



# IFE JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES (IJOHUSS)

A Journal of the  
OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA  
(Sponsored by Tertiary Education Trust Fund / TETFUND)

MAIDEN ISSUE 2012

# IFE JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES (IJOHUSS)

© Ife Journal of the Humanities and Social Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

*Published by*  
Obafemi Awolowo University  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or in any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers

*Printed in Nigeria by:*  
Obafemi Awolowo University Press  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

### Editors-in-Chief

Prof. Wale Adegbite, Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria  
E-mail: [adewaleadegbite@yahoo.com](mailto:adewaleadegbite@yahoo.com); [aadegbite@oauife.edu.ng](mailto:aadegbite@oauife.edu.ng) 2348034840633, 2348058968

Prof. M. O. Okotoni, Department of Public Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria E-mail: [olu\\_okotoni@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:olu_okotoni@yahoo.co.uk); [mokotoni@oauife.edu.ng](mailto:mokotoni@oauife.edu.ng)

### Editors

Prof. P. O. Jegede (Editor, Education)  
Prof. Toba Elegbeleye (Editor Social Sciences)  
Prof. Mrs R. O. Soetan (Editor, Social Sciences)  
Prof. Prof. Taye Asaolu (Editor, Administration)  
Prof. Dipo Salami (Editor, Arts)  
Prof. A. O. Popoola (Editor, Law)

### Editorial Advisers

Prof. A. T. Salami, Institute of Ecology and Environmental Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria  
Prof. Clement O. Adesina, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria  
Prof. K. A. Alao, Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria  
Prof. Maurice Amutabi, Department of Social Sciences, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya  
Prof. Peter Auer, Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Freiburg, Freiburg, Germany  
Prof. Gurseli Berik, Department of Economics, University of Utah Salt Lake City, Utah, USA  
Prof. J. S. Etim, Department of Education, Winston Salem State University, USA  
Prof. Harry Garuba, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa  
Prof. D. A. Guobadia, Research Professor in Law, Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Nigeria  
Prof. Andrew Haruna, Department of Languages and Linguistics, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Nigeria  
Prof. Nkonko Kamwangamalu, Department of English, Howard University, USA.  
Prof. Iyabo Olojede, Department of Public Administration, Lagos State University, Ojoo, Lagos  
Prof. Tope Omoniyi, Centre for Research in English Language and Linguistics, University of Roehampton, London  
Hon. Justice M. A. Owoade, Justice of the Court of Appeal, Owerri Division  
Prof. I. O. Smith, Department of Private and Property Law, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria  
Prof. C. O. Kolawole, Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria  
Mrs B. O. Asubiojo, Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria



## **Religious Crises and Security Challenges in Nigeria**

Akiti Glory Alamu, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

The author adopts a historical, analytical and systematic approach to investigate the factors that often lead the nation to conflict, unrest, mistrust, insecurity and backwardness. He observes that the world, including Nigeria, is in perennial search for peace. We live everyday of our life in perpetual fear and uncertainty. Thus, confusion and violence walk the streets; the sceptres of wars are haunting humankind and religious violence has become a way of life in Nigeria. In fact, religion, instead of making the Nigerian nation has been used to mar the nation thus making it a product of desperation, insecurity and horrible weapon of war in the land. The catalogue of the various crises is disturbingly endless. The author posits that in Nigeria, as a secular and pluralistic nation, people should respect, tolerate and possess the right attitudes towards other faiths. This respect does not serve as an impediment, but rather, a demonstration of many in one with tolerance, open-mindedness, hospitality and accommodation. Religion in all situations speaks about peace and encourages adherents to seek and sustain peace. Therefore, religious leaders, practitioners and other stakeholders should respect one another's faith and tenet and promote security of lives and property.

**Key words:** security, religious crisis, global peace, Christianity, Islam, Africal Religion

### **Introduction**

Global peace is a perennial, topical and all-involving issue in the humanities and other fields of human endeavour. But this has been disturbed because of the many religious crises in the Nigerian nation in particular and the world over. Of a truth, religion is an embodiment of peace in the very sense of its existence. Religion, in fact, is life itself. Every human existence and understanding is suffused in religion. Practically speaking, religion is a unifying factor, as its name implies, as well as a social mechanism for national development. Without equivocation, the tenets of religion provide individuals with shared values, roles, altruism and responsibilities. However, in the developing world where Nigeria belongs, religion has become a weapon of war and a militantly anti-modernist organisation. Religious crises have occupied this beautiful earth, drenched human blood, destroyed human civilisation and sent whole nations to unprecedented agony. Religion is, therefore, seen as representing something other than what it appears to be. It has become a product of desperation and is also sharpened by the living conditions of the environment (Alamu 2010a).

Relatively, peace is the central message of virtually all the world's living religions. However, today's global age has lost its peace and security and the world is in search of security. The security in the Nigerian state has become a major problem in recent times. Cases of abduction, kidnapping, terrorism, senseless killings, maiming, nihilism and burgeoning restlessness, among others, have been unabatedly rampant. Thus, Nigerian citizens, despite the state apparatus to ensure safety and protection of lives and property, are incessantly living in perpetual fear and worry. As a matter of fact, a Boko Haram sect



has joined dawn marchers to orchestrate moral evils in Nigeria. However, these senseless killings, bloodletting, assassination and anti-religious actions are inimical to religious tenets. It is against this background that this paper sets to explore religious crises and security challenges in contemporary Nigeria.

### Religion: An Overview

In all ages, religion has come to grips with the existence of all human endeavours. Religion at all times plays a pivotal role in shaping the thought, perception, approach, feeling and history of humankind. It embraces all aspects of life and it represents wholeness of all existence and life itself. Apparently, religion is the keystone or cornerstone of the people's lives and cultures. Religion is far more than a believing way of life in the Nigerian context, where a distinction or separation is not made between religion and other areas of human existence. It serves the aim of building and maintaining human society. Dopamu (2005) is apposite when he states that there is no known society without the existence of religion. In line with the above position of Dopamu, Abe (2004) argues that religion is the provenance and consummation of all things. According to him, "in the beginning, it was religion; and in the end it shall be religion." In fact, religion has explained the world and human understanding of it.

Without equivocation, many scholars have attempted to define religion, but the explanations seem to defy universal acceptance. Kenny, as cited by Ayantayo (2002), aptly describes religion "as any system which relates men to ultimate values, whether God or something else and which embodies a creed, a code and a cult." In another development, Ayantayo (2002:4) distinguishes three basic features of religion as belief, feeling and action. It is imperative to note that what is pivotal to religion is belief in God or gods, the nature and destiny of the meaning of history and the end. On the basis of this, we come to appreciate the fact that religion does not only command loyalty but also gives its adherents something they are glad to live for and, if need be, die for. Ejiofor (1974:63) also attests to the fact that:

Religion is the complex of beliefs and behaviour of men in the supernatural sphere and realities and in the dynamic linkage of supernatural with the natural... Religion is one major drive behind human behaviour. Religion has had an important disciplinary effect on the whole social order in any given civilisation.

Religion is a very deep factor in the lives of men. In point of fact, religion identifies itself with the first instinct for self-preservation. "Men take off from religion, men march along with religion and they arrive at religion with a minute-to-minute phenomenon." Again, Ejiofor (1974:63) says:

The pride of the mind, the strength of the will, the relish of human emotions, coveted object of delicate sentimentality... In short, it is the comprehensive resume of man's spiritual, rational and corporate existence.

The definitions above reveal certain essential elements as relating to religion in Nigeria. Thus, the concept of God, gods, relationship of man to ultimate values, a creed, a code, a cult, belief, action, feeling, supersensible world, law and social order, the relish of human emotions, and the pride of the mind are indispensable to religion in Nigeria. In all things, Nigerians are religious (Idowu 1996).

As sensitive as religion is, it is worth living for; it offers a pride of place for people as they subsequently derive satisfaction from it as well as a sense of security. In Nigeria, there is the practice of triadic religions of African Religion (Afrel), Islam and Christianity. The history of African Religion or indigenous religion is as old as the people themselves. It is a religion handed down by our forebears from the yore and it is orally transmitted from one generation to another. It does not possess sacred scriptures; yet, it is thus written in memory of the very world we live and transmitted orally as the occasion demands. This is a not proselytising religion, nor does it have a drive for membership, yet it is tolerant, it accommodates and remains autochthonous. Adherents are born into it, live in it and die in it. (Awolalu and Dopamu, 2005). Commenting on the overview of African Religion, Dopamu (2005:3) says:

This is clearly seen in African Religion (Afrel), which encompasses all aspects of life. Africans do not know how to live without religion. They celebrate life religiously and they never embark on anything without bringing in religion. Thus at birth, marriage, death, warfare, healing, the foundation of any project, planting, harvesting, enthronement of chiefs and kings and other areas of human endeavour, Afrel plays important roles.

In contrast to Afrel, Islam and Christianity are the proselytising religions, which had been imported into Nigeria. Islam was introduced into Nigeria in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by the Timbuktu traders who had contact or encounter with the Northerners. It was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that Islam spread to the south-west, while Christianity penetrated Nigeria in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The attempt to Christianise Nigeria failed initially due to many factors, but, eventually, Christianity came to be planted permanently in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly therefore, Nigeria is a secular and pluralistic state without any particular religion being a state religion. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is a country of diverse cultures, traditions and beliefs. But of the entire diverse elements, religion has proved to be most sensitive agent of legality in the society. It is this fact about religion that has made it an instrument of legality, unifying factor as well as social mechanism for national development. Of a truth, the tenets of religion provide individuals with shared values, roles and incumbents, altruism and responsibilities. Religion, as a way of life, is aimed at the transformation of individual life. This individual life is a means of microcosmic structure in the overall macrocosmic structure of the society. Apart from this, "each of the patterns of life and practice presupposes a structure of shared beliefs. When the credibility of central religious beliefs is questioned other aspects of religion are also challenged." (Dopamu 2005). Tersely, therefore, religion is recognised as a channel for human and national development as well as legal instrument. Idowu (1996:4) becomes apposite when he states that religion is the keynote of the people's lives:



Religion forms the foundation and all-governing principle of life for them. As far as they are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the Deity; their own part in the matter is to do as they are ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to be interpreters of the will of the deity. Through all the circumstances of life, through all its changing scenes, its joys and troubles, it is the Deity who is in control.

Without fuss, religion has all-governing principles of life and infuses discipline and social order. Thus, religion is a cord that binds people together in order to promote social cohesion and communal well-being. As the rule of law is the machinery set in place to guide the conduct of the people, likewise, religion is both the social and legal mechanism for harmonious living and co-existence. Besides, religion is a divine law or mechanism that regulates human conduct and as well institutionalises social norms in human society. Religion has the knack of bringing people together where they can experience presently what it means to live the full human life. It is also a major instrument of transforming any human society into a community that acts justly. To this end, religion becomes the law of life, pathway to God-realisation, absolute value truth, living power, justice, and morality.

#### Religious Crises in Nigeria

Crisis means a period of great difficulty or danger. It also comprises hostility, uncontrolled riot and fiasco, among others. Crisis is dynamic and often a long romance with evil. This is a deliberate act or choices of individuals or of an entire society. Today's senseless religious killings and the wave of terrorism by the "Boko Haram" sect in Nigeria had their foundations laid in the national landscape by way of layers of fraud, lies, deceit and mischief that, for a while, have constituted the character of the Nigerian government (Alamu 2010a). There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is a nation of diverse cultures, traditions and faiths. But of all diverse elements, religion has proved to be the most sensitive and the one that has often led to hatred and divisions. Dopamu (2001:6) did not mince words when he said that "it is human factors that have turned religions into a two-edged sword-cohesion and division". The fact remains that religion does not engage in crises with humankind; rather, human factors and politics have been mixed up with religion to unleash the various terrorisms.

Admittedly, the causes of religious crises are enormous. However, we must mention and discuss some of these factors, which include religious superiority and absolutism, religious particularity, fanaticism and fundamentalism. Apparently, in Nigeria and many other places in the world, each of Christianity or Islam claims to have absolute superiority and exclusive right to attaining God's salvation. In ensuring the claim to the monopoly of religious truth and salvation, both even exclude each other. However, Ayandele (1978:607) has rightly noted that "Christians have been guiltier than Islam and African Religion by being the most articulated in denigrating the others, adopting a negative and, therefore, unrewarding attitude towards the other religious communities, religions they little understand unto this day". Sincerely speaking, this finds expression in their "outside the church, no salvation" "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*". The Muslims

cannot be spared also because partnership and unbelief -*shirk* - is not associated with Allah. These have grave consequences.

In addition, religious particularity is one of the causes of religious crises in contemporary Nigerian society. It is the belief that one's religion is the only religion that is ordained by and acceptable to God to the total exclusion of others (Olukunle 1980:79). Corroborating the above, Dopamu (1984:607-608) rightly asserts that

The sting of differences and controversy is felt in the two scriptural religions Islam and Christianity. What is known as particularity has often armed itself with sharp, poisonous teeth, biting hard here and there, among the adherents of these two religions. And this has often led to some unpleasant occurrence. It has also led to divisions, hatred, and prejudice. In some quarters, it has gone beyond the sphere of religious antagonism; it has actually spread like an epidemic into social, economic and political realm, to the effect that religion which is expected to be the basis of peace, unity and total well-being is now becoming an arena for grievances, disturbances, public unrest, disunity, hatred and violence.

Instead of Islam and Christianity that had a Semitic origin to see themselves as 'brothers' in Nigeria, they usually attack each other on doctrinal issues as if the belief of one neutralises the other. Dopamu (2010:7) has supported (Surah 10:99) to argue that "If God has wished the whole world to worship Him in the same way, He should have done so in His infinite Wisdom. But as we have always opined, He has not done so because He hates monotony and loves variety". With the above explanation, Idowu's (1971:85) submission again appeals to us here:

... religions themselves have more often than not been disloyal to that which is the basic purpose of their existence. Each advocates peace, but often selfishly. Each religion violates peace by internal divisions over non-essentials; religion quarrels with religion in consequence of perverted particularity- often dictated by non-religious motives. Perhaps the conflict of good with good is more disruptive to peace than the conflict of good with evil.

Fanaticism cannot be ignored in this regard. It is common knowledge that adherents of the different faiths practised in Nigeria have absolutely condemned and sought to destroy other religions as a result of their own culture and historical background. This attempt is regarded as fanaticism, which Babs Mala (1985:112) describes as a "naughty child of a difficult mother". Not only that, religious fundamentalism, which Ryerson (2005:85) describes as a "bastard child", is a cause of religious crises. Igboin (2010:186) also sees it as a bastard child who is always demanding to know his father. He creates troubles out of peace, problem out of solution, disorder from order, sadness from happiness and fear from security in search of his father. It is sad to note that from the Nigerian experience, fanaticism and fundamentalism have often led to hatred, anarchy,



lawlessness, senseless killings and anti-religious activities in the name of religion and in the defence of God. The truth is there is no parameter or calculus to gauge or measure the best religion.

Evidently, sheer sentiment, passion and emotion attached to religion make Islam and Christianity to be a prey in the hand of religious zealots, fundamentalists and political anarchists, bearing in mind the fact that the exclusivist, particularistic, absolute, monopolistic and superior interests can protect only a bigoted position which results in wanton destruction of lives and properties. Alamu (2009) argues that the monster called religious crises, sparked off in the late 1970s, of which Kano has assumed a symbol and norm of religious fundamentalism, is capable of tearing the nation apart if not curbed. "Hardly does a year pass by without some zealots unleashing religious mayhem and terror in Kano. Because of this assumed position, Obasanjo comments that Kano has rapidly acquired a reputation for intolerance, murder, violence and political rascality" (Alamu 2009:90).

The catalogue of religious crises in Nigeria is endless. These have continued to rear their ugly heads from time to time. More often than not, the crises are between Christianity and Islam, mostly in the Northern parts of the country. For the sake of this study, Alamu (2009:90) has catalogued the various religious crises that have greeted the Nigerian state so far. Close observance of the arson and bestial killings in the name of religion since late 1970 has revealed the level of irreligious activities. They include the Maistatsine disturbance in Kano (1977, 1979, and 1980). Zaria 1981, Maiduguri 1982, Kaduna 1982, Kano 1982, Yola and Gombe 1984, Shaki and Ilorin 1986, Kaduna and Kano 1987, Kaduna 1988, Bauchi 1999, Kaduna 2001, Jos 2001, Kano and Abuja 2003, Sagamu 1996, Lagos 1999, Owerri 1996, Shagamu 2001, Aba 2001, Wase 2002, Yeldam Shendam 2002, Jos 2008 and Bauchi 2009. The Boko Haram religious crisis of July 2009 is the most recent one. This crisis started in Bauchi and subsequently extended to Yobe and Borno states. Eventually, Muhammed Yusuf, the leader of the sect was arrested and killed. Consequently, thousands of people have been sent to their early and unprecedented graves and 230 women and children were kidnapped and rescued in Abuja. Today, it is either Maiduguri or Jos that the Boko Haram's activities are being noticed every time with explosives. Jos, which was known as a state of harmony, has become a state of cemetery for innocent people.

Actually, the indices of the severe crises show the mixture of ethnicity and political grievances to interpret such disagreements as the genie of religious violence. Dopamu (1986:117) has rightly agreed with the above that

The question of personal gain, political ambition, selfish ends, egocentricity, power of domination, ethnicity and the question of the perversion of an entirely human and reasonable process, may enter into the enthusiasm one throws in one's propaganda activity. This is fatal for religion and intention.

### The Concept of Security

Dopamu (2007) vividly asserts that security is a complex concept that defies every definitive quest, especially in modern societies where the concept covers a large number

of variables from internal security to external security. However, *Encarta Dictionary* (2008) sees security as the state or feeling of being safe and protected; coupled with the assurance that something of value will not be taken away. It is also seen as something that provides a sense of protection against loss, attack, or harm. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1995) describes security as freedom or protection from danger or worry; a measure taken to guarantee the safety of a country, people and something of value. Dopamu (2007:6) again goes further to define security as something which protects or makes secure:

It is protection against lawbreaking, violence, enemy acts, external aggression, danger, risk, attack, want, poverty, insufficiency, unemployment, environmental degradation, illiteracy, disease, oppression, suppression, inhumanity, destruction, rebellion, natural disaster and the likes. In a modern society, the government of the day is expected to provide security for all these to ensure a high degree of peace, economic growth and social development.

The security of the state is a must and a necessity. The state in this regard includes Nigerian nation, people, property, territory and the environment. The security of these arms is the responsibility of the government.

### Security Challenges in Nigeria

In Nigeria today, it is insecurity and religious crisis as a way of life. (Alamu 2010b:141) observes that "insecurity brings a concatenation of appalling circumstances that make it difficult for people to live in peace and safety and as well overcome their developmental challenges". We are alarmed by the upsurge in abduction, crime wave as the men of the underworld launch the onslaught on the state, kidnapping, assassination, religious crises, senseless killings and other vices. These moral vices are on the increase. The recent and emerging Boko Haram, which is averse to western education, secularism and democracy in Nigeria, is clamouring for religious freedom, exclusive rights and an Islamic state. Boko Haram, with its un-Islamic activities and similar sectarian conflicts in the North, coupled with the appalling state of affairs and insecurity in other areas is an issue commanding attention. The granting of amnesty recently and subsequent surrender of various armaments in the Niger-Delta point to the fact that security in Nigeria is a mess. Nevertheless, Worrey (2009:40) categorically states the implication of security in Nigeria:

The potential economic opportunities offered a lot of attraction to people not only in Nigeria but across the neighbouring countries.... Now the most fundamental elements of governance are security. Indeed, several communities were formed out of common desire for security. Even when you see animals in pairs, it is for security.

The above indicates that without security, economic opportunities would be thwarted and investors would be totally schemed out from investing in Nigeria because no one can



invest in an unsafe or insecure environment. This could be a monumental waste on the part of the investor, because security is a fundamental element of the state. In Nigeria, people can no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. The rich have the financial wherewithal to build a carapace or fence that is costlier than the real building itself as a result of insecurity. It is no longer news today that the rich purchase bullet proof cars consequent upon the state of insecurity.

Alamu (2010b:151) opines that "It is quite correct to say that Nigeria Police and other security apparatuses have abysmally failed in this respect. They cannot even protect themselves, let alone protect the lives and property of the Nigerian citizens. Today, this constitutional responsibility of the nation's security agencies has failed and is challenging the cardinal policy and the common existence of the Nigerian state". Moreover, the insurgence and menace of Boko Haram is an eyesore. Today, Boko Haram has advanced from the North to Kogi State with their dangerous weapons that can cow the fire power of an armed regiment. It might interest us to know that there are permanent interest groups, trigger-happy politicians and political anarchists who are financing and promoting these Boko Haram sects. This excruciating and prevailing situation appears to lend credence to the fact that these permanent interest groups are training Boko Haram guerrillas in camps that are yet to be identified. Recently, these terrorists in the North have another game plan, as they plan to replace the improvised Explosive Devices with rocket launchers and rocket-propelled grenades. According to experts, these weapons could be shot from long distances, thereby giving attackers sufficient time to escape just as they could cause havoc on their targets. Even today, security operatives are worried about the state of art of these weapons.

...the attempt to use rocket weapons by terrorists was the latest challenge security operatives were battling with.... We are not in war. Why are these people bringing rocket launchers into this country? Rocket launchers are used in only wars! What do they want to turn Nigeria into? We are still contending with Improvised Explosive Devices and now this (Sunday Punch, 2012).

The Boko Haram sect is more vicious now than before. In fact, it has been reported that it has foreign aids. Ogunseye (2012:2) rightly observes that the Boko Haram would continue to be vicious because of the foreign aids it receives every now and then. According to him,

Extremist Arab countries are supplying the weapon to terrorists in Nigeria. It is no longer news that the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb has penetrated this country and we can easily tell where these rockets are coming from. We don't have to manufacture these war weapons. Iran, Yemen, Syria, Libya and others are suppliers.

### Possible Solutions

The challenge before all peace-loving and peace-seeking Nigerians is to discern properly the sources of the ever-with-us religious crises and insecurity that are spreading like whirlwind, setting so much fear, agitation, tension and anger in the land (Alamu 2010a). We must rediscover the sense of corporate personality, communal responsibility and human solidarity. Of a truth, a critical social conscience must be evolved in order to know that injustice suffered by one Nigerian has a destabilising implication for the entire nation.

In Nigeria, the leadership and followership must be fully committed to the process of repentance and reconciliation. Thus, the politics of exclusion and isolation will not get Nigeria anywhere. It is not by greater repression of perceived enemies to the government that Nigeria will move forward. The leadership must begin to give rapt attention to faint voices of the oppressed poor, aggrieved politicians and the deprived minority groups. This is the only way we can break the backbone of violence and insecurity. There should be rigorous education by religious leaders and theologians of the various faiths on the essence of religions and the beauty of living together to promote cohesion and social solidarity in the country, coupled with the effort at inter-religious co-operation as people from various religious traditions. This inter-religious co-operation will enable religious communities to perceive themselves as relations, with a view to providing models for one another that weave bonds and build bridges rather than create conflict and cause bloodshed.

Christians and Muslims should see each other as living under the sun of the one Merciful God who is the Creator of Mankind. We acclaim God's sovereignty and we depend on human's dignity as God's servant. Therefore, we must employ dialogue on issues relating to religious matters. Interestingly, dialogue talks about understanding in relationship and interaction between people of various backgrounds to the common concerns of humankind. This dialogue permeates respect for other faiths, tolerance, co-operation and understanding of one another's point of view.

The major faiths in Nigeria prohibit senseless killings, lying, stealing and other moral vices, and these religions encourage such things as helping those in need and treating adherents of others faiths with respect. This would simply be of immense value within Nigerian nation. Furthermore, it is unethical and inappropriate for religious stakeholders, whom many adherents are looking up to, to suddenly prohibit them not to embrace or respect people of other faiths. Worst still, they prevent adherents of other faiths from expressing and acting in accordance with their beliefs. These conservative religious stakeholders carry with them explicit and implicit assumptions that are inappropriate, controversial and fundamental. Religion should not be politicised because it is very volatile, sensitive and live itself. All the stakeholders should get rid of exclusivist persuasion, extremist confession and fanatical trademark. However, for the sake of harmony, co-existence and progress, these stakeholders should stop employing the service of the commoners to promote their selfish ambition at the very slightest opportunity.

Moreover, it is worth asserting that Nigerian security agencies are not well-equipped. This results in killings and overpowering of the security operatives by the terrorists. For



instance, the Nigeria Police still use outdated rifles, while the terrorists frequently use sophisticated weapons and other states of the art gadgets to monitor their victims. In fact, the Nigerian government, as a matter of urgency, should provide and stockpile the armoury with the latest weapons and state of the art gadgets to discover the location of these criminals and terrorists. Again, security agencies should be well trained and equipped. They should likewise be insured against eventualities. These and other measures can help to boost their patriotic value.

The security loophole in the country has enabled stakeholders to clamour for community and private policing in order to provide support for operational efficiency. This effort would complement that of the police and other security agencies. They should be empowered by the government and they would also help to secure borders and other illegal routes. Meanwhile, the federal government should complement the effort of the community policing in terms of logistics, funding and aids as motivation and moral boosting (Alamu 2010b).

Boko Haram, as a sectarian group in Islam, should be stopped and crushed by all means, since they are not even ready to stop or negotiate with the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) as well as other stakeholders in the nation. Religious sentiments should be put aside since this sectarian group is vomiting hailstone, fire and is ready to crush anyone, whether government or her agencies, at any slightest opportunity. Even the group is ready to tear the nation apart if not checked. The group sees Nigeria as a madhouse where the worst is not bad enough, a country where one absurdity succeeds another and anarchy becomes breakfast.

## Conclusion

This paper has x-rayed the numerous religious crises and insecurity in contemporary Nigeria. It has discovered that the issues are many and the responses within Nigerian context are varied. It is clear that religious crises and insecurity are a way of life in Nigeria. The paper, therefore, has postulated that respect, tolerance and right attitudes to other faiths are synonymous with peaceful co-existence. Nevertheless, various stakeholders should get rid of exclusivist, extremist and fanatical persuasion as well as violence in order to embrace genuine dialogue. Likewise, the government should come to the aid of security agencies coupled with community policing so as to promote security of lives and property, safeguard the various routes and borders and stop the menace of Boko Haram. This will do for a start.

## References

- Abe, G.O. (2004) Yahwism Tradition vis-a-vis African Culture: The Nigerian Milieu" The 1<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Lecture delivered at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko.
- Alamu, A.G. (2009) Sins of Omission and Commission in Nigerian Religious Violence: Dopamu's Hermeneutics as an Alternative. *Insight: Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol.5

- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010a) Religion as Scapegoat in the Ethno-political Violence in Nigeria. In H. O. Anyanwu and E. U. Manasseh (eds) *Religion and Culture: Understanding the Dynamism of Faith in Africa*, Beijing: Universal Academic Service
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010b) The Role of African Religion in Promoting National Security in Nigeria. *AAU: African Studies Review*, Vol. 9.
- Awolalu, J. O. and Dopamu, P.A. (2005) *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: Macmillan.
- Ayantayo, J. K. (2002) Application of Dialogue to the Contemporary Nigerian Multi-religious Society. *Mimeograph*. University of Ibadan,
- Dopamu, A. P. (1984) Religious Particularity in Nigeria. In Sam Babs Mala and Z. I. Oseni (eds) *Religion, Peace and Unity in Nigeria*. Ibadan: NASR
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1986) Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity in Yoruba: Pattern of Interaction. In Emfie Ikenga-Metuh (eds) *The Gods in Retreat*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2001) Religious Tolerance and Peaceful Co-existence: The Case of Africa Religious and Philosophy of Religious Tolerance. In Momoh, C.S. et.al.(eds).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2005) The History of the Relationship between Religion and Science. *CORES: Journal of the confluence of Religion and Science*. Vol. No.1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2007) African Religion (Afrel) and National Security: The Yoruba Perspective. In A. P. Dopamu, et.al. (eds) *Dialogue: Issues in Contemporary Discussion*. Arifanla-Akute, Big Small Books,
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010) Religion and the Quest for Peace in Nigeria: Focus on Christianity and Science. In Oyewole, S. O. et.al. (eds) *Science in the Perspective of African Religion, Islam and Christianity*. Ilorin: LSI
- Ejiofor, L.U. (1974) Religion and a Healthy Political System. *Nigerian Dialogue* Vol.1, No.1.
- Encarta Dictionaries Microsoft* (2008)
- Fashole-Luke, et.al. (1978) (eds) *Christianity in Independent Africa*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Hornby, A. S. (1995) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press,
- Idowu, E. B. (1971) Religion on Peace. *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* V/11
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1996) *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longman.
- Igboin, B.O. (2010) Religious Fundamentalism in a Global World. In C.O. Isiramen et al. (eds) *Issues in Religious Studies and Philosophy*. Ibadan: En-joy Press and Books.
- Olukunle, O.A. (1980) Unacceptable Particularity. In NASR Conference Papers Proceedings, University of Jos, Jos.
- Ogunseye, O. (2012) The Boko Haram and Terrorism. *Sunday Punch*. 5<sup>th</sup> August
- Ryerson, C.A. (2000) Faiths and Fundamentalisms: Recipe for Violence. *Religion and Society* Vol. 47, No.4.
- Sam Babs Mala (1985) Fanaticism in Religions: A Naughty Child of a Difficult Mother. *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XVII/2
- Sunday Punch* August 5, 2012.
- Worrey, P. (2009) *The Sun*, November 21