



UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN
ILORIN, NIGERIA

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN GENERAL STUDIES: THE HUMANITIES APPROACH

EDITED BY
PROF. WAHAB O. EGBEWOLE
DR. RAFIU I. ADEBAYO

CONTENTS

Preface	v
Notes on Contributors	vi
Abridged Courseware	viii
Chapter 1	
Culture in a Pluralistic Society: A Case Study of Nigeria	
Lérè Adéyemí	1
Chapter 2	
Ageing in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects	
Isaac Olakanmi Abimbola	14
Chapter 3	
Causes and Effects of Religious Violence in Nigeria	
Rafiu Ibrahim Adebayo	27
Chapter 4	
Announcing Grief: The Place of Strategic Communication	
Tunde Ajiboye	37
Chapter 5	
Issues in Fundamental Human Rights	
A. Yusuf	48
Chapter 6	
Globalisation in African Perspective	
Pius Oyeniran Abioje	62
Chapter 7	
Nigerian Legal System: Concept of Justice and Rule of Law	
Bashir A. Omipidan	75
Chapter 8	
Curbing Examination Dishonesty through Value Education	
AA. Jekayinfa & Hamdallat T. Yusuf	87
Chapter 9	
HIV/AIDS and Drug Abuse Education	
Alfred A. Adegoke & Samuel A. Ajiboye	99

CHAPTER THREE

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

R. Ibrahim Adebayo

Department of Religions,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

Introduction

The history of human creation as captured by the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'an, reveals that man, from inception, has been in conflict with Satan. Man, consequently, fell prey to the plot of Satan when he ate the forbidden fruit and was eventually sent out of the Garden of Eden. That notwithstanding, a stance of physical violence happened when the two sons of Adam, Cain and Abel engaged themselves in a hot argument and Cain, out of wickedness, smashed Abel to death with his rod. This act of wickedness on the part of Cain did not go unpunished to indicate the consequences of wickedness on the wicked one, to the extent that Cain confessed, "my punishment is greater than I can bear" (Genesis 4: 13). In spite of this, man persists in this act of wickedness to the point that God regretted His action of creating man on earth (Genesis 6: 5-6). The only hope for mankind to salvage itself from the bondage of Satan is through religion which unfortunately has become an instrument of violence and polarisation of mankind because of selfish reasons. In the words of Yousouph (2010: 340), "more than ethnicity, religion discriminates and differentiates humans in a sharp and exclusive way, even more than belonging to a country would do. A person can be half-French, and half-Saudi, and at the same time, be a citizen of both countries. However, it is difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim."

Objectives of the Chapter

At the end of the lecture, students are expected to:

- i. define the term religion;
- ii. explain some cases of religious violence in Nigeria;
- iii. examine causes of religious violence in Nigeria
- iv. analyse critically the effects of religious violence on Nigeria and
- v. suggest means of checking religious violence in Nigeria.

Religion has been considered as one of the words that are difficult to define in view of the numerous perspectives with which it is seen. It is defined as a belief in one or more gods, and the belief that the God or gods is/are responsible for the creation and control of the world, and as being able to give men life after death (Procter, 1978). *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2010: 509), defines religion as "a particular or a set of systems in which doctrines, myths, rituals, sentiments, institutions and other similar elements are inter-connected" (McHenry, 2010: 509). According to Martineau (quoted by Edwards, 1992: 140), religion is defined as 'the belief in an ever-living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the universe and holding moral relations with mankind.' As appropriate as these definitions could have been, they lack a certain ingredient of all religions, which is 'worship' – an expression of the existence of the Super-Natural Being in faith and action.

Religion is said to have been etymologically derived from three Latin words, namely: 'Ligare' which means 'to bind'; 'Relegere', meaning 'to unite or link' and 'Religio', meaning 'relationship' (Nor, 2010: 48). With this, religion is termed to mean the relationship between two persons – the human person and the divine person. This relationship takes the form of recognition of human person, the existence of a Divine Person as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe in faith, and so man directs his worships to him and as well supplicates to Him for his needs. Religion is therefore seen as a rite of worship and exercise of faith by man to the Supernatural Being; a means of establishing spiritual and moral relationship with Him with a view to earning rewards in the terrestrial and celestial world. The recent happenings in the country where religion is being used as an instrument of oppression, threat, vandalism, and violence, have become a matter of concern to scholars. It is on this basis that this chapter shall discuss instances of the use of religion as a weapon of violence, its implications and suggestions for checking the menace of violence in Nigeria.

Instances of Religious Violence in Nigeria

In Nigeria, religious violence has taken its toll as a major threat to national security ever since the 1999 transition from military to civilian rule. Before this time, the Maitasine uprisings had rocked many parts of the Northern Nigeria in the 1980s. Muhammadu Marwa who was the leader of the group was said to have hailed from Marwa, a village in Cameroun. He came to settle in Nigeria, but was deported in 1962, only to come back and settle again in Kano in 1972. Marwa became notorious when he came up with certain ideological principles that were against the teaching of Islam, and decided to impose such on the Muslims. He declared those who did not believe in him as infidel who must be fought, and whose blood could be shed. He was said to have illegally planned to take over the Emir's palace in Kano, the Electric

power station and the General Hospital (Abdul Fattah, 2007). He however met his Waterloo in December 1980 when he was killed and many of his members were arrested. That notwithstanding, the casualties of the uprisings were enormous and lingered long after the death of the leader. In Bullum-Kuttu, more than four hundred lives were lost and property worth over three million naira were destroyed or looted. The Jimeta Maitatsine crisis of 26th February and 5th March 1984 claimed 1,004 lives, while 5,913 families were displaced. The Gombe Maitatsine disturbance of 26th and 28th April 1985 was also said to have claimed one hundred lives (Imam, 2004).

Another instance of religious violence was witnessed in Kano in 1990, following the invitation of an international Christian preacher Reinhard Bonnke, to the city. It was said that the Muslims reacted violently to this action in view of the fact that the Federal Government had denied them the chance of hosting another international Muslim preacher from South-Africa, Ahmed Deedat. The crises took place between 11 and 14, October 1990 and left behind a casualty of over 500 lives and million-worth property.

There was another instant of religious violence in 1991 which occurred between the Muslims and Christians of Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi State. The cause of the crisis could not be precisely given. While some believed that it erupted following an attempt of a Christian to slaughter pigs in the Muslim section of the town's only abattoir, some said it was ignited consequent upon roasted meat (suya) made of pork and sold to a Muslim. The casualties of this incidence knew no bound, as many lives were lost and many properties were looted.

The 1992 Taraba State religious crisis was ignited by a misunderstanding between Muslim and Christian female students of the Government Science Secondary School, Jalingo. It consequently spread to other parts of the northern states and went away claiming lives and property. Two lives were also said to have been lost in the Potiskum disturbance on December 4, 1994 consequent upon the conversion of one Catherine Abban, known as Fatima Abban to Islam. There was also a demonstration of the al-majirai in Maiduguri, Dikwa, Biu, Ngala and Monguno on 4th April 1996, which led to destruction of churches, hotels, and property worth over two million naira (Imam, 2004).

Another serious religious crisis enveloped the entire city of Jos on September 10, 2001. The problem arose consequent upon the reaction of a woman who drove through a street barricaded by a group of Muslim worshippers during a Friday service. The woman was bent on having her way because she felt the people had no right to block a public road and this led to crisis which claimed many lives and property.

Apart from the above, the re-introduction of Shari'ah to some Northern states

Lapses in the security system

Another cause of violence in Nigeria is the lapses in the security system of the country which paves way for all Dick and Harry to have access to the country. This constitutes an international dimension to terrorism in the country. It should be noted that the brain behind the 1980 Maitatsine riot was not a native of Nigeria; he hailed from Marwan, a village in Cameroun. He was said to have initially been deported to Cameroun in 1962, only for him to sneak back into the country in 1966. In his research, Albert (2005) found out that about 185 of the followers of Marwa who were arrested and detained at Kano Central Prison and the Goron Dutse Prison in 1980, were non-Nigerians – 162 of them from Niger Republic, 16 from Chad Republic, 4 from Cameroun Republic, 2 from Mali Republic, and 1 from Burkina Faso.

Misinterpretation of Scriptural verses

One cannot rule out the fact that some scriptural verses are often misinterpreted and misconstrued to ignite crisis and violence. Some Qur'anic verses that talk of *jihad* are mostly twisted for justification in this respect. Many still erroneously believe that dying in the cause of such '*jihad*' is a direct visa to paradise. Many youths are so fascinated to the preaching of their so-called spiritual leaders that they are carried away to the extent of laying down their lives through suicide, or destroying the lives of common people in obedience to their leader's command. Little did such foolish entity realise the confinement, limitations and restraints of obedience.

Effects of Religious violence on Nigeria

The following are some of the effects of violence on the nation and its citizens:

Loss of lives and property

One serious effect of religious violence is the alarming rate at which lives were lost. The Maitatsine riot in Kano alone was said to have claimed 4,177 lives. As if that was not enough, subsequent Maitatsine riots in Bullum-Kutu in Borno State of 26th - 29th October 1982 were pathetic. Imam (2004) recorded the enormous casualty of the Maitatsine uprising of Bullum-Kuttu that it claimed more than four hundred lives and property worth over 3 million naira were destroyed or looted. According to him, the Jimeta Maitatsine crisis of 26th February - 5th March 1984 claimed one thousand and four lives, while five thousand, nine hundred, and thirteen families were displaced; and the Gombe Maitatsine disturbance of 26th – 28th April 1985 claimed over one hundred lives. The Kafanchan riot of March 1987, in addition to some mosques and churches that were burnt, left about twenty-five people killed and several others hospitalised (Lateju & Adebayo, 2006). The recent violence between herdsmen and farmers in Kaduna State was said to have claimed many lives while several homes were destroyed when the suspected Fulani cattle drivers

attacked five farming communities populated by Christians. According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) the death toll of the incidence was about 200.

Draining the nation's purse

Another serious effect of religious violence on Nigeria is the alarming rate at which it drains the purse of the nation. Valuable human and material resources which could have been invested in education and other useful projects are spent on acquiring weapon and providing security measures which have not been all that successful.

Denting the image of the country, religion and its adherents

From all indications, no religion preaches violence and terrorism. As such, incessant violent acts that have religious undertones have portrayed religion generally as an instrument of threat, deceit and polarisation. With particular reference to Islam, Muslims have been seen as aggressors that must be fought under the pretext of fighting terrorism. In the words of Siddiqi (2004), the violence committed by a few Muslims has portrayed Islam and Muslims as uncivilised, inhumane and unkind. Indeed, violence does not bear good for the Muslims and Islam as a religion. It has portrayed Islam as a religion of violence. Not this alone, it creates unnecessary tension for the Muslims.

Disruption of Economic activities

Due to incessant strikes of violent people, curfews imposed on the affected areas have serious effects on their economic activities. No serious foreign investor would also come to risk his resources in a country that cannot provide security for his investments.

Fear to approach places of worship:

The fear of violent acts has made places of worship become scary to worshippers for fear of being attacked by hoodlums. Curfews imposed in places where violence occurs do not allow worshippers to have free access to their places of worship.

Conclusion

Going by the experience of Nigeria on religious violence, it can be established that no act of violence has benefited the nation. Such has rather interrupted the spirit of togetherness that has been in existence between adherents of different religions in the country many years back. Rather than using religion as an instrument of violence. Therefore, adherents of religions should adhere strictly to the teaching of their respective religion on sanctity of life and property, as well as other virtues on peaceful co-existence with one's friends and assumed foes, in their conducts and thought. Their actions should speak more than their precepts.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The following suggestions are put forward as means of checking religious violence at national level:

- (i) Any aggrieved society should look for alternative means of making its grievances known or facing the challenges of oppression against them, as violence adds more to the problems and it has failed to solve them.
- (ii) Concerted efforts should be made to put in place powerful news organ to communicate ideal religious character and ideology to humanity.
- (iii) Nigeria should justify her being a blessed nation in terms of mineral and natural resources with high potentiality of industrial and economic development, by diversifying her economy for the purpose of providing employment opportunities for her citizens. Involvement of youth in acts of violence has been largely due to the fact that they have nothing to do, and so, their lazy hands become the devil's workshop.
- (v) There is also the need to revamp the educational policy of the country in such a way that the traditional Al-Manjiri education (migrant seekers of knowledge) will be integrated into the mainstream of education. To find a permanent solution to the social scourge of the Al-Manjiri, it is pertinent that the Federal Government takes a step at giving due attention to this age-long system of education just as it does to the western system of education.

Revision Exercise

1. The Maitatsine Kano riot was championed by

- a) Muhammad Husaiyn
- b) Muhammad Marwa
- c) Aminu Kano
- d) Reinhard Bonnke

2. One of these is not an effect of religious violence

- (a) sadness and mourning
- (b) popularity of the nation
- (c) draining the purse of the nation
- (d) disruption of economic activities.

3. Which of these is a cause of religious violence?

- (a) public preaching
- (b) provocative statements
- (c) religious propagation
- (d) justice.

4. Religion is said to have been etymologically derived from the Latin word 'Relegere' which means

- (a) To unite or link
- (b) To worship
- (c) To supplicate
- (d) To defend

5. The Muslim preacher who was invited to Nigeria but was not allowed to preach was

- (a) Muhammad Marwa
- (b) Ahmed Deedat
- (c) Ta Ha Husain
- (d) Al-Mawdudi

References

- Abdul Fattah, Olayiwola (2007), *Islam in Nigeria: One Crescent Many Focuses*, Maiduguri: Sakirabe Publishers.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2010), "Strategising Peace Through Islamic Ethical Values" in Albert, I.O & Oloyede, I.O. (eds), *Dynamics of Peace Processes*, Ilorin: UNILORIN Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2010), "Ethno-Religious Crises and the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Nigeria." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, vol. 12, No. 4.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2011), "Religious Provocative Statement in Nigeria: A Threat to Harmonious Co-Existence;" *Studies in Islam, A Journal of Islamic Sciences and Muslim Development*, Series 4, Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto.
- Albert, I.O. (2005). "International Dimensions of Social Conflicts in Nigeria Since the 1980s." A Lead paper presented at NDA National Conference on Crisis and Conflict Management in Nigeria since 1980, held at the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, between 15th and 17th June, 2005.
- Ali, T.M. (1987), "Towards a Definition of Terrorism"; *Al-Tawhid*, vol. 5, No. 1.
- Ali, Yusuf (1413 AH). *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, Maryland: Amana Corporation.
- Barlas, Asma (2003), "Jihad, Holy War and Terrorism: The Politics of Conflation and Denial"; *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 20, No. 1.
- Dansabo, M.T. (2006), "International Terrorism and the United States of America" in Muhibbu-din, M.A. (ed), *Globalisation and Terrorism: The Response of Islamic Scholarship*; The Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS).
- Edwards, P (ed) (1992), *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vols. 7 & 8, New York,

- Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc.
- Hornby, A.S. (2001), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (6th edition); Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/02/ethnic-religious-violence-grips-kaduna/> accessed on 29/5/2017.
- Ibrahim, F. Oyine (2008), "Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kano: Poverty as a Major Explanatory Factor"; in Duze, Mustapha C, Mohammed Habu & Kiyawa Ibrahim (eds), *Poverty in Nigeria: Causes, Manifestations and Alleviation Strategies*, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd.
- Imam, Y.O. (2004), *Religious Crises and Social Disruption in North Eastern Nigeria*, Ibadan: Loud Books Publishers.
- Jenkins, Brian M. (2003) "International Terrorism: The Other World War", in Charles, W. Kegley (ed) *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kuper Adam & Kuper Jessica (eds) (1996), *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, London: Routledge.
- McHenry Robert (ed) (2010), *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, U.S.A Library of Congress, vol. 26.
- Lateju, F.T. & Adebayo, R.I. (2006). "Christian-Muslim Encounter in Nigeria and Interfaith Perspective on Religion in Conflict and Peace Building." A Report of the Centre for Interfaith Relations and Cross-Cultural Outreach submitted to Life and Peace Institute, Sweden
- Nor, Zaato Mathew, (2010), "Religion and Environmental Sustainability"; in Imam, Y.O. (ed), *Religion and Environment*, Association for the Study of the Interplay between Religion and Science (ASIRS).
- Procter, Paul (ed), (1978), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, London: Longman.
- Salisu, T. Moshood (2009), "An Overview of Religious Conflicts with Emphasis on the roles of the Muslim Youth (Qur'anic Pupils) in Nigeria"; in Akintola, I, Yusuf, B.O, & Salisu, T.M (eds), *Correlates of Islam*, Zaria: The Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited.
- Siddiqi, M. Najatullah (2004), "Violence and Muslims"; *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 21, No. 2.
- The Muslim World (2002): A weekly Magazine from Muslim World League, Makkah, January, 18.
- Waghid, Yusuf (1996), "In Search of a Boundless Ocean and New Skies: Human Creativity is a Matter of A'mal, Jihad and Ijtihad." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol.13, No.3, Fall.
- World Book Inc. (1989), *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Chicago: World Book Inc. vol. 19.
- Yousouph, R. Olabisi, (2010), "Ethno-Religious Crisis and Traditional Peacemaking Processes in Nigeria"; in Albert, I.O & Oloyede, I.O. (eds), *Dynamics of Peace Processes*, Ilorin: UNILORIN Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies.