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AN EXAMINATION OF THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS FOR NIGERIAN COMMONWEALTH

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Abstract

Religion is a terrain that guarantees communion between the object of worship and adherents. This implies that religious beliefs and activities or practices of a particular religion should not be forced on adherents of other religions. But the contrary is the case in many climes, especially in Nigeria, where people flout the principles of religious pluralism. Often times, such disregard for tolerance of adherents of other religions in a diverse society, breeds violence that leads to monumental loss of lives and property thereby impinging negatively on Nigerian Commonwealth. Therefore, this research is highly interested, firstly, in the examination of the veracity of the claim by adherents of Christianity and Islam that their religions epitomise peace and secondly examine the factors that trigger religious violence vis-a-vis the ethical implications of such religious induced violence on the societal psyche. This becomes imperative in order to critically address its effects with a view to reducing inter and intra religious conflicts that have engulfed Nigeria in particular and some nations of the world in general. In view of the fact that this research falls within the ambit of contextual study, phenomenological method will be employed to carry out the primary investigation; while literary works of scholars shall be consulted in order to elucidate information on the subject matter.

Key words: Ethical Implications, Violence, Christianity, Islam, Nigerian Commonwealth.

Introduction

Religion is an inescapable phenomenon in human society because consciously or unconsciously, humans are naturally religious and they practise religion not only for the purpose of communing with God or gods but also do so in order to sustain moral values, with the view to building a well-ordered society. Scharf establishes that, religion has a pervading; continuing and universal power in all societies.¹ Odumuyiwa corroborates this assertion by affirming:

There is no society that is devoid of religion and religious activities. Even in an atheistic society, it is presumed that such society recognizes the place of religion believing that there is no God is a kind of belief.²

In the eras that predated the emergence of Christianity and Islam, the scattered peoples of what is now known as Nigeria practised various forms of indigenous religions. However, Ehianu says that by the time of Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country was drawn more or less along religious zones of influence, namely, the largely Muslim north and the Christian south.³ The latter was subdivided into the predominantly Catholic east and the west, with an almost equal number of Muslims and Christians.

The indigenous religion has the rare quality of accommodation and tolerance of other religions. It is not a proselytizing religion in the sense that it does not go forth seeking converts neither does it pick offence when deserted by its adherents nor assume that its object of

worship is superior. Therefore, it has remained the recruiting ground for other religious groups. However, one must accept the fact that adherents of Islam and Christianity still recognize the traditional religion owing to its patronage on some occasions.

This is not the case with Islam and Christianity, both of which not only arrogate themselves the status of being the sole dispensers of salvation but enjoin their adherents to canvas for followership. For the Christians, the catalyst for missionary zeal is derived from Matthew 28:19 (NIV): "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations..." In Islam, you find such passages as:

Fight against such as those who have been given the scriptures and believe not in Allah, nor the last day, who do not forbid what Allah and His apostles have forbidden, and do not embrace the true faith, until they pay tribute out of hand and are utterly subdued. (Quran 9:29).

Another passage admonishes Muslims that Allah had sent forth His messenger with guidance and the true faith to make it triumphant over all religions, however much the idolaters may dislike it. (Quran 9:33). In carrying out these mandates, adherents of these religions have in their frenzied zeal employed such means as politics of exclusion, intimidation, blackmail, manipulation of ethnic sentiments and violence in an attempt to out-do each other and gain the ascendancy. Thus, conflicts of varying magnitude continually ensue, due to the teaching of these religions on the one hand, and human foibles on the other. Islam, for instance, is theocentric in its doctrine. This means that it does not draw any line between religion and state, spiritual and mundane affairs. Both are fused and entrusted in the hand of one man who is believed to be Allah's

representative. Besides, in Quran 4:59 Muslims are enjoined to aspire to rule themselves wherever they may be according to Allah's laid down laws.

Abrahamic religions refer to Judaism, Christianity and Islam; however in this context, the discussion is limited to Christianity and Islam which registered their presence in Nigeria in the fifteenth⁴ and nineteenth⁵ centuries respectively. Commonwealth here is contextualised as the public welfare, general good or advantage and could be succinctly posited as common wellbeing of a people among other meanings associated with the term.

No doubt, there are evidences that both Christianity and Islam played key roles at all levels of Nigerian social, political and economic life. Specific mention was made by Fatokun in his reflection on the dominant roles played by the 19th century Christian missionaries in laying the foundation for civilization of Nigeria through the doctrine of the 3'Cs- Christianity, Commerce and Civilization.⁶ The import of this assertion is that it is obviously impossible to discuss Nigerian commonwealth without reference to impactful contributions made in the past by both religions under review.

However, one interesting fact observed about the Abrahamic religions most especially in Nigeria is that though they have been used as a catalyst for nation building, they have also been used as instrument for demolishing peaceful coexistence of the citizens. The current increase in the acts of terrorism, kidnapping, rampant organised violence and virulent ideological insurgency by religious fanatics in recent times has made the citizens as well as nationals of other countries vulnerable to attacks. Nigeria is now a country where different sorts of fundamentalist movements kill innocent

people in the name of religion. Abdulrahman submits that Nigeria is facing serious internal security challenges ranging from the Boko Haram insurgency, ethnic clashes by Fulani herdsmen militia ravaging mostly communities in Benue, Plateau and Kogi States.⁷

This situation has raised some questions pertinent to this research. One, is it true that violent essence is inherent in every religion? Two, should religion be an instrument of stability or violence? Three, is it impossible to experience peaceful coexistence in a religious pluralist state? Four, how do we deal with extremism in both intra-faith and inter-faith environment? Five, are there possibilities of evolving strategies to deal with difficult texts in religious scriptures?

It is believed that this paper will be beneficial to faith-based institutions so that the adherents of religions in a pluralistic society will become aware of the negative pictures in which religions are being painted today. In addition, this work is intended to infuse in religious practitioners the sense of recognizing individual rights in choosing what religion to practice without coercion or threat from the other. This is very crucial to minimize if not totally eradicate tensions that have engulfed the global societies thereby making peaceful co-existence a delusion.

Situations that Trigger Religious Violence

There are a wide variety of ideological reasons that account for religious violence. These include extremism, exclusive claims in sacred texts, missionary drive of some religious and socio-political factors among others. We shall discuss these briefly.

Hate Speech and Uncomplimentary Body Language

One fundamental factor considered to have triggered violence among adherents of religions in Nigeria is hate speech which however is often seen as insignificant. Some religious leaders are culpable in making uncomplimentary speech about other religions that goes a long way in creating hatred for such religions in the heart of their followers. While some Christians label Islam as *Esin Imale* meaning religion of force, some Muslims refer Christianity as *Esin Kiriyo* which implies religion of beggars. These uncomplimentary names are erroneously given based on the tenacity of Quranic training the Muslims give to their children; while the Christians are so branded based on the missionary spirit in their efforts to win converts.

In addition to hate speech is the hard stance taken by adherents of both religions on the issue of marriage. Marrying a wife outside one's religion is considered in some cases being married to an unbeliever. In this situation, love is relegated insignificance while the religious affiliation of the person to marry is given primary consideration.

Exclusive Claims in Sacred Texts

In the Christian scripture for example, such claims like "Jesus is the Son of God" (John 3:16), "Christianity is the only way to heaven" (John 14:16) and the concept of Trinity are offensive to Muslims who argue in their profession of faith that Allah is one and great and Mohammed was His messenger.

Arguing from Islamic perspective, Sultan Shahin believes that misinterpretation of scriptural texts has led to gross violent acts among the Muslims. For instance the teachings of some leading

Islamic scholars had had adverse effect in the way Muslims relate with adherents of other religions in the society.⁸

To this, Pope Francis recently suggests to the Muslim world to base their theology on adequate interpretation of the Quran especially in the light of chapters 39:55, 18; 38:29; 2:121 and 47:24⁹. These verses point to the fact that the Quran teaches that there is no compulsion in religion (*La ikra ha fid Deen*) and also that, “for you, your religion, for me, mine” (*Lakum Dee ana kum waleyaa Deen*). Mtata sees this as a challenge to both Christianity and Islam who have failed to translate the precepts of peace in both religions into good practice in everyday life.¹⁰

Missionary Spirit of Some Religions

It is a known fact that Islam and Christianity are missionary in nature, competing for large followership. While it is not an issue for any religion to embark on conversion of non-members in order to expand, it is unethical to be discourteous in doing so. The ways this is offensively carried out are mentioned by Mtata such as, the use of provocative or inconsiderate language by some preachers to propagate their religion, pitting the Bible and Quran against each other in public preaching and using the media in condemning the other religion in order to market one’s religion.¹¹ This has often led to conflict among adherents of both religions which if not checked on time, escalates into loss of lives and property.

Socio-Political Factors

In most African countries, economy, ethnicity, politics and alliance with external forces have all been identified as contributory factors in orchestrating religious violence. For example in Northern Nigeria, the level of poverty makes it easier for rich politicians to use them in launching attacks on people of other political or

religious inclinations. Since the poor people recognize the rich as their benefactors, they do not hesitate to carry out their orders. In addition, there have always been negative reactions by Muslims in Africa especially in Nigeria to show solidarity with Muslims anywhere in the world whenever they had issue with the European West. This attitude arises from the perception that the Europe West is Christian and the Arab East is Muslim. The invasion of Iraq in 2003, the 2006 Danish Cartoon crisis and the 2012 US film about Mohammad, all led to upsurge of religious conflicts in Nigeria that culminated in the killing of many Christians and burning of places of worship.

Today, words such as *Islamophobia*, *Westophobia*, and *Christophobia*, characterize global Christian-Muslim relations, with dire consequences for Christian-Muslim co-existence in Nigeria. Peter Riddell defines *Westophobia* as entrenched and endemically hostile attitudes to the west and to perceived cultural traits of the west, while *Islamophobia*, is the fear or hatred of Muslims and Islam¹² *Christophobia* is hatred or fear of Christianity and Christ. Vinoth Ramachandra puts this tension thus:

If there is an Islamic threat, many Arabs and Muslims believed there has also been a western threat of political, economic, and religio-cultural imperialism, a political occupation accompanied by cultural invasion. As a result, many in the Muslim world, like their counterparts in the West, opt for easy anti-imperialist slogans and demonization. At its worst, both sides have engaged in a process of “mutual satanization”.¹³

Muslim's distaste of *Westophobia* arises from several factors, to include among others, United States' support for Israel's stance towards the Palestinians, United States' contemptuous occupation of

Iraq and Afghanistan, and Western condemnation of Shariah. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi puts it right that, “the West speaks of Islam from a position of arrogance demanding not a dialogue but capitulation to its values.”¹⁴ He continues thus:

The first problem with Western criticism of Shariah, in my view is that it fails to take into account the wider global context of the perceived confrontation between the West and the Muslim world. The dominance of the US as the sole remaining power and its ideologically-inspired promotion of the process of globalization have led to a perception among Muslims that every criticism of the Muslim world from the West is in fact, American-inspired. The truth, to be blunt, is that Muslims detest America because they believe, America detests Islam and Muslims.¹⁵

Riddell on the other hand, recognizes two other factors of Muslim detest for the West in globalization and the conspiracy theory. On globalization, he states:

It could be argued that Muslim opposition to globalization is driven by a dissatisfaction with the particular forms it takes, rather than opposition to globalization per se. Islamic globalization is desirable, Western globalization is not.¹⁶

Thus, adherents of Islam are opposed to globalization because they see in it, western values, which they hardly separate between them. On conspiracy theory, Riddell notes that another more intangible yet powerful factor is causing Muslim apathy to the West is the prevalence of conspiracy theory in much in the Muslim world. This is closely linked with issues of power and disempowerment. Up to 70 percent of the world’s refugees are Muslims and some of the

poorest countries in the world are predominantly Muslim. Hence, the Muslim world has developed a tendency to attribute responsibility for economic, social, political problem to the world's rich and powerful nations and societies. In today's world, wealth and power lie predominantly in the West.¹⁷

Such reaction could not be seen as being morally right for a religious group in any given context to bear the consequence of an action performed outside of one's country. Importation of conflicts that emanate elsewhere will only impede the progress of the nation that accommodates such "product".

Debates on Extremism in Religious Beliefs

Extremism is a complex phenomenon with different definitions. It is an ideology in religious sense that connotes something far outside the mainstream attitude of the society. It is the belief by some religious adherents that for a religion to prove its essence, it must be radicalized.¹⁸ Religious extremism cuts across all religions. While religious liberalists consider religion primarily as a personal affair, the extremists see it as a totalitarian ideology that must be forced on the society at the expense of the individual liberties of others. In history, this is typical of the crusade of King Ferdinand of Spain which led to the massacre of Catholic or Jewish minorities in 1525 and the killing of several Israeli athletes in Munich Olympic Games by radical Palestinian Muslims in 1972 among others. Today, we have extremist religious groups like ISIS, al-Qaeda, Taliban, Boko Haram etc., who carry out monumental nefarious activities at the national, regional and international levels. Unfortunately, we have people who did not see anything wrong in their theology of violence.

Many scholars have engaged in discussion on religious violence by looking at the nature of different religions especially the two prominent Abrahamic religions. For instance, scholars have argued that although Muslim leaders do not want Islam to be linked with acts of violence, but it is observed to have propensity to violence. It has tendency to create fanatics more than any religion. The likes of Wendy Doniger¹⁹, Josef W. Meri²⁰ and Khaleel Muhammad²¹ have all pointed to Islamic terrorism, Islamism, Jihad and Mujahideen as pieces evidences of violence in Islam. The violent acts of terrorism seem to have their root in the texts of the Quran. Lewis Bernard corroborates this position by positing that in the Quran and Hadith, jihad implies warfare in the large majority of cases.²² Such warfare has been interpreted as one of the collective duties of Muslim community as a whole. It is a valid protest they must make. It is a holy war. In recent times a lot of terrorist acts are carried out by some Muslim groups motivated by either politics, religion or both. These range from airplane hijacking, kidnapping, suicide-bombing and mass murder. This tension reached its climax on September 11, 2001 when Islamic terrorists launched devastating attacks on America which led to monumental loss of lives and property. Nevertheless, many Muslim authors tend to reject the militarization of the concept jihad with the emphasis on its non-militant connotations.

Similarly, Christianity also has been associated with some acts of violence. In the era of church fathers we had the just war theory of St. Augustine²³. While Heitman and Hagan identify the inquisitions, crusades, wars of religion and anti-Semitism among the most notorious examples of Christian violence, Papal's wars, slavery, colonialism and systemic violence of women subjected to men can be added to the list. One is then worried that despite the fact that Christianity advocates peace, love, forgiveness, compassion,

violence is being fostered by the practitioners. Mark Juergensmeyer says even Jesus Christ could not be exonerated from violence in Christianity because of the statement attributed to him "I come not to bring peace but to bring a sword." which has been interpreted as a call to arms to Christians.²⁴

In his work, Ronald T. Michene posits that there is a connection between the European wars in post reformation era and religious wars of Europe which scandalised the church as a legitimate contributor to societal violent acts.²⁵ Kenneth Mtata in his reflection adds other acts of violence perpetrated by the church in public space. This include cruelty of religious persecution, the barbarism of the crusades, the burnings at the stake of those accused of witchcraft and heresy, the wars between the Roman Catholics and Protestants, the fundamentalism of the church, the endorsement of racism and apartheid and other such ideologies.²⁶ The effect of this negative aspect of religion was its decline and the rise of the age of secularism.²⁷ At this age of enlightenment, religious rules, rituals and morality have been discarded. Religion, no longer held sway in public space.

Christian apologists like Miroslav Volf and J. Denny Weaver reject the claims that Christianity is a violent religion. According to Volf, Christianity is intrinsically nonviolent, but has suffered from a confusion of loyalties.²⁸ He sees the involvement of the church in conflicts as a factor of people's overriding commitment to their cultures and ethnic groups. Supporting this view, Roland Bainton argues from Christian Pacifism and peace churches by alluding to the first centuries of Christianity where many Christians refused to engage in military combat or serve in Roman military because they posited, among other reasons, that the use of violence was an antithetical to Jesus' teachings.²⁹ In the 3rd Century, the likes of

Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian denounced all forms of violence which include warfare, judicial death penalties, killing of one's enemies or meeting violence with violence.³⁰ This nonviolent attitude has been imbibed by the 20th century Christian pacifists.

Forms of Religious Violence

From various debates on this subject matter, the following has been discovered as forms of religious violence; inter-religious violence, intra-religious violence and violence induced by external forces against religion.

Inter-religious Violence

This of course ensued between two or more groups of different religions. This in many cases could be a response to an attempt to enforce some ideologies or doctrinal beliefs of one religion over the others. Examples abound globally to attest to the fact that this form of violence is very common. In India where Hinduism is very predominant, it tends to dominate both the religious and political space which generates reactions from other religions such as Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, etc. Nigeria is another typical example where we have preponderance of inter-religious violence. The fight for supremacy between the two Abrahamic religions, Christianity and Islam has led to gruesome killing of several thousands of people and wanton destruction of property in recent times. However, it must be pointed out that the menace of religious crises in Nigeria is more pronounced in the Northern region and is often tied to the enforcement of the Sharia law, an Islamic legal system in the Northern States.³¹ Recently, the *Boko Haram* Islamic sect, with the support of Taliban and ISIS, is hell bent to actualize the agenda of Islamizing Nigeria or else, peace will continue to elude the country.

Intra-religious Violence

This form of religious violence is worrisome because it involved two groups (in most cases) of the same religious affinity. In this situation, inability to agree on some principles often creates schism in the same religion. This is typified in ecclesial history where the Donatists did not agree with the Roman Catholic Church on some teachings and principles in Carthage (present Tunisia and part of Algeria) and decided to pull out from the mother church. Having used persuasion to bring back the dissident group to no avail, St. Augustine who was the Bishop of Carthage decided to use religious coercion (through the machinery of the state) to clamp down on the Donatists. Ralph Tanner opines that violence is far beyond infliction of pain and the shedding of blood, it encompasses "the forcible interference with personal freedom, violent or passionate conduct or language and finally passion or fury".³²

Thus far we can say that those forms of religious violence discussed above are violence stirred up in the name of religion. But we also have the other side of the coin which is violence against religion.

Violence Induced against Religion by the Secular forces

Religious violence does not refer exclusively to acts committed by religious groups but also acts committed by secular groups against religious groups. This situation is evident in the plight of Christians in the Middle East by political forces and the suppression of Sikhism in India by the government just to mention a few. This could be described as violence against religion. In most cases, arson is carried out on sacred places and scripture of a particular religion at the slightest provocation.

Ethical Implications of Religious Violence

This aspect of the paper is the nucleus of this work whereby the effects of religiously induced or political motivated violence is examined from the ethical point of view.

First and foremost, religious violence is an ironical contradiction and violation of religious precepts. It contravenes the mind of the Creator for his creation whose purpose is to give life and not to terminate it or endanger his creation. For Reinhold Niebuhr, it is ethically inconsistent for religious precepts to preach peace and at the same time propagate violence.³³

Secondly, Harold Recinos arguing from public theological perspective articulates that religious violence organized by religious fundamentalists is a threat to global peace, thereby making religion to lose its role and relevance in public space. In his book *Wading through Many Voices: Towards a Theology of Public Conversation*. He states:

Religion can no longer be naively viewed as a form of spiritual life that provides comfort and promotes values favouring the common good in society.³⁴

In lending credence to the position held by Niebuhr, Mark Juergensmeyer posit that, although religion does not create violence but it provides the moral rules and symbols that make bloodshed possible. These ideological resources are evident in most of the religions globally.³⁵ The perpetrators of religious violence either base their action on defensive strategy or vengeful ideologies. In the case of the former, the terrorist group who prefer to be called militants believe they are waging spiritual battle against any societal act that assaults their morality. An example of this was the attack on

abortion clinics in the 1990s all over America most especially by some Christians and the religious violence in Northern Ireland of which the perpetrators provided the moral and theological justifications to support their action.³⁶ The latter case which is typified by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's attempt to assassinate Hitler during the Nazi regime in Europe, and the recent September 11 terrorist attack on America, are acts of vengeance.³⁷ The position of this paper is that the ethical implication of the two cases is that the actions of the perpetrators tantamount to acting as both the judge and executioner.

Furthermore, in most cases and to a greater extent, religious violence or coercion tantamount to infringement on human rights. Among these rights are rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Any denial of these rights is to make people feel less human. The idea of human rights is the notion that a human being has a set of inviolable rights simply on grounds of being human. Hence David J. Smith reflects that celebration of human rights once in a year is not as important as living human rights every day of one's life.³⁸ In essence the suppression of people because of their religious inclination or heinous violent act on them based on their refusal to accept some religious ideologies is in fact a violation of their rights to choose the religion they are convinced to practice. All these can be interpreted as the social and moral implications.

Moreover, religious violence also has its psychological and economic implications because through such violence people are traumatized due to the loss of property, humiliation and torture. Some victims even decide to migrate to other places for survival. In such situation, people are emotionally and psychologically thrown off balance hence they become disillusioned about their future.

Besides the aforementioned, fundamentally, religious violence has broken the cord of unity among members of the same family who once imbibed the spirit of brotherhood. This situation relates especially to Southern-western Nigeria where a man could have wives who are inclined to different religious traditions. In the past, they all lived together in harmony, celebrating together their religious festivals but in the wake of religious violence across the nation, the commonwealth is truncated through mutual suspicion and hatred.

Suggested Approaches to Counter Religious Violence

It must be stated from the outset that in order to combat religious violence, different strategies could be adopted based on different situation. On the level of state or nation, dialogue with the moderates in different religions should be constant for the purpose of educating the extremists. By this approach, a solid campaign against religious violence can be achieved. In addition to this is the neutral position that states and nations should maintain on issues of theology so as not to hurt the sensitivities of other religions thereby provoking conflict.

Secondly, there is the need to have a reappraisal of tenets of faith in order to deal with difficult texts in religious scriptures. This requires critical study of scriptures in the light of prevailing situation today. The purpose of this exercise is to make adherents of religions accept the constitutive and essential verses of the scripture as a guide rather than the contextual and allegorical ones which the extremists or religious terrorists use as justification for their acts.

Thirdly, in religious pluralist states globally, the religious leaders owe it a duty to emphasis areas of commonalities among different religions rather than their divergences. This can be achieved

through interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Since all religions stress the “Golden Rule” and “Shalom”, religious leaders as well as the followers should live out these concepts. By this, the rate of religious violence will be drastically reduced.

In addition, sharing in faiths’ celebrations can also be a veritable means of dealing with religious violence. When members of a religious group decide to participate in the celebrations of other groups, there is the tendency to achieve peaceful atmosphere.

Furthermore, both Christianity and Islam ought to be involved in national development by mounting intensive campaigns for attitudinal changes. Rather than dissipating energy and resources on actions that will not enhance Nigerian Commonwealth, religion should be deployed to the restoration of moral and ethical values that is the bane of socio-economic development of the country.

Finally, Sultan Shahin posits that the use of ex-terrorists or fundamentalists to counter radicalization is another viable strategy.³⁹ This implies that since the ex-extremists have sufficient experience required to speak against violence, they could be used to reach out to the perpetrators of religious violence.

Conclusion

Religious violence creates an atmosphere of instability because people’s emotion and psychology are infringed upon. In the same way every form of religious coercion tampers with people’s rights and freedom because it is dehumanizing to force a particular religious ideology on others. All forms of ill-treatment such as molestation, confiscation, destruction of lives and properties in the name of religion should be seen as unethical and grievous sin against the Creator whose revelation depth cannot be fathomed by a single religion.

God can be likened to the sun, though it is one but it has different rays. Every nook and cranny of the world feels the ray of the sun. In the same vein, no religion or group of people can make exclusive claim of God's revelation. If this is true, then it must be accepted that every religion has something to contribute to the society. Therefore it is rationally and ethically tenable to say that the use of violence or coercion in a religious pluralistic society is an abnormality that all religious adherents should strive to avoid.

Recommendations

Thus far, it can be deduced that religion is a volatile affair. It is often seen as a two-edge sword. While some use it to promote peace, in some quarters, it is used to fan the ember of conflict and violence. But the truth remains that religion as a concept is not the problem, but the people who hide under it to achieve their social, economic or political interests. Therefore, this paper hereby recommends as follows:

One, the attitude of criminalizing a particular religion by others should be discarded. This has the tendency to promote conflict. The fact remains that the actions of a small segment of such religious group may not be motivated by their religious beliefs or shared by other members of that religious community. Such violent smaller group may have been driven by other factors apart from religion.

Two, the act of terrorism or religious violence does not have the potential to achieve peace. Rather it worsens the situation by manifesting its negative effect on the society, if not immediately, then in no distant time. Most of the local and global terrorist attacks carried out today are a response to the past attacks.

Three, religious violence or terrorism is a condemnable act sin that should be disapproved by all religious authorities. This becomes necessary because it has made religion to lose its value in the society. Religion has no moral justification whatever to wade into societal crisis if it is engulfed in conflicts itself. This view is corroborated by Mtata who recalls how the former Ghana President, J. J. Rawlings asked both the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Muslim Representative Council, to go back and reconcile themselves before they could broker peace between politicians.⁴⁰ In a similar connection, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo aptly states in the aftermath of the Shariah crisis in Kaduna thus:

Any adherent of either religion would thus be failing in his faith if he or she would resort to violence, destruction of life and property. It is foolishness to trust in promoting our faith or religion by violence or in protesting against other people's faith or religion by violence⁴¹.

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