa since Inception.....	20
<b>2. CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA .....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1. Colonization and the Creation of Geo-Religious Identities in Nigeria .....	23
2.2. Secondary Causes of Religious Conflicts in Nigeria .....	24
2.2.1. Ignorance.....	25
2.2.2. Poverty .....	26
2.2.3. Religious fanaticism.....	27
2.2.4. Un-forgiveness .....	27
2.3. Sharia Law as a Tool of Religious Crises in Northern Nigeria.....	28
<b>3. AN OVERVIEW OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS CRISES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA .....</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1. The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria .....	33
3.2. Politics and the Unhealthy Religious Stereotyping in Nigeria: 2011 Post-Election Violence Case Study.....	35
3.3. Kafanchan Riots of 6th March 1987: Mutual Misperceptions and Mistrust.....	37
3.3.1 Claims and Counter Claims.....	38
3.4. External Influence on Religious Crises in Nigeria.....	39
3.5. Internal Dynamics: Christian and Muslim Militancy .....	41
3.6. State and Religious Crises in Nigeria.....	43
<b>4. NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN RELIGIONS.....</b>	<b>48</b>
4.1. Mutual Prejudice .....	49
4.2. Appraisal of Reviewed Literatures.....	50
4.3. What Factors can Promote Harmonious Co-Existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria?.....	51
4.3.1. Sanctity of Life.....	52
4.3.2. Forgiveness and Act of Tolerance.....	53

4.3.3. Secularism should be upheld.....	54
CONCLUSION .....	55
REFERENCES.....	58
APPENDICES.....	66

## **ABSTRACT**

Majority of Nigerians have abandoned the traditional gods of their ancestors to embrace either of the two immigrant religions in vogue (Islam/Christianity). Hence, the research shows the fact that the abandonment of African Traditional Religions (ATR) and the emergence of alien religions have made religion a gargantuan obstacle of oppression in Nigeria as well as a fountainhead of negative perceptions and unhealthy stereotypes, mutual mistrust, distrust, suspicion, prejudice attitude and even overtly hostile behaviour among the adherents and consequently the bane of one of the world's deadliest terror group-Boko Haram. This abandonment will be proven by this study as the bedrock of all the calamities cause by religion in Nigeria today in the form of violent conflicts of all kinds. The anxiety arose primarily from the rather obvious tremendous toll which the so-called 'Religions of the book' (Christianity/Islam) have continued to take on African Traditional Religions. The study further ascertain the seed of religious and ethnic discord sown by colonial masters and went on to proffer some salient recommendations and revealed the necessity of religious dialogue and sound doctrines in a religiously pluralized society like Nigeria in order to ameliorate the security challenges posed by religious bigotry-cum-fanaticism which has been the global trend in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Keywords:** Religious Conflict/Crisis, African Traditional Religions, Christianity and Islamic Rivalry, ethnoreligious, religious politicization.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since the inception of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria, African Traditional Religions (hereinafter ATR) gradually went into extinction and subsequently, the country started witnessing religious conflicts. The incessant bloodshed and sectarian violence which first started in the 1980s with the deadly attacks of Maitasine riots in northeastern region of Nigeria and the subsequent terrorism experiencing onward is wholly credited to the inception of the religions of the book (Christianity and Islam). Hence, the level of religious manipulation and its usage in the national polity has been worrisome and alarming even to the extent that every trivial issue ends up in religious argument and often times result in skirmishes. However, in the Nigerian traditional setting, the people were religiously homogenous. All of its people were bound by common fears, and hopes of destiny which allow the people to live closely and interact freely together devoid of any religious differences or religiously motivated conflicts.

There was a common faith, ideology and ideal, each person regarded himself or herself as the brother or sister of the other. It is this features that made the Nigerian traditional societies. Another basic feature that was common in the traditional religion was the close link between religion and other spheres of life, i.e. religion permeated into all departments of life so fully that it was not always easy to isolate it. Hence, the abandonment of traditional religion and the acceptance of foreign religions tend to be the bane of the incessant human carnage caused by ethnoreligious conflicts in Nigeria which by extension became the bedrock for the Boko Haram insurgent. This abandonment also had a tremendous impact on the ethical reactions to religious crises in Nigeria today and appallingly, when crisis come, the people developed so much hatred for others who are from other religion, and subsequently, there is a build-up to distrust and mistrust. It is also important to say that the abandonment and the acceptance of Islam and Christianity against African Traditional Religions have continued to constitute dividing lines among Nigerians to the extent that to be together and understand one another has become difficult, hence the principles of tolerance and understanding become increasingly difficult.

The author chose to identify ATR as a unified religion by using uppercase letters while referring to the African Traditional Religions (ATR); reason being that the majority of African religious scholars unanimously agreed that the ATR is a unified religion unlike Islam

and Christianity despite the fact that there are many pantheon of African deities, divinities, and gods; they all have the same concept of the supreme being (one God) irrespective of numerous tribal/ethnic concept of worship. Thus this is why the author henceforth will be referencing to ATR as a unified religion.

## **Statement of the Research Problem**

The simmering and the unabated ethnoreligious conflicts and the politicization of religion couple with the menace of Boko Haram terrorism bedeviling the nation have been alarming and worrisome. The crucial reason behind the incessant human carnage caused by religiously motivated conflicts in Nigeria has not been clearly stated in most of the works done in this field. Missing gap in previous studies underpins and provokes the justification of this very research; hence the statement of this research problem. The issue germane to this research work that needs clarification is that the existing works failed to indicate or attribute the abandonment of African Traditional Religions as the bane and springboard of religious crises and ethnoreligious conflicts and by extension the ongoing terrorism in Nigeria which has been a cog in the wheel of peace and national development.

The traditional Nigerian societies were highly bonded by common value system characterized with respect, ethical norms, morals and good behavior devoid of rampant social vices which are contrary to today's vicious society due to the fact that the foreign religions preaches forgiveness which seems to encourage people to commit atrocities without immediate or no consequences. However, as soon as Islam and Christianity forced their way into Nigeria; their arrival suddenly led to the decline of traditional and ancestral religion as well as the cultural values, and this abandonment has consequently become the bane of moral decadence and religious conflicts in Nigeria today as the paper will subsequently ascertain. Generally, the objective of this study is to examine and assess the impact that the abandonment of traditional African religions has on religious conflicts in Nigeria. This research expectedly seeks an understanding to which extent the rivalry between Christianity and Islamic religion has caused insecurity and human carnage in Nigeria since their inception and by extension the Boko Haram menace which has become an internationally known terrorist organization.

Thus, the aim of the study is to examine the extent to which the abandonment and the acceptance of foreign religions have impacted or influenced the religious crises in Nigeria and to analyze the meaning of sanctity of life and the concept of peace and harmony in traditional religion and elucidate the worldview of ATR.

Sequel to the foregoing, the study will make an attempt to answer and suggest a solution to the following questions: Why did religion in Nigeria become a sinister force for unleashing untold pains and suffering on humanity instead of promoting peace and tranquility? To what extent the abandonment of African traditional religion has implication on religious crises in Nigeria? To what extent is the implication of religious crisis on the Nigerian nation? What are the best possible measures that could be taken to ensure religious ideas that could best drive the attainment of love, respect for human life, peace, and stability? The research will further investigate to see how religion is negatively manipulated by its adherents in Nigeria in times of crises and will also suggest some salient means to bridge the whispering lacuna of peaceful relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria in order to promote and maintain harmonious lifestyle between them that can drive the attainment of love, respect for human life, peace, stability, security, socio-economic growth and development in Northern Nigeria specifically, and to also present traditional religious moral values as a role model before Islam and Christianity in Nigeria for the good of the commonwealth based on the findings of this study.

## **Research Methodology**

The utility of research methodology is to afford the researcher an in-depth understanding of the process involved in inquiry. This utility will also assist in the evaluation of the validity and reliability of the research instrument, the benefit, in the final analysis, will be systematic, reliable and valid knowledge. However, this study seeks to adopt qualitative document analysis based on the primary and secondary literature or sources, hence observation-based approach. This method will help in the systematic analysis of the previous texts and data that are related to this study. The author will also adopt the use of socio – historical approach which will help in perusing or tracing the religious worldview and belief system of traditional Nigerian society and the history of religious crises in Nigeria. Secondary sources of data, in the form of academic texts, journals, national dailies, dictionaries, library



materials, internet materials, census and official documents or records will be the data to be used.

## **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The abandonment of African Traditional Religions and its implication on ethnoreligious conflicts in Nigeria has attracted some degree of scholarly attention from contemporary ecclesiastical historians, sociologists, and anthropologists of religion who have either made intensive or casual references to the topic. This topic is not an issue that is just been considered today, rather it has been in existence for a long time now but has not been able to provide answers to the question that prompted this research. However, the width and scope of this topic forbid an exhaustive treatment in any singular work. Be that as it may, religion and conflict is not an issue that is just considered today as earlier stated, but to the best of the author's knowledge, the attempts at a scientific study of the abandonment of African Traditional Religions as the bane of religious crises in Nigeria necessitated the following works reviewed below.

James Coleman (1986) asserts that from time immemorial, African Traditional Religions has been the religion of the Nigerian people, until the 14th century when missionaries entered the Southern area of Nigeria. Southern Nigeria was regarded as a core area from which missionaries advanced to areas such as Benue and the Nile through Lake Chad. Although Roman Catholic missionaries arrived at Benin as early as 1516 and remained until 1688, their efforts to make any significant or lasting impression failed. However, despite the 14th Century colonial fiasco, the Europeans did not get deterred and still went on with other expeditions. As rightly observed by Balogun (1980) missionary activity began to expound in Nigeria and adherents of African Traditional Religions got converted and accepted Christianity and Islam. He went on to say that it was this acceptance that led to the sponsoring of Bishop Ajayi Crowther (a Yoruba ex-slave) to England where he compiled a Yoruba grammar and a Yoruba – English Dictionary and translated many books of the Bible into Yoruba, says Balogun (ibid). Sylvester Ayih (1999) aptly opines that; traditional societies in Nigeria had their type of politics and also religion. They believe in God, spirits and also in the spirits of the ancestors, but with the coming of Christianity and Islam, Africans and

especially Nigerians embraced those two religions and therefore abandoned their native religion.

In traditional Nigerian societies, there was high moral standard and the societies were usually small and everybody was his brother's keeper. Evil doers were easily known and severally punished. Notorious criminals were even ostracized or banished, if not executed... (ibid). In the past, anybody that commits crime or indulges in violence act, the law of the community punishment or jungle justice was always given to such person based on the offence immediately and he will be fine to pay for the crime, but today the case is different because of the foreign religions, and western civilization and Human Rights that accompanied those religions which warrant people to follow the way they want without traditional law. Be that as it may, Human Rights and western civilization has undeniable positive impact on African continent and Nigeria which is a well-known fact but the traditional African gods were instantaneous in rewarding evil act which serves as a deterrent and caution to would be evil perpetrators and this keep the society peaceful and safe.

However, the ethical value or African customs did not allow an individual to live the way he or she wants, certain rules were given to control the standard value or moral behavior of people within their immediate environment but with the coming of the early missionaries in Africa and especially Nigeria, the people were either cajoled or forced to let go of their traditional religion and values which is their way of life and embraced the two foreign religions which is the first challenge to the survival of traditional religion. Vexen Crabtree (2009), writing on religion and crime avers that what people fight and go to war over today may not be religion but politics and cultural differences and he, therefore, puts it this way; "Many religious wars have a political and cultural component; often it is not just two groups of people fighting over religion, but one culture fighting another. Some defend religion in general by saying that societal divisions are the main factor in such conflicts" ([http://humanreligions.info/violence\\_and\\_crime.html](http://humanreligions.info/violence_and_crime.html)). The religious crisis started in Nigeria after the inception of the Christianity and Islam and mostly due to the rivalry and competition between the two religions.

Since religion and culture are indispensable, we now notice that most of the ethnic-cum-political conflicts in Nigeria has religious undertone. Crabtree further notes that such divisions are worsened by adhering to religious identities and Nigeria, evenly distributed between Christians and Muslims, is a country where people identify themselves by their

religion first and as Nigerians second (Crabtree 2009). Crabtree's submission resonates the vividly present scenario in Nigeria since religion had wild more influence on crime on its adherents in Nigeria and it has been the common norm for the citizens to first be identified as either a Christian or a Muslim instead of their ethnic or tribal identity. Speaking in regards to the very beginning of sowing the seed of religious discord in Nigeria; Akinola (2005) aptly avers that the polarization of the territories that became Nigeria actually began with the country's creation and administration as two separate colonies, namely: Northern and Southern Nigeria. Also buttressing on this it is expedient to note that somewhat Romanic interest in the North, especially in the Sokoto caliphate and its institutions seems to have induced the colonial administrators on the North to treat that Colony as if it is special, thus every effort was made to advance its territorial and political interests Vis-à-vis those of the south (Afigbo 2002). This singular act has been the very springboard of promoting one particular religion above the other just for the benefit of the colonial masters.

The immediate implication and repercussion of the ordinance backed by the Muslims' desire to confine themselves to an environment where their religious practices and obligations would not be influenced by the Christian culture gave birth to the rise of Sabon Gari (New Settlement) patterns of settlements in Northern Nigeria. The North was also to become a prototype 'native' state operating its own indigenous institutions while being protected from all external influences, especially Christian proselytizing and educational enterprises. Even residents immigrants from southern Nigeria were to be restricted to the Sabon Gari or foreigners quarters (Akinola 2009, 279). In 1911 the Sabon Gari or new settlement came into existence in Kano which made it compulsory for those coming from the southern part of Nigeria who basically happened to be all Christians would settle in that separated part of the city (Sabon Gari), different from where the Kanawa (people from Kano or the indigenes) were settling. And gradually, the culture of establishing Sabon Gari residence area for those coming from Southern Nigeria metamorphosed into a formidable force and still in existence up till date and fueling ethnic segregation.

Consequently, the residential segregation of the Kanawa from the Southern Nigerian migrants engendered hostility between members of the two groups. Equally in the southern Nigeria, the Hausawa (Hausa people: the major and populated ethnic group from the north) who were initially living amongst the Yoruba people of pre-colonial times were soon resettled into the Sabo (new) areas in line with the colonial policies of ethnoreligious divide and rule

principle. Backing up this point, Falola (1989) has shown that in 1928, the Hausawa (i.e. Hausa people) who were living happily in the midst of the Yoruba, were ordered by Ooni (traditional ruler) Ademiluyi Ajagun to relocate to the Sabo quarters which was created for them, in line with the directives of the British resident in Oyo who instructed that the Ooni and obas (traditional chiefs in the western Nigeria) should resettle the Hausa people in One place.

This seems to corroborate the fact that the British colonial rule intentionally instituted one religion/ethnic against the other as a divide and rule policy to enhance a smooth administrative running to the detriment of Nigeria state. In the same vein, “the colonial administration legally accepted Islam in the Northern part of colonial Nigeria, and used it as the basis of political authority in local administration during the period” (Adigun 2006). However the colonialists did not only keep Christian missionaries from the North, so as to preserve the assumed Islamic homogeneity of the region, it also adopted the emirate system of political administration with its strange religious content. In spite of this early trend, the issue of religious crisis did not come to the front burner as a critical issue dividing Nigerians until 1986; however its foundation has been laid already. The major event that opened the floodgate of religious antagonism was the decision of the government to secretly upgrade Nigeria’s membership in the organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) in 1986 (Mimiko 1977). This move, however, was seen by Christians as a plan to turn Nigeria into an Islamic state against the spirit and the letter of the constitution and consequently, mutual distrust started brewing between the two religions.

# **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WHAT IS AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION?**

It is imperative to note at this juncture that chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this study will provide the theoretical background of this research. The central concepts and phenomena will be discussed. This chapter is concentrating on the concepts of African Traditional Religion and the religious situation in Nigeria.

## **1.1. A Birds Eye View of the Concept of African Traditional Religions**

In order to have a clear understand of this study, the author deems it expedient to lucidly expatiate on what African Traditional Religions (ATR) means in detail. Religion is generally a fundamental tool in human existence and it directly or indirectly influence and shaped the international affairs and global policies even in our contemporary international relations. However, religion is the most crucial influence in the life of Africans and this is supported by (Awolalu 1976) as he says that the essential principles of ATR are too often unknown to foreigners who thus make themselves constantly liable to misunderstand the African worldview and beliefs. Religion enters into every aspect of the life of the Africans and it cannot be studied in isolation.

Whenever we mentioned African Traditional Religions, we are referring to the *indigenous* religious beliefs and practices of the African people in the traditional society before the advent of western religion and Islam. Awolalu (1976) again aptly defines ATR as a religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present Africans, and which is being practiced today in various forms and various shades and intensities by a very large number of Africans, including individuals who claim to be Muslims or Christians (ibid). However, it is also imperative to explain the word *Traditional* at this juncture. The word traditional in this context means *indigenous*, that which is aboriginal or foundational, handed down from generation to generation, upheld and practiced by Africans today. This is a heritage from the past but treated not as a thing of the past but as that which connects the past with the present and the present with eternity. This is not a fossil religion, a thing of the past or a dead religion. It is a religion that is practiced by living men and women observed by Awolalu (ibid). Of course there have been many scholarly arguments on whether ATR is a

unified religion unlike Islam and Christianity hence should be written in uppercase letters or capitalize each word, however there has been a unanimous consensus between many African religious scholars to refer and identify ATR as a unified religion since it has common world view even with hundred pantheon of gods hence the reason why the author chose to use and identify ATR as a unified religion in this study as earlier stated.

This religion, unlike many other world religions, has no specific founder or sacred book but its doctrines and dogmas are well embedded in African proverbs, folklores, songs, tales at moonlight, ritual festivals, shrines, religious functions and so on, and then transmitted or passed on orally from generation to generation by the community elders. This religion encapsulates and permeates every aspect of African lifestyle, as Mbiti John (1969) corroborate with this fact when he once captured that *Africans are notoriously religious, in traditional religions there are no creeds to be recited; instead the creeds are written in the heart of the individual.... There are no sacred scriptures, and religion in African societies is written not on paper, but in people's hearts.... There is no conversion from one traditional religion to another. A person has to be born in a particular society in order to assimilate the religious system.... African religions have neither founders nor reformers* (p.3-4).

This means that religion is a holistic or total way of African lives; everywhere there is the concept of God (called by different names); there is also the concept of divinities and/or spirits as well as beliefs in the ancestral cult. Every locality may and does have its own local deities, its own festivals, its own name or names for the Supreme Being, but in essence, the pattern is the same. There is that noticeable *Africanness* in the whole pattern and this was why ATR survived in crossing the Atlantic deeply rooted in the hearts of the slaves and is still practice today in the Caribbean, Brazil, Cuba, Latin America, etc. in spite of the reprisal from the slaves' masters.

## **1.2. The Value of Human Life in African Traditional Religions**

African worldwide is originally anthropocentric and religion and culture are indispensable and interwoven with life to enhance harmony in traditional society. Human life is held 'Sacred' in the traditional African society; it is esteemed as the highest value and this explain why many African proverbs, ritual festivals, folklores and other customs and cultural values are highly loaded with lots of appreciation of life. Hence life is appreciated as the very

primordial bedrock for all human endeavors, potentials, and aspirations. Such philosophy of life is expressed in some tribal names, for instance Igbo names (A tribal ethnic group in south-east of Nigeria) like ‘Ndibisi’ (life is first and foremost), ‘Ochifije’ (life is greater than wealth), and of course in Igede nation (the author’s ethnic group); Oberi (enjoyer) etc. Abuse of human life is abominable, just like shedding of human blood is categorically abhorred in all ramifications. And in many African tribes, the killing of kinsman, the antithesis of caring for him was not only a crime but also as an abomination, after the murderer had been executed, his family would have to perform sacrifices and ritual rites to remove the stain of evil and ward – off the anger of the gods, else the family and even the next generation of the culprit gets a collective punishment from the gods. Such beliefs and customs, however, ensure respect and preservation of life in practical terms hence upholding the sacrosanctity of life in the traditional Nigerian society and by extension Africa. So in ATR, ripe old age is valued as a blessing, especially when it is edified with many children, relatives, and wealth. Even the poor and the mentally sick are protected and cared for both by the community and the family ties. Here, Ekpenyong (2010) rightly observes that; the need for social security to feel at home seems to be the reason (for Africans) to search for kinship... in a time of needs, poverty, sickness, disaster, and death – the welfare of those involved is the happy burden of the family...the view of the family guided by hospitality looks down on individualism, selfishness, exploitation, war, and ethnicity. To be cut off from the family is suicidal and death.

Suffice to say here that, Africans and Nigerians, in particular, show their respect for human life until its end. The sacredness of human life especially that of a kinsman has been an edict enshrined in the heart of every Nigerian. Commenting on the sacredness of human life, Ejimonye, and Konye (2007) deposit as follow; small wonder the penalty for the transgression of this norm is capital punishment in the original African society... the peoples of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life. They reject the idea that it can be destroyed, even when the so-called ‘progressive civilizations’ would like to lead them in this direction. However, it is an abomination to take someone’s life whatever the circumstance but the life of enemies and intruders are never revered. Paradoxically, today foreign religions have made Africans and Nigerians in particular to develop a kind of conscience that is not perturbed by homicide as long as they can justify. Hence, husbands murder their wives, wives kill their husbands, mother kill their children in cold blood and

children murder their parents and this get worse in the wider society as unabated and incessant killings goes on and now this ill has metamorphosed into the monstrous Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria which has been rated as one of the deadliest terrorist organization in the world.

In like manner the concept of individualism converse by Western civilization to some extent corrupted the traditional modus operandi of communal solidarity and collectiveness. Bernard Joinet (2001) aptly concurs with this as he observes that; many Western people want to be autonomous, to depend only on themselves, and to find their own pleasure in their own way. Young children are brought up to be autonomous and to look after themselves. These people have little time for solidarity, and Western culture is often accused of destroying traditional African solidarity. Individualization leads to individualism.

### **1.2.1. The Advent of Foreign Religions**

Before the inception of Christianity and Islam, the indigenes in Nigeria had a religion that is commonly called ATR as has been established from the foregoing. This religion is not an organized religion with a founder as stated earlier and with the advent of Islam and Christianity, ATR has been in the decline and not just that, so many religiously motivated violence and conflicts have taken the center stage and religious agitation has even transmogrified into one of the world deadliest militant group-Boko Haram.

The major reasons for the influence of the two foreign religions according to many scholars are things like the accompanying literacy, civility and development that they bring over to Africa, and above the more primitive content of African Traditional Religions. ATR, however, is particularly inspired by a true sense of the sacredness of life and all its elements. According to Yusuf and Turaki (2006), African Traditional Religions has its impact in society because it gives society order and Cohesion; ATR is especially characterized by a vibrant living harmony and the spirit of tolerance and collectivism revolves around the societies. Meanwhile, the coming together as children of the same divine father is celebrated in the community as the special gift of life. Thus the emphasis is not on the I nor ego, but on us as brothers and sisters. This manifested in the strong African sense of hospitality where the other is seen as oneself. It is reflected also in the sense of morality which permeates daily life and is manifested in how one gets along with others, as well as in self-criticism; but all these



traditional values were eroded with the coming of the two foreign religions with their rivalries and competition.

Ayih (1999) succinctly captures the paradigm shift as he writes on this by saying that the relevance of African Traditional Religions and culture is that it enables the individuals to become aware of their cultural values and ideals. Such values and ideals like religious services and rituals, cleansing ceremonies, marriages, parent-child relationship, husband-wife relationship, boy-girl relationship, child rearing practices and other processes and methods involved in the people's way of life.... Therefore, the emphasis in western education is on individualism, liberty, and self – discipline, which gives way for moral permissiveness; the growing problems in schools and colleges and unwanted pregnancies, stealing, unrest, cultism, and violence. The era of virgin marriage is gone as youths now constitute a moral nuisance in villages. Because their behavior is frowning at by the villagers, they tend to move to the townships where there is a higher degree of permissiveness.

### **1.2.2. Brief Overview of Religious Situation in Nigeria**

The Three dominant religions that can easily be recognized in Nigeria now are Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religions (this comprises the pantheon of gods, divinities, and deities revered in the traditional African societies). Islam and Christianity are however the two major and dominant religions accentuated on regional and ethnic distinctions. Islam dominated the northern region of the country and held stronger numbers in the southwestern Yoruba part of the country as well, however; Christianity is much evident in the south and eastern region. The 1963 Nigerian population census indicated that 47 percent of Nigerians were Muslims, 35 percent Christians and 18 percent members of local indigenous congregations (ATR adherents). In general, the country is seen as having a dominant Muslim north; a mixed Christian and Muslim southwest and middle belt; a non – Muslim, primarily Christian south- east and south – south (Imo 2010).

In terms of Nigeria's major ethnic groups religious affiliations and according to Nigeria demographic profile the Hausa ethnic group in the north is 95% Muslims and 5% Christians, the West which is the Yoruba tribe is 60% Christians and 30% Muslims with 10% going to adherents of other African religions while the Igbo in the East and the Ijaw in the south are 99% Christians (Catholics) (National Demographic 2010). The middle belt of

Nigeria contains the largest number of minority ethnic groups in Nigeria and they are mostly Christians and members of traditional religions with few Muslim converts.

Before the coming of Christianity and Islam, the religious situation in Nigeria was highly defined with the existence of ATR and the worldview of Nigerians was one that promotes good moral standard and provides a well-defined society free of crime, crises, and social insecurity but this has all being a history today as the religious rivalry between Christians and Muslims permeates every fabric of the society and people choose to first identify themselves with their religion before their ethnic identity. Also, religion has so much influence on the political set up, and the bitter competition between Islam and Christianity has led to so many arm conflicts that have caused unquantified havoc to the country and the climax of religious agitations is the emergence of Boko Haram seeking to institute a theocratic system (sharia) of government in the country.

### **1.3. Origin of Islam in Nigeria**

The origin of Islam in Nigeria is divided primarily into two phases. The first phase spans between the 11th and 17th century and the second phase began around the 19th century and the first phase Islam was spread by traders and clerics. The eleventh century was a time of the Trans-Saharan trade and many African Communities were engaged in this trade across the desert (Kenny 2001). This was, in fact, the very bedrock behind the contact between the sub – Saharan African communities including Nigeria and communities in North Africa where Islam was already booming in the high ascendancy.

Kenneth Morgan (1958) observes that it was around this century that Islam reached Timbuktu, by 1400, Islam had already taken root in some parts of West Africa and they were Islamic empires side by side with traditional African kingdoms in Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. However, these kingdoms comprise secondary cultural heritage from which Islamic tenets taking from a specific and highly characteristic of Maghreb forms received from north Africa-Morocco, were carried eastward to Kano (Nigerian northern state) and several Hausa centers. Thus, the Mali and Songhai empires contributed significantly to the spread of Islam in Nigeria. Kenneth (1958) went further to say that although Islamic missionaries from Mali had come to Kano in the 14th century; only in the 16th century did these states come into prominence with their Kings acceptance of Islam. Hence, around 1513, the king of Songhai,

Askia the Great, conquered Katsina, Zaria, and Kano. Afterward, there was expansive contact between the Hausa states and the regions of the west (ibid).

However, the 19th century marks the second phase of the spread of Islam in Nigeria. In this phase, it is no longer the trans-Saharan trade that becomes the primary means of the spread of Islam but we see a new form of trade, the Atlantic trade which was characterized by the slave trade. The most crucial or important event in this second epoch was the Jihad (holy war) of Usman Dan Fodio. In 1802, Shehu Usman Dan Fodio who was the head of the local Fulani clan and a learned Muslim scholar declared a Jihad. Yeld (1960) deposits on this by saying that; Shehu did this with the support of the nomadic Fulani and some of the Muslim Hausa, what he did was to overthrow one after another the Hausa chiefs, and Fulani leaders were installed as local Emirs. Hence, the origin of Islam made most Nigerians particularly the northerners to abandoned the traditional religions since Islamic conquest was very brutal and volatile, and this also affected the peaceful co-existence existed in the traditional society because people no longer see themselves as one and do things in common henceforth. However, an article published by Harvard Divinity School on ‘Religious Literacy Project’ (2014) articulates the history of Islam in Nigeria more succinctly;

*As Islam spread, Muslim West Africa became deeply tied in with Islamic networks that stretched across North Africa and the Mediterranean to the Middle East, as well as an important trans-Saharan network that enabled and necessitated Arabic literacy as the lingua franca of trade. During the 15th century, the Malian Songhay Empire spread into Northern Nigeria’s Hausa land, establishing a dynasty there under Askiyya Muhammad (d. 1538). The GOLD TRADE brought migrants from around Hausa land to flourishing central cities such as Kano, and the Hausa language became an important medium for Islamic literature and scholarship. Arabic continued to provide the groundwork for religious scholarship that facilitated exchanges between Muslims in Mali, Sudan, and beyond, formed the basis for classical Islamic education, and allowed Muslims to read foundational works of doctrine and jurisprudence.*

And gradually the religion spread across the country and down to the southwestern part of the country.

#### **1.4. The Origin of Christianity in Nigeria**

There are two phases in the history of Christianity in Nigeria as well as in the case of Islam and the first era was in the 16th century when Portuguese expedition team arrived in the southern region of Nigeria and became a trading partner with the kingdoms of Benin and Warri in the southern region of Nigeria. Priests who were their chaplains started carrying out evangelization work among their trading partners and later on, Spanish capuchin missionaries started doing evangelization with the king and members of the king's palace with the vision of converting first the royal family, who can, in turn, cajole and influence his followers to embrace the new religion as well. The motive was that, once they could convert the king and possibly his palace to Christianity, then the entire kingdom will become Christian which was the case in most of Europe. This evangelization strategy, however, failed afterward and did not work by the late 19th – century. Thus, in the history of Christianity in Nigeria, it is the second phase which began in the early 19th – century that receives much more attention. The evangelization during this period was more systematic with missionaries being sponsored by Europe and North America. During this period, the Methodist missionaries were the earliest to make an effective missionary contact with Nigeria.

Fredrick Pilkington (1957) observes that; its greatest apostle was Thomas Birch Freeman who arrives in Badagry Creek in September 1842. Hence, with the coming of Christianity into Nigeria, the people were cajoled and often forced to abandon their traditional religion. Again with the coming of the missionaries, traditional religion was devalued by giving it all such of derogatory names which psychologically affect the confidence of the worshippers. Furthermore, with the emergence of Christianity, Competition and rivalry started between Christians and Muslims and subsequently, religion became a dividing line in Nigeria against the backdrop of the traditional religions peaceful coexistent society.

#### **1.5. The Growth of Islam and Christianity in Sub-Sahara Africa since Inception**

Just a little above a century now, the religious growth between Islam and Christianity has soared rapidly and the landscape of sub-Saharan Africa has as well dramatically changed. In the year of 1900, Muslims and Christians were both relatively of a handful number of

minorities in the sub-Saharan Africa since the higher number of the population practiced their traditional African religions (ATR), while followers of Christianity and Islam together made up a little less than just a quarter of the population. Pew Research Centre (2010) ascertained that; *since then, however, the number of Muslims living in the Sahara Desert and the Cape of Good Hope has increased more than 20-fold, rising from an estimated 11 million in 1900 to approximately 234 million in 2010. The number of Christians has grown even faster, soaring almost 70-fold from about 7 million to 470 million. Sub-Saharan Africa now is home to about one-in-five of all the Christians in the world (21%)....*

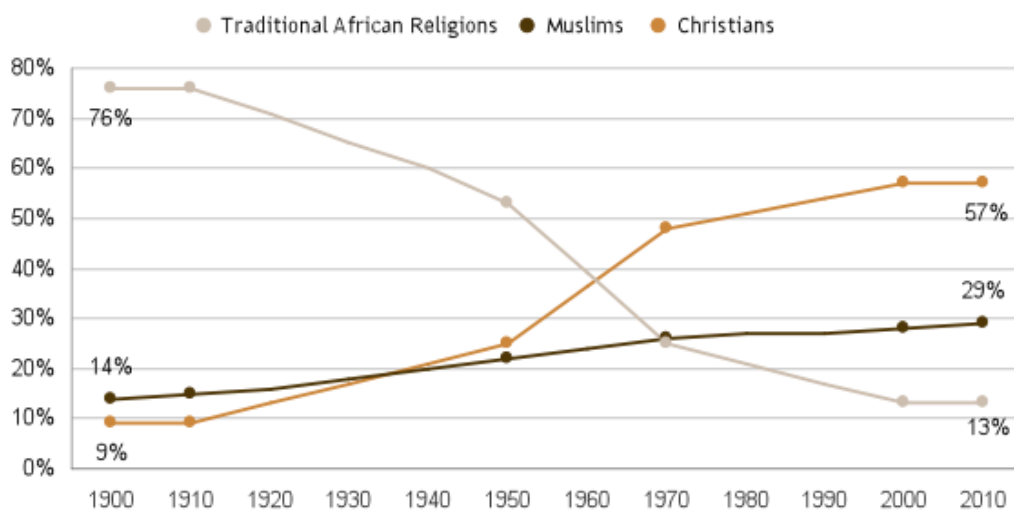


Figure 1: The growth of Islam and Christianity in Sub-Sahara Africa since from 1900-2010

Source: (Pew Research Centre 2010)

The author deems it paramount to excerpt this statistical diagram depicting the drastic and dramatic growth and an increase of Islamic and Christian religion in sub-Saharan Africa, the reason being that Nigeria is one of the foremost and highest religious nation in Africa and this growth shows the very reality on the ground. As much as the sub-Saharan Africa has closely twice as many Christians as Muslims, on the African continent however as an entity Islam and Christianity are almost balanced, with an estimated figure between 400 million to 500 million members each and North

Africa is vastly Muslims while the west is majorly Christians. This rapid growth of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria has outmuscled and relegate ATR to the background.

However, ATR has been seen by most of its believers and African religious scholars as an invisible religion which never makes headlines on the world stage but however remains strongly rooted in the hearts of its adherents even after Africans are been converted into either Christianity or Islam.

## **2. CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA**

Colonization played a fundamental and key role in religious conflicts in Nigeria as the foundation of religious and ethnic identity was solidly laid down by the colonial masters. Therefore, this chapter will deal with primary and secondary causes of religious conflicts in Nigeria. The primary causes will be a concern on the colonization and the creation of geo-religious identities in Nigeria, while the secondary causes comprise of factors such as ignorance, poverty, religious un-forgiveness, and religious fanaticism and the introduction of Sharia law.

### **2.1. Colonization and the Creation of Geo-Religious Identities in Nigeria**

After the slave trade ended, a group of Western nations gathered in a conference in Berlin, Germany in 1885 known as the famous Berlin conference. This happened of course as a result of the European ‘scramble for Africa’ and for their conquest for colonies and during the conference, the European powers divided Africa among themselves just like a mother sharing a loaf of bread among her children; this actually is what came to be known as colonialism. An African scholar named Emeagwali Gloria (2010) simply defines colonization as; *a system of administration; a process of exploitation and a production system often geared towards the creation of capitalist relations and the economic and socio-cultural aggrandizement of the colonizer. This may be done by covert or overt psychological, legal and military mechanism.* Subsequently, the colonial masters created an identity that was geographical and at the same time religious. What became commonplace in Nigeria is that once you are from the North, there was an assumption that you are a Muslim and once you are from the South, and there is the general assumption that you must be Christian.

The assumption is fallacious and has led to a lot of problems from the colonial epoch definitely and consequently the bane of the ongoing religious/ethnic crisis in Nigeria and that is why the author confidently sees this as the very fundamental or primary factor serving as the springboard for religious and sectarian ethnic crisis in Nigeria. The problem with this assumption set in motion by the British colonial masters is that some Northern states such As Zamfara concluded that their state is a Muslim state and passed the Sharia law as the law governing everyone in the state and some of the Christian states in the south like Cross River

state threatened to declare the state a Christian state and will subject everyone in the state including the Muslims to the Canon law and this has actually created more intolerance among the different religious adherents. This is how colonialization created the seed of discord among the two alien religions by pitting the northern Muslim population against other regions that is populated by Christians. Again, the colonial masters designated the colonial administrative positions to the north all through the colonial era and this factor consequently gave rise to the northern hegemony which is still very firm until this day as the north produces about 95% of Nigeria's head of states since its independence in 1960.

## **2.2. Secondary Causes of Religious Conflicts in Nigeria**

All over the world, violence emanating from the practice of religion is not abating but rather getting to its climax in our contemporary world; the incidence is rather on the upward swing, especially in certain parts of the world. Corroborating with this fact as pointed out by James Henslin (1995); history is filled with wars based on religion combining with politics. Between the 11th and 14th centuries, Christian monarchs conducted nine (9) bloody crusades in an attempt to take over control of the Holy land (Jerusalem) from the Muslims. Unfortunately, such wars are not just a relic of the past. Even in rest years, we have seen Protestants and Catholics kill one another in Northern Ireland, while Jews and Muslims in Israel and Muslims and Christians in Bosnia have done the same thing and today we have numerous sectarian wars of different Islamic sects in the Middle East.

The scenario, as already demonstrated, is not different in Nigeria. Sometimes, it is difficult to even comprehend why religious enthusiasts would wake up one day and begin to see each other as enemies to be eliminated, in a somewhat gruesome and inhumane manner. Perhaps people act violently for several reasons, for some they have to subject everyone to share the same belief system as theirs while others felt that their religion is superior and second to none, however, the causes for religious crises are multifaceted; some of the precipitating factors may sometimes have nothing to actually do with religious convictions or even affinity. This observation will become evident as the following predisposing secondary factors for religious crises as the following subsections highlighted below is paramount in adding credence to the foregoing.



### 2.2.1. Ignorance

According to Efe (2010), a careful analysis of religious extremists or fanatics, their modus operandi and the reason why they employ illegitimate means to accomplish their goals shows that they are largely ignorant of the core tenets of their religion using the often toxic relationship between Christians and Muslims in the northern part of Nigeria. As an example, it is easy to see that most of the violent crises between these two religions are totally unwarranted. In the same logic, the north statistically has the highest level of uneducated population and having so many children with no access to formal or western education. However, In light of this point, it would be germane to mention that a careful look shows that Christianity and Islam shared a common belief system most times and at the heart of the Qur'an (Islamic scriptural book) is the following expression that underscores a common fundamental source for the beliefs of both Christians and Muslims saying; "we both believe in God and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and that which was given to Moses and to Jesus and to all the prophets from their Lord. We do not make a distinction between any of them and to God, we bow" (Qur'an 3:84).

As if to clarify the point already made the Qur'an went further to pontificate; "and dispute ye not with the people of the Book (Christians) except with means better, unless it is with those of them who inflict wrong. But say 'we believed in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; our God and your God is one, and it is to Him we bow'" (Qur'an 29:46). Be that as it may, many Islamic extremists are probably ignorant of this particular injunction in Qur'an or else they choose to ignore its searching claims. If they knew and adhere to the phrase that *our God and your God is one*, that is; both Christians and Muslims worship one and the same God, there would be less violent and conflict confrontation in Nigeria. Efe (2010) buttressed further on ignorance by saying that unfortunately, many of the Christian zealots who are in the vanguard of violent eruptions against people of other faith may also be said to be ignorant of the scriptures and ethics of the religion they claim to uphold. However, Efe's submission rightly agrees with the fact that; Jesus told Peter in the book of Matthew to his sword back in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew 26:52). This is a truism that many who believes in a violent means of resolving a crisis is ignorant of the fact that violence begets violence. This situation is not helped when they are equally ignorant of the positive elements of the faith

they are contending with as many of them cannot even read their scriptures or holy books themselves and will rely on their religious leaders to read and interpret the message to them and often times the leaders cease the opportunity to brainwash them with negative ideologies.

Akinseye (2010) observes that; in religious interaction, understanding is very important when the different interacting religious groups fail to appreciate each other's merit and contribution because they do not possess the knowledge of the other people's point of view, the result will be faulty judgment and erroneous conclusion. Hence, sometimes it takes just a little misunderstanding even though unintentional; to ignite a religious conflagration and many religious conflicts occurred due to this misconception of others worldview. Quite a great deal of religious riots in Nigeria may be traced to this very factor.

### **2.2.2. Poverty**

Perhaps somebody may be wondering how poverty could help religious crises or sectarian violence as is common practice in Nigeria. Of course, poverty is a crucial factor helping in some many ways and Efe (2010) agrees with this as he notes that; in some respects, ethnoreligious conflicts may actually be systematic of economic impoverishment, and there are so many young people on the streets without any visible means of livelihood. This situation, however, poses a serious threat to national cohesion and stability as the idol and wandering youths tend to be the easiest manipulating tools for ethnoreligious conflicts; just as the common saying that; a *hungry man is an angry man* and as widely said that the; *heart of an idol man is the devil's workshop*.

Ononugbu (2010) agrees with the above by pointing out the danger of having so many youths roaming the streets as they easily become prone to negative influences. He says, they hang on for some time, just whiling away the time but when they get tired of merely 'sitting on the fence' they tend to implode and fall into all sorts of anti-social behaviors or habits ....This is how many of them end up as career miscreants and a menace to the society, for the rest of their lives. Whereas the human capital development index is unfortunately generally low in Africa, from all indications the figures could be said to be abysmally low in Nigeria and mostly in Northern Nigeria that is mostly characterized by religious conflicts and presently with the ravaging of the region by the insurgency, it is a woeful plight. Thus, the youths are ready to maim or kill even under the guise of religion as a way of paying back the government that is totally insensitive to their legitimate needs and plights; hence they even

become fanatical in their religious convictions because there is really nothing else to live for as much as life is concern to them.

The al-majiris (Muslim street urchins) for instance, constitute a class that some Islamic extremists recruit to torment trouble in the north at any time of crisis. Isiramen (2010) rightly observed that; the war force in the northern part of the country... is made up of the al-majiris, whose hope for the future is black without the assistance of the rich Muslims. To this sect of people, even if they die, there is nothing to lose.

### **2.2.3. Religious fanaticism**

Closely connected with the concept of religious intolerance is fanaticism which is the extreme belief that one religion is the best and so the adherents of other religions must be dealt with and eradicated and this has been the global force behind any religious terrorist organization. Commenting on the people involved in religious fanaticism, Isiramen (2010) however notes that; people take up arms against fellow citizen only on the premise that they loathe them for embracing religions other than their own. Blinded to the ideas of other religions, these fanatics ignore the provisions of the constitution and warm themselves up with the aim of establishing a theocratic state. This is the exact situation with the Islamic sect terrorizing the country from the onset and has transmogrified into the draconian Boko Haram sect.

### **2.2.4. Un-forgiveness**

Forgiveness has been conversing by both religions but unfortunately, this has not always been adhered to in times of misunderstanding between them. Caleb Ogunkunle (2010) in addressing this scenario notes that, this is another major cause of ethnoreligious conflicts in Nigeria, in other words, whenever an offense is committed by the adherent of one major religion, the adherents of the other religion make sure that revenge is taken. However, the killing of several hundreds of Muslims in 2004 in a small town of Yelwa in Plateau state snowballed to Kano where several people were killed in reprisal attacks by Muslims. And one can go on and on with such reprisal attacks during religious conflicts in Nigeria. Perhaps if the spirit of forgiveness exists between the religions, definitely there won't be retaliatory attacks or revenge which always escalates the conflicts.

### **2.3 Sharia Law as a Tool of Religious Crises in Northern Nigeria**

Sharia law has been a contentious issue in Nigeria in recent years and has led to some religious strife and violence between Christians and Muslims. At the beginning of the new democratic dispensation in 1999 having spent so many years under military dictatorship. Many Muslims zealots started clamoring for the implementation of Islamic law popularly known as the Sharia law. Hence, Ahmed Sani Yerima, a seating Senator presently in the Nigerian legislative upper chamber and a former governor of Zamfara state (a northeastern state) surprised the nation when he introduced the Sharia law first in his state in the year 2000. He introduced the full provisions of Islamic law in the penal code of the state. Sanusi Lamido (2002) who is a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and presently the Emir of Kano (Muslim religious leader of the northern region) says that Yerima's decision had a bandwagon effect on other predominantly Muslim states in the North with other governors taking Yerima's footsteps with varying degrees of enthusiasm. However, the Sharia problem in Nigeria has been summarily stated by Nelly Van Doorn – Harder (2002) as follow;

*Nigeria's Muslims insist that because sharia is the pure law revealed by God, humans cannot tamper with it. They are frustrated because the Nigerian government allows only partial implementation of this law, which the northern Hausa and Fulani tribes have followed on and off since the 11th century. Christians fear that if the Muslims gain political power throughout Nigeria, Christians will be reduced to second – class citizens. They point to countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran, where freedom of religion is severely restricted.*

The current practice of the sharia law in states where it is implemented is very restrictive of the Christian's rights. The Christians cannot reconcile the Muslim's insistence that the sharia law is for Muslims only when it affects the day to day lives of other non-Muslims. Some of the social provisions associated with the sharia law that affects non – Muslims especially Christians is the separation of the sexes in public schools, in health and transportation services and the criminalization of alcohol consumption which is very uncomfortable and worrisome to non-Muslims residing in those sharia states.

International Crisis Group Report (2010) documents that; in Kano state for instance, non-Muslims are fined approximately \$380 or up to a year in prison for drinking or selling alcohol in certain public places. The only place alcohol can be sold or drunk is in Federal

government setting or setup like military barracks. Thus, there have been numerous Sharia-related crises in the northern region and subsequent reprisal attacks in the south and western part of the country. For instance, on June 8, 2016, a Christian man named Francis Emmanuel was attacked and stabbed mercilessly by some Muslim irate youths in Kaduna state on the accusation that he was eating during the Muslim fasting or Ramadan period despite the fact that he's not a Muslim, Francis however narrowly survives the attack. Also in the same vain; enrage Muslims youths in Kano on Thursday evening of June 2, 2016 was reportedly decapitated a woman trader over allegations that she blasphemed Prophet Mohammad (Islamic founder). The victim, who was said to be of Igbo tribe from the eastern region extraction, was accused of blasphemy during a religious argument at Wambai market. The woman, who sells plastics at the local market, was in the company of her husband when she was brutally murdered and beheaded (Sahara Reporters 2016).

In a similarly brutal manner, a woman named Eunice Olawale was held in the neck and stabbed to death while preaching the gospel in the early hours of the morning in the suburb town of Abuja (The federal capital city) on July 10, 2016 and the number goes *ad infinito*. Douglas Murray (2017) while writing on the ongoing human carnage carried out by the Fulani Muslim herdsmen across Nigeria captures a grieving scenario of the truism, he writes;

*Another day in northern Nigeria, another Christian village reeling from an attack by the Muslim Fulani herdsmen who used to be their neighbors — and who are now cleansing them from the area. The locals dare not collect the freshest bodies. Some who tried earlier have already been killed, spotted by the waiting militia and hacked down or shot. The Fulani are watching everything closely from the surrounding mountains. Every week, their progress across the northern states of Plateau and Kaduna continues. Every week, more massacres — another village burned, its church razed, its inhabitants slaughtered, raped or chased away. A young woman, whose husband and two children have just been killed in front of her, tells me blankly; our parents told us about these people. But we lived in relative peace and we forgot what they said.*

The concept of relative peace in the foregoing was during the epoch of the traditional religions, but definitely, everything has been a glaring nightmare now. Jonathan Racho (2012) observes that; the latest source of tension between the two religions is Sharia, the practice of

Islamic holy law that extremist Muslims want to implement across Nigeria. The primary cause of conflict is the Islamic religion; there are continuous attacks on the church. Of course, they have been in many cases retaliatory attacks by Christians as well, and many a time Muslims complain of Christians provocative actions which usually led to incendiary burst out by the Sharia clamoring devotees.

Again, there is a new wave of terrorism going on in the country right now, this terrorist act is carried out by the Fulani herdsmen who have been on killing rampage of mostly Christian villages and they brutally kill and set the communities ablaze. "On Saturday, January 7 a group of Muslim herdsmen invaded a predominantly Christian village, where they killed six police officers and four civilians, and destroyed houses and a police station. The Fulani are the largest nomadic group in the world and are known for the high level of importance they assign to their cattle. They are predominantly Muslim and often carry out attacks in Nigeria in the name of Islam. However, Nigeria has refused to recognize them as a terrorist group" (Raymond 2017).

However, due to the fact that hundreds of Christians have been slaughtered and maimed by Muslim Fulani in recent weeks and months, a religious body named Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) assigned Sunday, January 8, as a national day of mourning for Christians killed by Muslims Fulani terrorists in southern Kaduna state, it described the killings as ethnic and religious cleansing or genocide by Islamic fundamentalists disguising as Fulani herdsmen. This contradicts Nigerian president Buhari, a Muslim, who attributes Fulani violence against Christians to poverty, injustice and the lack of job opportunities. Other analysts especially in the West cite climate change and desertification as factors. Christian leaders said Buhari's minimizing of the Fulani attacks speaks volumes over perceived official endorsement of the dastardly and ungodly acts (ibid).

In light of this, a Hudson Institute senior scholar ascertained that; the push towards sharia in Nigeria serves as a battleground for Christians and Muslims over religious freedom (Nina Shea 2001). However, suffice to note that; many persons including Muslims themselves are very uncomfortable with the Sharia law most especially as it relates to some high-profile cases in the last few years. And many Nigerian feminist activists are also uncomfortable with stoning women to death for adultery while letting the men that committed the very act go away free for lack of evidence which is the common practice in sharia courts. The majority are also uncomfortable with cutting off people's hands for minor crimes such as stealing of

goat or a bag of rice when most of the rich Muslims in the country are living comfortable on ill – gotten wealth or misappropriating public resources and are outlawed.

In the final analysis, the introduction of Sharia law, as well as other forms of religious laws in Nigeria as the civil penal code, has highly politicized religion which did not even go well with some true Muslims who believed in religious pluralism or secularism. Regrettably, this has been the bane for the ongoing Boko Haram terrorism which has been clamoring for an Islamic state or Sharia statehood.

### **3. AN OVERVIEW OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS CRISES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

Imo (2011) however, defines religion as a social fact which is essential in the regulation of those conducts of individuals in society that has to do with the essential questions of life and point man to the ultimate reality. This definition aligns with this study in the sense that religion is a formidable force that detects and dictates the mode of relationships between the members of the society on the one hand and the supernatural realities on the other hand. Furthermore, religion is a powerful factor in human society as it shapes and regulates the consciences, behaviors, and cultures of its adherents in any given societies where it exists. And this means that religion occupies such a position in human life and his societies. It has often times been described as providing the cultural coding of individuals and ascribes an identity to man.

However, given this place of religion in human society in general, human history is full of stories of harm and evil deeds done by people in the name of religion. Some people, therefore, see religion as constituting the gravest problem of humanity and most especially in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century world order that has been riddled and characterized by religiously motivated violence and terrorism. Many religious skeptics regard and think of religion as an obstacle to development, depriving people of freedom, and making them irresponsible by setting their minds on some heaven or afterlife when they could take charge of their lives and bring about some required personal and social change. If this is true, then religion is a curse, if it is true that humans are religious by nature (*Homo-religiosus*) then we are cursed and Africans and most especially Nigerians are more cursed because they are as the renowned African scholar John Mbiti (1970) puts it, Africans are notoriously religious.

Again, it becomes more disturbing when one sees the brutality and destruction that still take place today in the name of religion in Nigeria as numerous and series of high intensity and murderous conflicts in Northern Nigeria which usually mushroomed across the country and are usually tagged religious crises because they were directly or indirectly, solely or partly, caused by religion, or at least, Christians and Muslims were the ones attacking each other and destroying their places of worship. In Kaduna, Jos and other parts of Northern Nigeria, Christians and Muslims fight for all sorts of reasons spanning from ethnocentrism, religious fanaticism, misconceptions, prejudices, commercialization of religion, role mixing of politics and religion by overzealous religious leaders, Farmers versus herdsmen, land



disputes (indigene – settler problems more common in Plateau state), manipulation of ethnic and religious sentiments for political and economic reasons or gains. All these have been a reoccurring decimal in Nigeria since the abandonment of ATR.

Be that as it may, it suffices to aptly note that religion itself could be an enormous blessing when the adherents uphold to the sound doctrines and dogmas, just like the era of Traditional Religions in Nigeria. People (Muslims/Christians) have only misused it to bring about trouble and pain in our world today which is contrary to what was obtainable in traditional Nigeria society under the auspices of ATR. It is expedient to aver that; the situation is getting worse every day; it became quite disturbing some years back when people began to use firearms in such conflicts and nowadays bombs and other sophisticated deadly explosives have become the order of the day which has put the entire nation on a tinder box or incendiary position. Apparently, Christians have suffered more from the previous developments according to statistics because churches have been targeted and such bomb attacks are meted on Christian festive days: Christmas, Easter, and Sundays. However, with the emergence of the monstrous Boko Haram, both Christians and Muslims alike have been casualties and almost the entire north-east region has been ravaged.

Again, the trouble with practice of religion is the tendency of practitioners of Christianity and Islam to see their own religion as the only true one and those of others as untrue, of lesser value and therefore, to be discouraged-hence the emergence of the two religions created the mentality of religious superiority among themselves which wasn't the case in traditional society in spite of numerous different tribal and clannish religions, yet there was a high tolerant. People of other religions are perceived as being in the dark, and practitioners of some religions feel the obligation to bring such people to light, namely, their own religion. Some have openly regarded non-followers of their own religion as their enemies or 'unbelievers' as is known in Christianity and 'infidel' among Muslims.

### **3.1. The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria**

Both Muslims and the Christians have used religion as a tool to serve their political interests and religion has been a major tool in Nigerian political affairs right from the colonial era and was formally instituted after the independence. However, the politicization of religion became more alarming during the 1970s politics onwards where the country started voting

based on religious line and religion afterwards was basically a mechanism by which the country's politicians used for their secular interests and greed. Consequently what is common between the two religious groups is that their insistence on the religious way of life is not necessarily because they are convinced about the right thing for the country but they do it in order to satisfy their overzealous religious constituencies.

However, the North shares one thing in common which is Islam as earlier documented. Kenny (1992) once again highlights that; Islam has long been a social definition in Nigeria; they bound together to advance one common political value which is not that of their religious rights and privileges but to go get their own share of the national cake. On the other hand, Christian never had this common political value, it, however, became a rallying point in reaction to Islamic politics. This fact highlighted by Kenny is very real as the researcher himself has witnessed so many cases of manipulation of religion all his time Nigeria and can attest to these religious shenanigans. This politicization of religion permeates every department of the Nigerian society as many elections of student union associations in the higher institutions of learning in the country have always been influencing by religion and students usually cast their votes based on their religious affiliation and often times those fracas snowballs into secular conflicts between the two warring religions. Hence, the result of this is that the fight between the two religious groups is primarily political. It matters to each of the religious groups who the president of the country is, or the governor of a state is irrespective of his qualification for the political position or his moral standing.

In a south – eastern states for instance, Christians would not live to see a Muslim become a governor even if they are absolutely sure their Christian rights would be protected, in like manner, the North would not want to have a Christian as the governor of any northern states even if they were guaranteed of their religious freedom as Muslims for fear of either Islamization or Christianization of their state. The other issue that comes out more and often glaringly concerning the concept of religious politicization is the struggle in the North between the elected politicians and the religious establishments of both divide. According to Sanusi Lamido (2002); the latter tends to be the force behind demands for implementation of sharia and claims that certain governors are not good Muslims and are adopting what is called 'political' sharia. The governors make compromises to save their political careers and spare no effort to moderate the opposition of the Ulama (Islamic law) by discrediting them, blackmailing them or compromising them where possible.

Hence, there is political Islam and political Christianity, it is not uncommon to see a person who was never religious begin to identify himself or herself with a religious group during and when the person eventually wins an election, depending on his or her religious platform begin to use government money to pay for pilgrimages either to Mecca or to Israel/Rome which is contrary to the concept of secularism or the separation of state from church instituted in the constitution of the country. However, what is often the case is the fact that these pilgrimages are not sponsored holistically among the two religions. A Muslim governor is usually paid or sponsors for only Muslim pilgrims to go on pilgrimage and the Christian governor will often pay or sponsors for only Christian pilgrims, which usually generate tension in most states. Most times conflicts arise in the number being sponsored between Christians and Muslims. At this juncture, it is expedient to note that, politics and religion have always been inextricably linked side-by-side in Nigeria, and recent political developments have affected religious coexistence in a more catastrophic way.

International Crisis Group (2010) reports that; historically, the expansion of the country's political structure from three regions in 1960 to 36 states in 1996 undermined regionalism and reconfigured state-level coalitions. The smaller, predominantly Christian ethnic groups began emerging as more significant political actors within their states. With this development a paradigm shift occurred and threatened by this development, the ruling classes in the region began to explore new strategies for retaining their influence and control. In the far north, they fell back increasingly on religion and (Jibrin 1988) says that religion has been a tool to forge a new hegemonic coalition, and it became a major instrument for mobilizing constituencies, sometimes violently.

### **3.2. Politics and the Unhealthy Religious Stereotyping in Nigeria: 2011 Post-Election Violence Case Study**

Following the April 2011 presidential election about 800 people were killed, (Human Rights Watch 2011) Amnesty International earlier warned Nigeria during the build up to the election due to a much heated political permutations and confrontations among the actors, and the agency raised alarm that the 2011 presidential election, if caution is not taken, could end up in religious violence; and lo and behold the end result of the presidential election was a

religious conflict that claimed almost a thousand lives and a destruction of billions of Naira worth properties. The victims were all killed in three days of rioting across 12 Northern states.

The violence started with a widespread protest of the rejection of the outcome or result of the presidential election by supporters of the main opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, a northern Muslim from the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) who happen to recontest once again in 2015 presidential election and emerged victoriously and now the seating president. Following the re-election of the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the Niger Delta in the Southern region of the country who was the Candidate for the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), then violent protests erupted across the northern states where the other presidential candidate hail from. Hence, this electoral protest degenerated into religious riots and sectarian killings in northern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, yobe, and Zamfara.

The April 2011 elections were regarded as among the fairest in Nigerian electoral history at that material point in time, but they were at the same time regarded as well among the bloodiest resulting in a lot of human carnage. The presidential election further divided the country along ethnic and religious lines. As election results trickled in on April 17, and it became clear that Buhari had lost, his supporters and party sympathizers thronged to the streets of northern towns and cities to protest what they alleged to be rigging and electoral malpractices and manipulations of the election by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), the agency in charge of conducting elections. Human Rights Watch Report (2011) documents that;

*The protesters started burning tires and the protests soon turned into riots. The rioting quickly degenerated into sectarian and ethnic bloodletting across the northern states. Muslim rioters targeted and killed Christians and members of ethnic groups from southern Nigeria, who were perceived to have supported the ruling party, burning their churches, shops, and homes... In predominately Christian communities in Kaduna state, mobs of Christians retaliated by killing Muslims and burning their mosques and properties. According to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the umbrella organization representing the majority of Christian churches in Nigeria, at least 170 Christians were killed in the post – election riots, hundreds more were injured, and thousands displaced. The organization also reported that more than 350 churches were burned or destroyed by the Muslim rioters across 12 northern states and in the*

*predominately Christian towns and villages of southern Kaduna state, including Zonkwa, Matsirga, and Kafanchan, sectarian clashes left more than 500 dead, according to Muslim and Christian leaders. The vast majority of the victims in these areas were Muslims. In northern Kaduna state, at least 180 people and possibly more were killed in the cities of Kaduna and Zaria and their surrounding suburbs. Dozens of people were also killed during riots in the other northern states.*

And this has been the worst electoral violence witnessed in Nigeria, though the 2015 elections were strictly voted based on ethnic/religious line which is detrimental to the concept of national unity.

### **3.3. Kafanchan Riots of 6th March 1987: Mutual Misperceptions and Mistrust**

There has always been a mutual distrust between Muslims and Christians since their inception in Nigeria but never gotten to this calamitous height of Kafanchan religious conflict. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, 1987, what started as a minor internal misunderstanding among the Muslim and Christian students of the college of Education in Kafanchan, Kaduna state, finally sent sparks of fire as (Kukah, 1993) says that the destruction went beyond Kafanchan to other parts of the state, and threatened the stability of the entire country. The immediate cause of the riots relates to the plan by the Federation of Christian Students (FCS) at the college of Education, Kafanchan to hold a weekend of religious activities marking the end of its annual week of Christian activities since this is a common feature in all institutions of higher learning in the country, and it had been going on in the college. But in this case, the FCS seemed to have adopted a rather high profile approach which was a departure from its usual style. This time, as part of its initial preparations for the occasion, it hoisted a banner in front of the college which read *welcome to Jesus campus*. Some Muslim students' society (MSS) took offense at this and protested to the school authorities. The FCS leaders were told to remove the banner and they acted accordingly (ibid).

However, it would seem that this event somehow sowed the seeds of distrust and apprehension on both sides of the student bodies. The next problem was that of the guest speaker who further heightened the already inflammable atmosphere. Kukah (1993) captured the details story as he deposits further that; the FCS had invited a certain Rev. Abubakar

Bako, a Muslim convert to Christianity, as the guest speaker for the occasion. It was in the course of his lecture at the gathering that the said Rev. Bako was alleged to have made certain references to the Qur'an to illustrate certain points in his sermon. This sparked off reactions among the members of the Muslim students' society, and the fracas that followed set in motion other events that soon went beyond the campus and the student themselves (ibid).

Thus, it is very clear that the Skirmishes in the campus was the fact that the riots expressed deep – seated feelings of resentment, prejudice and all forms of frustrations between Muslims and Christians and they decided to cease this opportunity to ignite their simmering rivalry. However, after a much heated argument and confrontation, violence consequently broke out on Sunday and Monday in Kafanchan as the aftermath and by the time the security personnel could finally restore law and order around the town of Kafanchan; over a dozen of people had been killed already, with places of worship of both Christians and Muslims and private houses damaged and destroyed.

The above case is just one of so many ugly incidences of such nature that have resulted in hundreds of deaths and billions of properties been destroyed. Hence, religion increasingly becomes the platform for socio – political articulation across the country and also a tool for the emergence of cross-cutting cleavages in the country due mostly to its heterogeneous nature.

### **3.3.1 Claims and Counter Claims**

Though the events in Kafanchan introduced quite a new dimension of physical violence to the issues of religious conflict in Nigeria because not so many people were prepared for new metaphors it introduced to the socio – political relations among the victims of the tragic events in the northern states in particular and the nation at large. For instance, when the rains were late in coming in many parts of the northern states when it ought to be raining that year (though not an unusual occurrence in many northern states) many Christians were jubilating and were quick to ascribed that it was a sign of a Christian God's wrath and punishment as a result of what had been done to the Churches by their Muslims counterparts during the Kafanchan conflict. According to Benson Upah (1988, 36) in highlighting on a similar scenario; when a mysterious fire ravaged entire villages in parts of Gongola state (the present-day Taraba state); there were stories among Christians that the fire like God's punishment on the Egyptians, was ravaging only the houses of Muslims as a punishment for

the burning of the Christian churches in Kaduna state. However, God, it was believed by many Christians, had withheld and kept the rains away until such an appropriate time that the Christians could finish building their Churches after the conflict that ravaged the Churches. Hence, these clouds of anxieties sowed seeds of discord and animosity further in the minds of members of the dominant religions and unfortunately, the destructions by Islamic fanatics continued to reinforce the belief in the minds of many non-Muslims that these evil deeds were being perpetrated by Islam against non-Muslims and this singular act is generating so much religious bigotry.

### **3.4. External Influence on Religious Crises in Nigeria**

External support to local religious organizations seeking the allegiance of African largest Muslim and largest Christian communities has intensified Christian – Muslim rivalries most especially in Nigeria. Christian missions in the United States have invested considerably in evangelical works in Nigeria, including the far northern region. Often times leading European and American missionaries and evangelists have not been allowed to conduct revival programs in the north, however, sister Islamic nations like Saudi Arabia, Sudan, or other Arab states and Iran, along with many Islamic Charities based organizations in those countries has been allowed to get in freely as much possible and this has of course contributed substantial resources for propagating and the spread of Islam in Nigeria or sometimes for empowering particular sects. The vast majority of this money is intended for normal charitable work to cement the ties of Islamic brotherhood. However, its use is poorly monitored, and some have clearly found their way to people who preach hate, division and intolerance and the obvious consequence is the terrorist groups around today as some in the region are suspected and accused of perpetuating, fostering and exaggerating the already lingering dichotomy existing between sects in order to keep the flow of international funds and remunerations. However, on the part of the colonial administration, the imperialists sowed a seed of discord between ethnic-religious groups. According to Dogara Gwamna (2010); colonialists created superior/inferior complexes among peoples in Africa which have graduated into conflict. The situation in Northern Nigeria between the Hausa – Fulani and other ethnic groups, and the creation of segregated quarters for strangers; Sabon Gari and Tudun Wada have led to the volatility of ethnic-religious conflicts in these areas.

In the same manner, the most recent external influence in fomenting religious crisis in Nigeria is the case of Muslim Shiite group with a militancy sect called the Islamic Movement in Nigeria headed by their leader and founder Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky. This group plotted and ambushed the Nigerian Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. Buratai on his way to Kaduna state and the army chief narrowly escaped death; however the group engaged in a bloody battle with the military which led to the death of over 300 members of the sect and their leader was arrested and still in the custody as at the time of this study. After the detention of Zakzaky in December 2015, Shiite members in Pakistan and several other Arab countries took to the streets to protest in solidarity over the arrest and detention of their Nigerian counterpart Sheikh Zakzaky. The height of this was when in that same month the Iranian president Hassan Rouhani made a diplomatic call to his Nigerian counterpart president Buhari demanding the unconditional release of Sheikh Zakzaky and investigation into the killings of the sect by Nigerian military during the confrontation. Corroborating with the above allusion Padan (2010, 118) captures that; the prominent Hausa-language Islamist magazine Sakon Islam is sponsored by Muslim organizations in Iran.

However, the actual links with international networks that propagate violence on the basis of religion are likely to be very few since most of them covertly do that, and their importance is often exaggerated in both the Christian southern Nigerians and the international media. But international links and expressions of solidarity with groups engaged in conflicts elsewhere do fan the flames and embers of violence and are used by extremists to mobilize support. Prior to the deadly January 2010 clashes around Jos the Plateau state capital city, the West African branch of al-Qaeda known as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb ( hereinafter AQIM), offered military training and arms supply to Nigerian Boko Haram to help them fight the 'enemy'. It is widely believed and even said by Boko Haram that they received tactical and technical training in some countries in North Africa and Saudi Arabia. Again, recently Islamic terror groups in Mali and Sudan threatened Nigerian government if it did not allow Boko Haram to freely carry out their attacks, they will attack Nigeria. Also, Boko Haram, al-Qaeda and other terror groups in North Africa and ISIS all formed an alliance as Boko Haram openly pledge allegiance to ISIS and this unification makes Boko Haram and other militant groups more sophisticated.

However, as discussed above, the disillusionment with the implementation of Sharia is widespread and this has unfortunately strengthened the enticement of Islamic revolution as



further encouraged by the Middle East. These had been gaining ground since the Iranian revolution but have attracted an even greater momentum following the American government's 'war on terror' that started after the 9/11 attack on World Trade Centre. Despite the fact that Nigeria has long been governed for almost all of its history since the independence by Muslims, many Islamic conspiracy theories viewed the nation as aligned to the Western World and will be unable to advance Islamic interests for them, the government hence represents Jahiliyya (ignorance) that will never allow or give room to the free practice of an Islamic state and therefore should be fought in the same or like manner that Usman Dan Fodio had waged his ruthless Jihad against the Hausa Kings in the early centuries. This sentiment hitherto contributed significantly to the emergence of anti-establishment groups inclined to violent brutality. However, Christianity as well does get support and solidarity from Rome and Western countries in terms of medical aids and relief materials in times conflicts but research shows that there has not been any practical Christian militancy group in Nigeria yet unlike in some African states.

### **3.5. Internal Dynamics: Christian and Muslim Militancy**

Basically, the abandonment of African Traditional Religions has been the bedrock and fountainhead of religious crises in Nigeria as has been ascertained. The abandonment also led to some doctrinal religious disputes among the adherents of the immigrant religions. In either case, the two warring religions have been characterized by radical rejectionist worldview, including refusal to enter dialogue or comprise with secular authorities. There are also long – running animosities and bigotry between the dominant Hausa – Fulani and numerous minority groups. Mustapha (2000) agrees with this by saying that grievances date back to slave raids under the Sokoto caliphate, colonial indirect rule and continuing perceptions of marginalization among Christian minorities, exacerbated by an intensification of ethnoreligious consciousness and identity in Nigeria since the late 1970s. These tensions have also been influenced by uneven policies of predominantly Muslim state and local authorities, some of which Christian minorities consider as discriminatory. Also, state bias or partiality by the leader who always shows sympathy in favor of the majority group or his/her religion had perhaps emboldened Muslim and Christian youths to resolve in the acts of brutality without fear of state sanctions or consequences of their heinous actions.

However, in recent years, just the same way we are witnessing terrorism around the globe with reckless abandon; there has also been a rise in Islam and Christian militancy in Nigeria. Islamic militancy in Nigeria is always linked to ‘radical Islam’ and the very history of Islamic militancy in the country is always traced back to Usman Dan Fodio’s jihadist conquest. His militant and ruthless attacks were directed at establishing, purifying and reforming Muslim society in Nigeria but later caused some crack and division among Muslims in the country. Raymond (1980) assertions agreed with the above as he observes that; this conservative version of Islam promoted by Usman Dan Fodio later encountered a split between the traditional conservative establishment, as represented by most of the emirs and their councils, and more fanatical groups who do not eschew violence as means of achieving the desired Islamic state and this latter group constituted itself into an organization known as the Maitatsine.

While explaining the identity of the Maitatsine sect, Kenny (1992) gives a vivid background by saying that; the Maitatsine movement represents the uneducated casual laborers during the oil boom of the 1970s. Despite the prosperity of the country, they were poor and marginalized. According to them, both the traditional authorities and the new politicians had betrayed Islam and deserved death. This movement carried out violent actions in Kano in 1980, Bauchi in 1982 and Yola in 1984. It took the Nigerian military to crush them and send them underground. Perhaps this was the very first organized religious militancy in Nigeria that revolted against the state and its facilities and it was famously called the *Maitatsine riots or uprisings*. As has been noted, doctrinal debates between Islamic groups have sometimes degenerated into violence. The conflicts and clashes between the Izala and the Sufi brotherhoods in the 1980s were directly the results of doctrinal disputes and the ongoing Shiite Islamic group which has been having a standoff between the Nigerian army and the government of Kaduna state.

Since after these uprisings, there have been numerous riots between the Christians and Muslims. While there is no Christian group that constituted itself in a military style as the Maitatsine, Nigerian Taliban or Boko Haram movement, Christians have always come out in mass to defend their faith whenever these uprisings occur. According to Doorn – Harder (2010), in reaction to increasing activism, Christian militancy has also grown. And this becomes worrisome as many Nigerian Christians have forgotten to imbibe the Biblical principle or injunction of turning the right cheek when slapped on the left. They have

rediscovered the Old Testament code of *an eye for an eye* and *tooth for tooth*. Hence, this Islamic and Christian militancy is becoming more and more popular leading to more religious acrimony and bigotry in recent times.

### **3.6. State and Religious Crises in Nigeria**

Religion is the act of pleasing the divine/divinities in the traditional context, and salient about religion is morality and sanctity of life. Apart from the contrasting view of capitalist religions (Islam/Christianity), the term in explication defined man's existence. Even though the state usually downplays and tried to give the impression that these crises are communal, religious and ethnic, but the character of the violence, issues dynamics, and even the intention, actions and inactions of the state most of the times show the extent of culpability of the state towards the conflicts. Many scholars of ethnoreligious conflicts have argued that the state is an active actor in most of the crises. According to Osaghae (2002) ethnic and religious conflicts can be seen to be produced more by the (state's) threatening actions regarding the various communities and religions which sustain peoples' lives than by any intrinsic hostility among... peoples. While it is difficult to identify the overt role of the state in terms of physical recruitment of combatants, its role can be assessed by looking at its actions and inactions and ineptitudes before, during and after the crises. From the foregoing account of ethnic – religious conflicts, the following forms of covert state activities could be identified.

1. State funding of individuals and groups against activities of some social, community, and interest groups. This could be found in most of the crises discussed but the extent of involvement of one state or the other, but they have always found it difficult to substantiate. For instance, Akin (1999) aver that; the wives of Maitatsine alleged that their husband was receiving financial support from the state governor, Abubakar Rimi. They could not prove it before the tribunal of Inquiry. On Kafanchan crisis, Christians pointed accusing fingers at the Alhaji Aliyu Mohammed the then secretary to the federal government. Muslims, on the other hand, identified some powerful individuals and erstwhile state officials from southern Kaduna.
2. Active involvement of public officials in the activities of the rival organization by way of membership, attendance of meetings or functions, inciting statements against activities of

the group. A very good example of this is the ongoing allegation against Senator Ali Ndume from Borno state and some other public officials alleged to be Boko Haram sponsors but unfortunately, such trials or inquiry usually don't see the light of the day as the said Senator is still a seating member of the Nigerian parliament. In a similar case, the former governor of Borno state Ali Modu Sheriff was accused even by members of Boko Haram as one of their major sponsors while he was a governor of the state and suffice to point out that it was during his reign that Boko Haram actually started by the then commissioner of his administration named Mohammed Yusuf.

3. Again partisan or involvement dispositions of the state agencies most especially the Nigerian police force, the military and the Judiciary, which usually prevent fair hearing to warring factions in conflict situations is another clear-cut evidence. The authoritarian military state according to Jega (2002) particularly under General Ibrahim Babangida had continued to manipulate ethnic and religious sentiments in dividing the ranks of the citizens and enhancing the 'Legitimacy' of his regime. Hence, Babangida's administration popularized religion as a political instrument. Sequel to this, Babangida's registration of Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) exacerbates or heightens religious misperception and intolerance as well as active international religious politics into Nigeria's political fabric. While people continue to criticize the use of state resources to sponsor Muslim and Christian pilgrims to Mecca and Jerusalem respectively the so-called holy lands, forgetting the fact that Nigeria is a secular state in the content of the constitution. Also, the secretive manner by which Nigerian membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was handled further increased the simmering religious distrust and mutual intolerance and mobilization of contending and opposed religious positions in national political affairs of the country.

However, the Muslims have also on many occasions accused the state of favoring Christians above them and this manipulation of religious sentiments reflected on inter-communal conflicts in so many areas. Toure (1999) states that; the communal conflict between the Hausa –Fulani and ethnic minorities in Southern Kaduna has since the 1980s assumed an additional dimension of Muslim versus Christian dichotomy, the Kafanchan crisis of 1987 was the first major departure, from the previous conflicts, which were essentially communal. Hence, since the 1987 Kafanchan crisis, all the conflicts in Kaduna, Bauchi and even Kano took an additional dimension of religion. The state has also during crises, favored

one group against the other. In all the crises in Northern Nigeria, the two opposing religions have always accused the state in one way or the other of favoritism.

While Christians mostly in the northern region claimed that the state has been characteristically biased against them, it has always been the contention of the Hausa and Fulani Muslims that the state have always deploy its apparatus and mechanisms to repress Muslims during conflicts and this accusation and counter accusations keep rages on even till now. Suffice to note also that; many claimed that; the 1980 Maitatsine crises/riot in Kano was an attempt by the Northern Party of Nigeria (NPN) Controlled Federal Government to use Maitatsine in destabilizes an opposition state government in Kano state. There are also several allegations today, that the Boko Haram insurgency is an attempt by the Northern opposition party to destabilize the Christian/Southern man at the helm of the federal government affairs (President Jonathan) in the previous administration. However, it has been earlier established how Boko Haram was formed as a political tool. Presently there are many accusations by the Muslim north right now that the ongoing vandalism of the Nigerian oil facilities by the south Niger Delta militants is to sabotage the present administration of president Buhari who is a northern Muslim.

All these crises in Northern Nigeria often times presented enough early warning signs that any serious government with a political will in curbing conflict should be able to take precaution and calm the situation before escalation. For instance, in Kaduna, the Zango Kataf crisis of 1992 and the subsequent Sharia riots of Kaduna in 2000, Jos crisis and most of the crises in Kano would not have taken place had the state acted responsibly and fast. Again, the February and May 2000 ethnoreligious crisis in Kaduna even though the police were aware of an impending demonstration two days before, nothing concrete was put in place to deck the situation (Egwu 2001). And the list of such cases goes on and on; the most glaring and absurd situation is the ongoing Boko haram menace. The government was so reluctant to tackle the insurgent group headlong at its prime stage and that singular ineptitude has allowed the monumental human carnage we have been witnessing hitherto, and the Boko Haram terrorist group is now an international actor having been ranked as one the world's deadliest insurgency.

In many places during these religious crises, it usually takes two days or more intensive fight and killings before security agents will be drafted to the area. A good example of this was the recent killings in Riyom and Barkin –Ladi of Plateau State where it was

alleged that a distress call was put across to Joint Task Force comprises of security personnel of different outfits (JTF) in Jos at about, 4.30am, but fail to show up until 9.30am after the so-called Fulani herdsmen have finished the killings of the Christian community and this has never changed as we can still see the ongoing incessant and unabated human slaughter by the so-called Fulani herdsmen. Furthermore, Jos crisis was another case of government negligence, despite elaborate early warning signs in almost all the conflicts but the government is always been callous and allowed the crisis to occur. For instance, the then state Governor Joshua Dariye traveled abroad just a week before the crisis took place at a time when tension had risen to a dangerous level which he ought to stay back as the chief security officer of his state. Also in Kano, the anti-American violent protest wouldn't have occurred had the state acted fast and worked with security report. In fact, president Obasanjo being in charge at that material point in time bluntly blamed the state government for the crisis when he accused the governor of given him the false impression that the situation was under control whereas it wasn't true.

Another strong dimension of state involvement is the fact that, the government has most times used state and local government creations and boundary adjustment to fuel ethnoreligious violence particularly the case of the creation of Jos North by then military junta General Ibrahim Babangida is very crucial analogy on this. Similarly are the crises in Benue and Taraba state having been to a large extent associated with the arbitrary creation of local government without taken cognizance of sensitive issues like religious identity and ethnic groups. Most of the crisis in Jos also has to do with 'ownership' and control of local government. The tussle between the Hausa – Fulani in Jos and the indigenous' and 'settlers', or ethnic minority groups is more of political control of Jos North local government which always has a religious connotation or undertone. There have also been different responses to ethnic and religious conflicts by the government. A comparison of the crisis in Taraba and that of Zango Kataf provides a clear illustration and Mustapha (2000) aptly captured this view when he highlighted that;

*The Federal government response to the Mayhem in Taraba was slow in coming suggesting that the area been minority area (Christians community), no real stakes were directly involved...In Zango Kataf where Hausa (Muslims) interest was directly involved, government resources were poured into rehabilitate the area and prison sentences were handed out to alleged instigators and perpetrators of the killings.*

*Mostly in Kataf, in Wukari and Takun, however, no trials were held despite virtually three years of carnage. And no government resources were made available for reconstruction.*

At the end of most of these crises various commissions of inquiry were set up and constituted but never has the reports of these so-called commissions were made public, nor put to use, and no white paper has been issued on the reports. Also on many occasions, the perpetrators are made to go free as noted above hence no punishment and reward culture by the state which ought to have served as a deterrent to potential militants.

However, the negative involvement of law enforcement agents in managing crises is another dangerous situation of state indirect involvement which also contributes in exacerbating the crises and increasing the casualty figures. They directly repress people, arrest and torture, sometimes innocent people and many times there are accusations of soldiers giving information against one party to their religious body in times of conflict. In some cases, they go on the spray of extra-judicial killings. For instance, the brutal murder of Mohammed Yusuf (Boko Haram founder) by the security agents brought about all these incessant carnage in the country, as the followers claimed that they are retaliating firstly for his death. Also, the law enforcement agents are often accused of bias and protecting one group against the other. The activity of soldiers and the consequent massacre of innocent civilians is a clear case in point.

#### **4. NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN RELIGIONS**

Nigeria has demonstrated and witness a very high propensity of ethnoreligious violence in the past since the arrival of Christianity and Islam and there has as well been a drastic and dangerous rise in the level of religious fundamentalism, militancy religious movements of all types coupled with an extreme overzealous sense of religious intolerance which has resulted into uncountable and unabated cases of intra and inter-religious conflicts in the country. However, it was earlier established that since the emergence of alien religions, Nigeria politics, even when pitched on other lines (North versus South), always ends up being largely about Islam and Christianity and this has completely changed the political landscape of the nation since religion basically dictates the tune of national politics. And this fact again reverberates again during the 2015 presidential election where there was so much religious factor in play; the two aspirants campaigned on religious basis and even went overboard with some malicious vendettas and the election virtually was done based on religious line-Christian against Muslim.

Unfortunately, it is a well-known fact in Nigeria that hardly a Muslim is allowed to cast his/her vote for a Christian aspirant; and same applied to Christians who will barely vote for a Muslim candidate even if he is more qualify and suitable for the vying position. This is the ugly and absurd situation that the two foreign religions have caused a transgenerational enmity. Again, the politicization of religion by the state itself has created its own problems. Tunde Lawuyi (1980) has rightly noted this when he states that; the state has appeared as an innocent bystander in the religious conflicts when actually it is not. For the religious actors, the state is often involved in its approach to religious issues.

Perhaps the very essence of religion has been defeated since religion has metamorphosed into a mechanism use by the politicians and also the numerous evil perpetuated by religionists. Ilori J. A (1993) concurs with this by saying that, religion has lost to a great extent its spiritual authority in the society, in what has become a tool of the state. Thus because of the political expediency in the country, so many human lives have been lost due to the politicization of religion. It has also been examined that religion has always assumed the crucial role and duty of defining identity, including political identity among Nigerians and this portends danger for the continuing corporate existence of heterogeneous country like Nigeria. However, the previous elections since the independence in Nigeria were



marked with the overt use of religion to either win or lose votes. It is on this note that, Abdullahi Adamu (2001) the former Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, highlighted as follow;

*Events in our country since the return to civil rule in May 1999 show that the termites of ethnic and religious intolerance are beginning to eat the woodworks of our national unity and cohesion. While the shadow of ethnic and religious intolerance beginning to eat the woodworks of our national unity and Cohesion. While the shadow of ethnic and religious intolerance lengthens; understanding is growing shorter. Intolerance is beginning to blind if needed it has not blinded us to the beauties in the culture and religion of other people, where today a minor difference between individuals in any part of the country is instantly given a religious or ethnic coloration particularly in the north.*

This situation has no doubt worsened since then and the unabated and incessant religious conflicts couple with the heinous brutality exhibited or perpetuated in the face of any little or slightest provocation apparently attest to the fact that religion has become rather a liability and obstacle of oppression, instead of being an ethical and moral asset to the Nigerian state.

#### **4.1. Mutual Prejudice**

The abandoning of African traditional Religions and the acceptance of foreign religions has been the bane for the bitter rivalry and ethnoreligious conflicts in Nigeria as it created intolerance and mutual prejudices which are the cause of many gruesome religious debacles and human carnage in the country. For some strange reasons, which may or may not be quite clear, Muslims and Christians always look at themselves with suspicion and hatred due to their diverse religious beliefs and subsequently both their political, ideological and philosophical principles have been influenced and structured base on parallel religious beliefs. Rightly or wrongly, for Christians the Muslims are bellicose, belligerent, probably more inclined to go often the violent way in resolving a dispute and Christians also describe Islam as a volatile religion; this also is the same way Muslims regard Christians. The incessant bloody clashes between Christians and Muslims in the north which usually have reprisal attacks in other regions of the country may have helped to reinforce this perception, which probably informed the comment made by the Christian Association of Nigeria (hereinafter

CAN) some time ago. This apex body of Christian in Nigeria declared that it shall no longer keep quiet in the face of violence attacks but will continue to resist all and any kind of religious intolerance and attacks against its members as nobody has the monopoly of violence and such incendiary and inflammatory statements is an obvious implication when Muslims are been referred to as not having ‘monopoly of violence’; because this implies and signifies that Christians can as well explore or use violence power or method in revenge and as a means to an end. As though to make its position free from ambiguity, the Christian body explained that;

*CAN deem it proper to bring to the notice of both government and the general public that it can no longer continue to embrace peace when its members are being embarrassed, intimidated, maimed and killed by intolerance and fanatical Muslim faithful. Nigerian Christians are completely disgusted with the seemingly insatiable desire by misguided Muslim brothers to take lives and property at the slightest excuse... We no longer want to turn the other cheek (Isiramen 2010).*

If anyone is still in doubt that Christians have reached the limits of tolerance, such doubts are easily dispelled from the foregoing allusions by the body in charge of the Christianity. One can now see clearly why the problem of religious crisis in Nigeria is apparently intractable. It is one attack leading to a series of retaliatory attacks. The faithful on both sides of religious divide seemed to have crossed the limit of forbearance due to the mutual prejudice, thereby creating a sesame scenario. But this situation has not helped to douse or calm the fire of religious violence in Nigeria; it has rather made the condition worse. In fact, the prospect is frightening if this war of attrition between Muslims and Christians continues, unabated.

## **4.2. Appraisal of Reviewed Literatures**

In trying to conclude this section of the study, an appraisal of the works reviewed in the introductory section points that there is a methodological affinity in the works of Ayih (1999) and Balagun (1980) respectively. This approach no doubt gives a descriptive picture of the emergence, early growth, and development of religious conflicts in Nigeria. Efe (2010) focused mainly on the causes of the conflicts, while Ononogbu (2010) on the other hand explicated through some concepts how religious conflicts persist mostly in northern Nigeria. However, Akinola (2005) and Albert (1999) showed what led to the abandonment of

traditional religion in Nigeria and how the colonialists contributed immensely to the foundation of ethnoreligious conflicts via their divide and rule policy which was enhanced through their gunboat. Agbaje's (2006) works appear to be more extensive and encompassing in scope and content, their sociological approach is quite different from the earlier scholars', though their work is also not exhaustive and all-embracing. The time – frame of their work is limited to when colonialists sowed the seed of discord and mistrust among the northerners and the southerners.

The recent ethnoreligious conflicts, religious politicization and the menace of Boko Haram visited far – reaching consequences on the growth of religious conflicts and the degrading of moral values in Nigeria and mostly in northern Nigeria where religious conflicts reign supreme and has become the order of the day. These recent developments couple with the fact that none of the works address religious crisis in Nigeria as a phenomenon that emanated from the abandonment of ATR missing in previous studies underpins the justification of this study since the related reviewed works is not based in this field emphatically. Thus, due to the missing gap in the above-reviewed works, this study has present a more detailed implication and impact of the abandonment of ATR due to the arrival of the so-called religions of the book. This study also points out government contribution and its ineptitude towards ethnoreligious conflicts in Nigeria.

#### **4.3. What Factors can Promote Harmonious Co-Existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria?**

To state that Nigeria is a typical example of a religiously plural society is to over-flog the obvious. The fact that from the abandonment of African Traditional Religions with the emergence of foreign religions, there have been lopsided policies and the unabated religiously motivated conflicts is also not hidden. Colonial administrative policies towards Christian and Muslim communities institutionalized racial and religious differences with far reaching consequences before and after independence which has been the pivotal and the bane of mistrust, suspicion, and distrust among the two warring religions today.

Sequel to this fact, the researcher wish to make some salient recommendations that will foster mutual trust, peaceful coexistence and social harmony, religious and national

cohesion that will ameliorate the frequent religious tensions and conflicts and drive the attainment of love, respect for human life, peace, stability, security, socio-economic growth and development in Nigeria and for the good of the commonwealth. The recommendations will be discussed in the following subsections.

#### **4.3.1. Sanctity of Life**

This is pivotal and central among the traditional society, and both Qur'an and the Bible also attached so much importance to the life of human beings and in the Christian Bible in the book of Leviticus 7:11 which says that; for the life of a creature is in the blood .... Also Exodus 20:13 the Christian scripture admonished that whosoever sheds the blood of a man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God created man. And in the same manner the Muslim Qur'an chapter 5:32 teaches that; whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind. This means that no man had any right to take the life of another in the name of religion according to the holy books of the two warring religions in Nigeria, thus the adherents should live and adhere to the testaments of their scriptures and hence desist from the killing of each other.

In the same vein respect of fundamental human rights has been a major concern in the traditional African society and the two warring religions should ensure this sacred principle to ameliorate the incessant maiming and killing of each other. Cyril Imo (2010) supports this while depositing that; there are provisions in both the Bible and the Qur'an and in the teachings of Christ and the prophet Muhammad and the Apostles of the religions that clearly spell out the need and how to respect the fundamental principles of human rights and democracy. Experts in the two religions should respectfully work out how these can be applied in the Nigeria nation without jeopardizing the process of democracy, national cohesion, and economic development.

This must be respected and ensure that human life is held in high esteem and causing any form of harm to one another should be seriously abhorred unlike in the auspices of African Traditional Religions.

### **4.3.2. Forgiveness and Act of Tolerance**

Humanity could benefit the spirit of tolerance in African Traditional Religions. ATR is one of the most tolerant religions in the world and this tolerant nature of ATR allows it to sync with many other religions peacefully without forcing its tenets on anyone. In spite of the reticent and subjugation, ATR successfully crossed the Atlantic deeply embedded in the hearts of the African slaves and into Latin America, the Caribbean, Dominica, Cuba, Brazil etc. and the religion strived on in the hearts of the slaves despite the harsh and draconian reprisal from the imperialist and slave owners.

Even though this is not a popular position from the viewpoint of human perspective, however, it will be the panacea and a springboard to religious violence in Nigeria as lack of forgiveness and religious tolerance is seriously lacking in the actions of Muslims and Christians in the country hence resulting into a mission of mutual destruction. Violence often begets violence as they say, so the religious faithful must learn to tolerate, forgive and adopt non-violent option for the sake of peace and national unity. Religious leaders, on the other hand, must not only teach and preach sound doctrines, religious tolerance and mutual understanding but that people must learn to live exemplarily with others. Religious leaders must not be involved in triggering or fueling the embers of religious acrimony and rancor.

In a pluralistic and heterogeneous nation as Nigeria, inter-faith interactions and dialogues among different religious teachers should be welcome and encouraged as such will enhance a sustained peacebuilding and confidence creation among the religious divides with their adherents and different religious leaders themselves should be trained in order to appreciate the plural nature of the country. Similarly; religious organizations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) should also act as checks and a watchdog to curtail the excesses of fanatical extreme religious teachers and preachers that usually provoke others and cause violence with their inflammatory teachings and public remarks.

Time has come for the Muslims and Christians in Nigeria to try to understand and appreciate each other's feelings, have mutual consideration for each other, and respect each other's rights. Also, politicians must stop using religion to achieve their personal or selfish goals at the detriment of the masses. Religious leaders also need to preach the true tenets of religion emphasizing on the aspects which seek to promote peace, understanding and mutual coexistence, instead of promoting divisive tendencies which heighten tensions, fears,

suspicious which always result into chaos and conflicts. If Christians and Muslims borrow from the tolerant nature of ATR, then certainly peace will reign between them.

#### **4.3.3. Secularism should be upheld**

Section 38 (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as amended states that; every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including freedom to change his/her religion or belief and freedom either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest and propagate this religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. The freedom to exercise religion has two parts; one is the freedom to believe, and the other is the freedom to act on that belief. However the proposal by the sharia law and Boko Haram to Islamize the entire country is an abuse of this section 38; or for a particular religion to claim superiority over another is very contrary to the spirit of separation of religion from the state and both Christians and Muslims alike should take countries especially like Estonia as a role model in terms of clear separation and neutrality of the state and religion-hence religion and politics should absolutely be dispensable as this will ensure government's neutrality on religious matters. State or its agents should as a matter of urgency desist forthwith from intervening and meddling into religious affairs in a manner that could be interpreted as being bias or partisan. The Nigeria constitution is clear enough on the status of the country as a secular entity and this must be adhered to.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Acceptance of Foreign Religions as the Bane and Fountainhead of Nigeria's Religious Crises**

This thesis examined the abandonment of African Traditional Religions and the assessment of the Impact of foreign religions on ethnoreligious crises in Nigeria and at the course of the study, the research work had dealt justice to the negative effects of the abandonment of African Traditional Religions and its impact towards the religious crisis in Nigeria. As can be easily observed during the study, Christian to Christian and Muslim to Muslim fraternities are promoted in many instances and not the universal love of neighbor and the principle of oneness and cohesion as obtainable in the traditional Nigerian society. Thus, the abandonment and the emergence of the foreign religions accompanied by individualism have been identified as a major cause of social disequilibrium and unabated religious conflict in Nigeria. And this notion is quite contrary to the concept of collectiveness and 'weism' as well as the principle of extended family among the entire society which was obtainable in traditional society. Hence, the problem of individualism and inter-religious rivalry between Christianity and Islam, and noticeable intra-religious squabbles within Christian and Muslim denominations with particular reference to intra-religious wrangling existing between Protestantism and Pentecostalism in Christianity and simmering schisms between Shiite and Sunni and izzala of Islam reign supreme nowadays.

Hence, since the abandonment of African Traditional Religions in Nigeria and the emergence of Islam and Christianity have given birth to religious crises in Nigeria hitherto and have caused thousands of millions of Naira worth of property been destroyed and a magnitude number of human death. Communities that at one time under traditional Nigeria society lived mostly in harmony and peaceful solidarity have now been segregated and living in bitter rivalry and hatred; former friends and neighbors are now viewed as enemies. Colleagues or co-workers who have engaged and worked side-by-side for so many years peacefully are now suspicious and skeptical of one another and consequently lost the willingness and freedom to interact as they usually did before. Again, students who have previously gone to school together and played, enjoyed sports and other games together have now been separated from one another and they no longer love and trust each other as they use

to be. Thus, as many lives of loved ones have been lost, properties destroyed, houses burnt or raised down and places of worship destroyed and people began to retaliate forcefully, then mutual mistrust and stereotyping widened its gap between the Christian and Muslim communities.

However, there is an accusation or stereotype of terrorism and tendency to violence in Islam which are equally high in the Christian perception of their Muslim neighbors in the south/Eastern region. There is increasingly fear that one day, the Muslims in the Southeastern region could become easily radicalized. However, this is a very bad perception and unhealthy stereotype for religions that connote peace. The events that cause this unholy stereotype on Islam in South/east, and middle belt and southwestern regions remain no other things than the speed with which religious violence is unleashed in the society in different parts of Northern Nigeria. Apparently, the cause of each group is likely to be furthered by a competitive orientation towards the rival group which is often easily extended to include prejudice attitudes and even overtly hostile behavior. Hence Muslims and Christians started seeing each other with suspicion and mistrust.

Again, the research went on to show the sacrosanctity and sacredness of life which is the ultimate priority in African Traditional Religions which ought to be a quintessence model for Islam and Christianity to emulate the principle of tolerance, oneness and human value in order to enhance peace and tranquility in Nigeria and by extension world over. Further, a careful study also revealed that Colonialists partitioned Africa and especially Nigeria and created artificial states and boundaries without regard to ethnic peculiarities and divergent historical and cultural milieu. Also, the imperialists created or planted the seed of competition and superiority/inferiority complexes between the Christians and Muslims as they separate the people based on their ethnic-religious background. It was also proven that African Traditional Religions is one the only religions of the world that hasn't ever been to war or kill people on its own basis or behalf for the propagation of its doctrines or ideas, neither a Jihad or a Crusade nor the equivalent anywhere.

However, researching a topic like this had been a herculean work; but it has been interesting anyway. The topic of research abandonment of African Traditional Religions as the bane of religious crises in Nigeria points out the truth about the root causes of the incessant and unabated religious crises in Nigeria and the subsequent retaliatory attacks in other parts of the country. Furthermore, in the course of this research, the author succinctly



established that whenever the two warring religions clash, this creates tension in society and when those tensions boil over into violence, multitudes of lives are lost, an uncountable property is destroyed and the cohesion of the country itself is threatened. It was also learned that religion has emerged as the formidable force which is the constantly used element or tool in fueling and exacerbating ethnoreligious crises in Nigeria and religious politicization.

Finally, it is imperative to advise at this juncture that they would-be researchers in this field could further research deeper on this, since a topic of this magnitude cannot be fully covered in a single study due to time, resources and scope exigencies but they are still more to study on this discipline looking at the evolvement of Boko Haram and so many other deadly religious militants emanating in Nigeria and the world over.

## REFERENCES

- Abdul, M. O. (1977). Muslim – Christian Relationship in Nigeria: The view of a Muslim. Nigerian Dialogue. Vol. 2:2.
- Abdullahi, A. (2001). Towards Ethnic and Religious Tolerance Within a United and Diverse Nigeria. A keynote Address. Week/National Conference Organized by Gamji Members Association, Kaduna, January 22, 2001. P.4 <https://nasarawastate.org/gabi.htm>,p.2.
- Abdulrauf, M. (2002). Transformation of Minority Identities in Post– Colonial Nigeria. A. Jega, (ed). P.28.
- Afigbo, A. E. (2002). *In the Shadow of the Caliphate: Culture and the politics of structure and Administration in Nigeria*. Sultan Bello Hall Distinguished Lecture, University of Ibadan. 12th April 2002.
- Agbaje, A. (2006). Travails or the Secular State: Religion, Politics and the outlook of Nigerian’s 3rd Republic”. In the journal of Commonwealth and comparative politics: xxxviii edition. February 22, 2006.
- Ahmed, L. (2011). Remote and Immediate Causes of Religious Crises in Nigeria. The Economy Magazine. October 11, 2011.
- Akinola, G. A. (2005). Religion and the National Question in Nigeria. Paper Presented at the Staff and post-graduate students Seminar, Department of History: University of Ibadan 8th September 2005.
- Akinseye, F. A. (2010). Religion and Violence: A Christian Discourse. R.A. Akanmidu (ed.) Thoughts in the Humanities, Decency Ltd: Ilorin.

- Akin, A. (et al) (2000). Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria. Zango – Katak Crisis: A case study. Uppsala: Kano, p.121.
- Albert, A.O. (1999). Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Kano. Ibadan: Spectrum.
- Albert, A. O. (1994). Violence in Metropolitan Kano: A Historical Perspective. E.O. Osaghae, (Ed). Urban Violence.
- Arinze, F. (1997). Meeting other Believers. Pauline's Publications: Nairobi, Kenya.
- Attahiru, J. (2002). The state and Identity Transformation under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria. Jega, A. (ed). Identity Transformation. p.20.
- Ayih, S. (1999). Traditional societies in Nigeria. Ibadan: UPS PLC, P.83.
- Balogun, S.A (1980). History of Islam up to 1800. In Groundwork of Nigerian History. O. Ikime (ed). Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books PLC.
- Bernard, J (2001). The Challenge of Modernity in Nigeria. Kenya: Pauline's publications; Africa. P. 24.
- Bernard, H. (1964). The Law of Christ. New York: Newman press, vol. III. 1964.  
British Journal of Sociology. Vol. 11:2.
- Carmon, et al (2010). Christian Blueprint for Inter –Religious Peace Building in Northern Nigeria. University of Jos: 2010.
- Charles, K. (2002). When Religion Becomes Evil. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1999 Constitution as Amended.  
<http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>.

- Douglas, M. (2017). Who Will Protect Nigeria's Northern Christians? [https://spectator.co-uk/2017/02/who\\_will\\_protect\\_nigeria's\\_northern\\_christians](https://spectator.co.uk/2017/02/who_will_protect_nigeria's_northern_christians)
- Efe, E. (2010). Curbing Religious Violence in a Pluralistic Society: A Christian Perspective. R. A. Akanmidu (ed). Thoughts in the Humanities. Decency printers Ltd: Ilorin. P.353.
- Egwu, S. (2001). Ethnic and Religious Violence in Nigeria. St. Stephen Inc. Bookhouse, Jos.
- Egwu, S. (2001). Ethnic and Religious Violence in Nigeria. Okoye, (ed). P. 19.
- Ejimonye, R. and Knoye, M. (2007). The Crisis of Morality in African. In Nacaths Journals of African Theology. Vol.17.2007. P.19.
- Ekpenye, M. O. (2010). The Church as a Family of God. In Nacaths Journals of African Theology. Vol.19. 2010. P.37.
- Emeagwali, G. (2010). <https://members.aol.com/afriforum/colonia.htm>.2010.
- Exodus 20:13 (2008). The Holy Bible: New International Version (NIV). Colorado Spring: USA. P.54.
- Falola, T. (1989). Migrant-Settler in Ife Society. Calabar Historical Journal: Vol.3.No.1.
- Gwamna, D. (2010). Religion and Politics in Nigeria. Bukuru: ACTS, P.80.
- Harvard Divinity School (2014). Islam in Nigeria. Religious Literacy Project 2014. [https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/islam\\_nigeria](https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/islam_nigeria)
- Hickey, R. (1982). The Maitatsine uprisings in Nigeria.

Holy Qur'an Chapter 3:84, 29: 46.  
<https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=84>

Holy Qur'an Chapter 5:32. <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=32>

Ibrahim, J. (1988). *The Politics of Religion in Nigeria: Religious Violence*. The Guardian: Lagos.

Ilori, J. A. (1993). *Religion and Social Change: An African perspective*. Adam press: Zaria, p.84

Isiramen, C. O. (2010). *Religious Crises and Development Nigeria*. C. O. Isiramen (eds). *Religion and the Nigerian Nation*. Ibadan: En-Joy press & Books, 2010. p.333.

Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa (2001): Appendix B, Pew Forum.  
<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/sub-saharan-africa/2001>. P. 3.

James, C. (1986). *Nigeria Background to Nationalism*. Brobury and Wistron Ltd: Benin City, P.91.

James, H. (1995). *Society: A Down – to – Earth Approach*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

John S. Mbiti (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann Press,( 1990 ), P. 3–4.

John, M. Y. (1946). *Religion in the Struggle for Power* Durham, N.C. Duke: University press.

Karl, M. (1972). *Thesis on Feuerbach*. Milano: Giuffre.

Kazah, T. (1999). *The Political Economic Crisis Conflicts and Governance in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria*. *African Development*: Vol. xxiv, Nos. 1 & 2. p.10.

Kenny, J. (2010). The spread of Islam in Nigeria. A Historical Survey.

Kenneth, Morgan. (2002). (ed) Islam, the straight path: Islam Interpreted by Muslim Conflict in Nigeria.

Kukah, M. (1993). Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria. Ibadan: spectrum Books Ltd.

Leviticus 7:11 (2008). The Holy Bible: New International Version (NIV). Colorado Spring: USA, P.74.

Matthew 26:52 (2008). The Holy Bible: New International Version (NIV). Colorado Spring: USA, P.74.

Martin, W. Lewis (2011). Electoral Politics and Religious Strife in Nigeria. <http://www.geocurrents.info/cultural-geography/electoral-politics-and-religious-strife-in-nigeria>.

Nelly, Van Doorn-harde. Op. Cit. International Crisis Group. 2010.

Nigeria Demographic Profile (2017).

[https://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/Nigeria\\_Population\\_Demographics.html](https://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/Nigeria_Population_Demographics.html).

NigeriaNationalPopulationCensus(2006).<http://www.nigeriamasterweb.com/Nigeria06CensusFigs.html>.

Nigerian History (1980).O. Ikime (Ed). Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books plc.

Obi, I. (2005). African Traditional Values in Dialogue. In Nacaths Journals of Theology. Vol.

- Ogunkunle, C. (2010). An Exegetical study of Genesis 34 within the Contest of Religion and Violence in Nigeria. R. A. Akanmidu (Ed). Thoughts in the Humanities. Decency Ltd: Ilorin. 2010.
- Okure, A. (2011). Ethnicity in Nigeria <https://nccbuscc.org/mrs/pcmr/ethnicities/nigerian.shtml>.
- Onigu and Albert O. I.(1999). (eds), Community Conflict in Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum Books
- Onmhawo, J. A. & Adamu C. O. (2010). Ethnic and Religious Violence in Nigeria: A Biblical Theological Approach". R. A. Akanmidu (ed). Thoughts in the Humanities Decency Ltd: Ilorin.
- Ononogbu, D. (2010). Unemployment Among the Youths: A study on the Role of the Nigerian Church. R. A. Akanmidu (ed). Thoughts in the Humanities. Decency Ltd: Ilorin.
- Onukaba, A. – O. (1988). On the bloody Trail of Religious Violence. The Guardian: Lagos; June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1988. P.49.
- Otonko, J. (2010). African Theology and Human Rights Abuses in the Third World Nations: Identifying Challenges. R. A. Akanmidu (ed). Thoughts in the Humanities. Decency Ltd: Ilorin.
- Padan, J. (2011). Islam and Democratic Federation in Nigeria. African Notes (Report). Centre for Strategic and International Studies: March 2011. p.118.
- Pew Research Centre. (2010). Religion and Public Life: Executive-Summary-Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa. <https://pewforum.org/2010/04/15/executive-summary-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa/>. (08.05.2017)
- Pilkington, F. (1957). African Affairs Journal. Vol. 56: 223.

- Racho, J. (2012). The International Christian Concern's. Regional Manager for African Journal.
- Raymond, I. (2017). Spite on the Cross or Die. Muslim Persecution of Christians. Gatestone Institute: International Policy Council. January 2017. p.71.
- Sahara Reporters. Wambai Market Incidence. [https://sahara.news.reports/wambai\\_mkt\\_news](https://sahara.news.reports/wambai_mkt_news)
- Sanusi, L. (2002). Shariacracy in Nigeria: The Intellectual Roots of Islamist Discourses. (Eds) A. Osuntokun et al: Lagos.
- Shea, N. (2001). Annual Report on Human Rights in Situation Nigeria. Tell Magazine: Sept.24.
- Tunde, L. (2005). Nigeria in the 1980s: Religion and National Integration. J. Olupona and T. Falola (eds), Religion and Society in Nigeria. p.102.
- U. S. Department of State (2005). Nigeria: International Religious Freedom Report. Vol. 35. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2005/>
- Upah, B. (1988). *The Enigmatic force of Ibi*. Sunday New Nigerian: 6<sup>th</sup> March 1988. P.36.
- Vexen, C. (2010). Religion, Violence, Crime and Mass suicide. [http://humanreligions.info/violence\\_and\\_crime.html](http://humanreligions.info/violence_and_crime.html)
- Wunsch cited in Eghosa, Osaghae (2002). Ethnicity and its management in Africa. CASS Monograph Series.
- Yeld, E. R (1960). *Islam and Social Stratification in Northern Nigeria*. The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 11:2. 1960.



Yusuf, T. (2006). *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*. World Alive publishers: Nairobi. P.9.

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Muslim dogmatic sticker showing a contrast belief from Christians



Source: Author

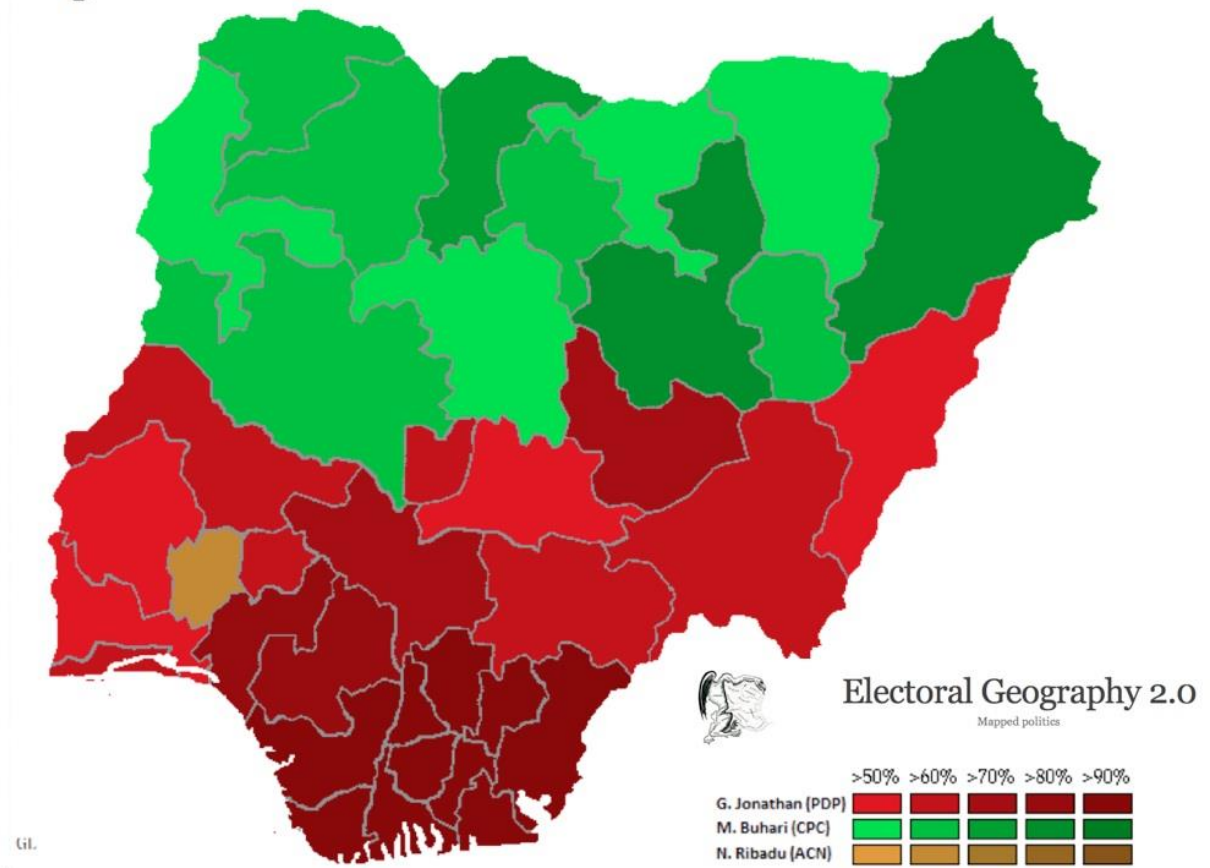
Appendix 2: Christian dogmatic belief sticker showing a contrast view from Muslims’



Source: Author

Appendix 3: Religious strife and Geopolitics in Nigeria: 2011 presidential election

Nigeria 2011



Source: (Martin, W. Lewis 2011)

Appendix 4: Nigerian map depicting Sharia states



Source: (Martin, W. Lewis 2011)