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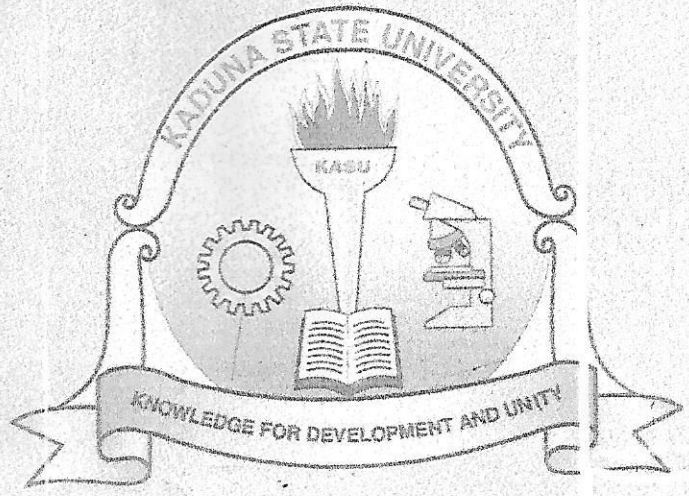

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Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria and its Proclivity for Terrorism

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Abstract

Global terrorism in more recent years has shifted from the political sphere to the religious. In the annals of such discourse there has been a preponderance of literature that focus on Islamic fundamentalism and its consequent terrorism. This gives a misleading impression that fundamentalism and terrorism are exclusive to Muslims. History reveals, however, that every religion (including Christianity) has at one point or the other influenced acts of terrorism. Since the introduction and spread of Christianity in Nigeria, particularly Pentecostalism, there has been evidence of religious fundamentalism perpetuated by Christians. Some of these were occasioned by the fanaticism of adherents, while the presence of a religion that equally has a large followership (Islam) in the polity has exacerbated the trend. Making use of both secondary and primary sources, the paper documents some of the fundamentalist features Christians exhibit in Nigeria, which are capable of outrightly snowballing into terrorism. This is based on the hypothesis that fundamentalism occurs in three operational stages: the passive, assertive and the impositional. The essay concludes that since there is an inextricable link between fundamentalism and terrorism, as evinced by global events, if Christian fundamentalism goes unchecked there is a tendency that it would ultimately lead to terrorism.

Introduction

Global terrorism is one of the most acute problems facing our contemporary world, and it has probably cost more lives than the casualties recorded in World War I and II put together. Global terrorism of course does not happen in isolation; it goes *pari passu*

Perhaps more tellingly, an overwhelming number of acts of terrorism recorded since the end of the Cold War have been religious and not secular. This fact makes the prognosis even bleaker since acts of religious terrorism are by far more dangerous than those motivated by secular considerations. This is so because while secular terrorist attack to correct a flaw within a system they accept as generally good, religious terrorist do not see themselves as part of a component worth preserving—therefore making them contemplate far more destructive terrorist operations. In other words, religious terrorists see their struggles as a 'total war' where violence is viewed as an end rather than a means to an end.[1] Unfortunately, a great number of these religiously motivated acts of terrorism have been traced to the Islamic religious tradition, which explains why there is a preponderance of literature on the subject compared to religious terrorism perpetuated by people of other religious traditions. An Islamic scholar tried to explain this frequency of Islamic terrorism in terms of a revolt by true 'Muslims' against what is 'largely a Western/Christian world.' [2]

There can be no religiously motivated terrorism without fundamentalism. This explains why religiously motivated terrorism is rarely discussed in isolation from fundamentalism. Given the number of attention Islamic terrorism attracts, 'Islamic fundamentalism' has been a recurrent theme in discussions about terrorism. It is important to point out, however, that not only is 'fundamentalism' not an exclusive preserve of the Islamic tradition, as we will find out, the term actually has its origins in Christianity.[3] Having made this observation, it is important to note that movements of a fundamentalist type are evident in all religions, including Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and other lesser known religious communities. Inextricably, therefore, acts of terrorism abound in every religious tradition, including Christianity. The KU Klux Klan, a ruthless hate group in the US that lynched, raped, and maimed African Americans, had an explicitly Protestant Christian terrorist ideology, basing their beliefs in part on a "religious foundation" in Protestant Christianity.[4] The goals of the KKK included, an intent to 'reestablish Protestant Christian values in America by any means possible", and they believed that 'Jesus was the first Klansman.'[5] In contemporary times there is the Phineas Priesthood movement in the U.S, which clearly stands opposed to interracial intercourse,

the mixing of races, homosexuality, and abortion. They are often considered terrorists by American authorities for, among other things, the planning and (or) execution of the bombing of FBI buildings and abortion clinic attacks.[6] In the Hindu religious tradition there is the Saffron terrorists, who burnt alive Australian Christian missionaries in 1999. There are also Buddhist in Thailand, Japan, India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, who engage in terrorism under the garb of nationalism.[7] Since the the turn of the millennium, there has been the phenomena of 'price tag attacks', which are hate crimes carried out by Judaist against Christians, left-wing Israeli Jews, Arab-Israelis and Palestinians.

Being one of the most religious countries in the world that can sometimes also be deeply divided by faith, Nigeria has had her own fair share of religious terrorism and fundamentalism. Given the numerous atrocities perpetuated by both the Maitatsine in the 1980s and the Boko Haram in more recent times, it is not surprising that an overwhelming number of scholarly works have concentrated on Islamic fundamentalism and its consequent terrorism,[8] neglecting some of the fundamentalist acts and terrorist tendencies exhibited by Christians within the polity. It is in this connection that the essay argues first that terrorism feeds on fundamentalism, howbeit in stages. Second, Christians in the country have over time exhibited acts of fundamentalism, which have at various times almost snowballed into overt terrorism. Lastly, if the trend goes unchecked, the Christian fundamentalist trend will inevitably lead to explicit acts of terrorism.

Terrorism, Fundamentalism and Extremism: A Conceptual Clarification

Definitions on the term *terrorism* are legion, yet there is no single generally acceptable definition. The aim of this paper is not to engage in such onerous task of providing one, but to give a description of the term. While there are divided opinions on what terrorism is and *is not*, there are generally accepted features it possesses. Firstly, there is the intentional and targeted use of violence to cause fear. Secondly, such violent attacks are usually not geared to the specific victim. Thirdly, attacks are designed to influence a greater audience from that in which the victims reside. Additionally, the ultimate goal of perpetuators of this act is to change behavior in a government or society, having brought

attention to their cause through the perpetuated violence. These parameters generally apply to all forms of terrorism. However, in *religious terrorism* there is an added dimension. Bruce Hoffman has identified 'holy terror' as different from 'secular terror' because of its 'radically different value system, mechanism of legitimization and justification, concept of morality, and Manichean world view that the holy terrorists embrace.'[9] Rapoport adds importantly that religious terrorism assumes a transcendental dimension, and its perpetrators are thereby unconstrained by the political constrictions that seem to affect other terrorists.[10] It is this 'Manichean world view', identified by Hoffman that connects religious terrorists with fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism is one of the most widely used, yet largely misconstrued terminology in today's world. Although an epithet commonly associated with fanatical adherents of various religious traditions (particularly Islam in recent years), the etymology of the word has a distinctively Christian background. In 1910 a series of booklets, titled 'The Fundamentals', was published in America and funded by the Stewart brothers: Milton and Lyman. It was then distributed worldwide in order to promote the view that there is a fundamental defining and non-negotiable set of traditional Christian doctrines. As a distinctive religious term, "fundamentalism" arose to refer to this generic idea proposed by the booklets.[11] However, the Iran hostage crisis of 1979–80 marked a major turning point in the use of the term. The American media, in an attempt to explain the ideology of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian Revolution to a Western audience described it as a "fundamentalist version of Islam" by way of comparison to the Christian fundamentalist movement in the U.S. Thus the term 'Islamic fundamentalist' was birthed and became commonly used in subsequent years. So what exactly does the word mean? The term fundamentalism is derived from the Latin noun *fundamen, fundaminis*, related to the verb *fundare*, meaning to establish, found, or confirm. The expression usually has a religious connotation that indicates unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs.[12] However, fundamentalism has come to apply to a tendency among certain groups—particularly religious ones—that is characterized by a markedly strict literalism as applied to certain specific scriptures, dogmas, or ideologies, and a strong sense of the importance of maintaining 'self' and

'other' distinctions, leading to an emphasis on purity and a nostalgic craving for previous ideals from which advocates believe people have strayed.[13] Rejection of diversity of opinion as applied to these established "fundamentals" and their accepted interpretation within the group is often the result of this tendency. Usually it is these people that become extremists.

Religions as a rule espouse values of peace and harmony and not violence. It is extreme forms or expressions of religion and religious ideology, however, which, under the guise of fundamentalism, is the point of connectivity between religion and terrorism.[14] *Extremism*, therefore, in literary terms connotes a sense of being at the margins, of existing on the boundaries or functioning at the edges. In other words, extremism suggests a far-reach from the 'centre' (the 'ideal' or the 'normal'). Consequently, any organisation or group that is in this sense extreme will tend to exhibit a tenuous link to whatever the appropriate "centre' is or else give evidence of a loose connection to the relevant normative tradition. In this sense, extremism expresses heterodoxy against orthodoxy. Extremism can also refer to something else altogether; even, indeed, the opposite of being "at the margins," and that is being at—or claiming to be—the centre.[15] Either way, extremism suggests fanaticism. However, caution has to be applied in describing who an extremist is based on the above explanation alone. To be sure, the description suggests relativism and subjectivity. For instance, who determines 'normal', 'margin' or 'centre'? This is perhaps the reason why *'extremists'* have been taken in modern academic parlance to denote 'those individuals or groups, who generally resort to violence in order to impose their beliefs, ideology or moral values on others.'[16] In this definition 'violence' is the keyword. The import of these distinctions is that 'extremists' are 'fundamentalists' that yield to violence, which includes terrorism. This also implies that not all fundamentalists are extremists or terrorists, but they are capable of being one. So at what point does this happen?

The Interface between Fundamentalism and Terrorism

The paper has hitherto attempted to establish that at the base of fundamentalism is an absolutist ideology. But an absolutist perspective—which is arguably at the foundation of every religion—does not always have to lead to terrorism. For instance,

there are many examples of religious fundamentalists who are pacifist in appearance and character. Nevertheless, the point is that fundamentalism may lead to terrorism, and in some cases it does. This section seeks to examine what can make fundamentalism metamorphose to terrorism. David Pratt's article 'Religion and Terrorism: Christian Fundamentalism and Extremism' is instructive in providing a plausible explanation. The author convincingly argued that fundamentalism happens in phases and can easily transit from its most benign state to a violent one, which could ultimately endorse overt acts of terrorism. To the author, there are three forms of fundamentalism: the passive, assertive and impositional.[17]

Passive fundamentalism is the initial and most benign 'phase' or 'form' of the three categories. These fundamentalists dwell on 'principal presupposition', which encourages belief in absolutism and inerrancy. They presuppose the absoluteness of their position (the very idea that it is only one of a number of possible perspectives is unacceptable) and that the applicable authoritative text or scripture can be read as providing immediate inerrant knowledge.[18] There is also among them the assumption of exactitude and apodicity of their religious text, believing it to be authoritative and unambiguous with respect to meaning. The final feature of this category, according to Pratt, is "implicit verification'. This connotes an emphasis on the correlation between the religious narrative that is espoused and the concrete lived reality of the fundamentalist religious community concerned, with which they use to justify their position.[19] What is adumbrated above is fundamentalism in its most basic and benign state. It is from this starting point of religious passion that the ideology of fundamentalism can evolve through a hard-line modality and into an assertive or even impositional extremist one.

Fundamentalism at the 'assertive level' is deepened. According to Pratt, the first feature of this phase of fundamentalism is 'epistemological construction'. Here, "real" knowledge is reduced to facts that are held to be true—all else belongs to the realm of falsehood. In other words, their interpretation of the religious text is that which is fact and all else outside it is deceit. Another feature of this category is the 'identity structure'. What is meant here is that the identity of a fundamentalist is bound up necessarily with the identity of the fundamentalist community: the stronger

or assertive the fundamentalism, the tighter this relationship. Allied to this 'identity structure' is 'ideological exclusivism with an inclusivist polity'. That is to say, on the one hand, religious fundamentalism excludes, virtually automatically, anything that relative to it appears "liberal"; that admits of, for example, any limitation, provisionality, otherness, openness, or change. It excludes religious compromise of any ilk. On the other hand, this same fundamentalism displays a propensity to include, in respect to considerations of the policies and praxis of social organisation, all others that fall within its frame of reference or worldview understanding.[20] The final feature in this category is perhaps the most important: "condemnatory stance". This has as its factors the holding and articulating of negative judgmental values and the exercise of what Pratt called a 'pietistic tyranny'. The most distinguishing element about 'Assertive fundamentalism' is its vociferous assertions of a condemnatory or judgmental sort. It is in the expression of judgmental values that such hard-line fundamentalism displays its real stance towards any who would dissent from within, or oppose from without.[21] Inherent in this is often a deprecating attitude and disparaging remarks towards 'others', whether in regard to virtually any other (the world at large), or focused on specific others (particular groups of categories of people such as Muslims/Christians, gays, nudists, sexual deviants and so on). It is the last feature that sets the tone for impositional fundamentalism.

The third and final phase is impositional fundamentalism. This is a stage whereby what began as a mere benign fundamentalist ideology transforms to something of a distinctly radicalized and impositional nature such that extreme actions, including violence and even terrorism, may be contemplated, advocated, and eventually engaged.[22] This phase includes and indeed builds on some of the features of assertive fundamentalism: 'ideological exclusivism/inclusivist polity' and 'condemnatory stance'. The first manifest feature of this stage is referred to as 'discriminatory value application.' This occurs when ideological exclusivism /inclusivist polity and condemnatory stance lead into a devaluation and dismissal of the 'other'. This 'religious other' is always demonized and cast as 'satanic' or at least seriously and significantly labeled as an aggressive opponent, and therefore hostilely regarded.[23] This negation is necessarily followed by a

corresponding assertion of self-superiority vis-à-vis any "other.' This feature, therefore, sets the tone for the next characteristic, which is 'explicit justification' for both ideology espoused and the actions it implies. This means sanctions against the 'other' are conceived and the violence this might yield, legitimated. The final feature in this category becomes 'enacted violent extremism' which is a reflection of manifest contempt usually expressed through terrorism.[24]

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria: A Historical Survey

Thus far, the essay has attempted to establish the fact that fundamentalists are not necessarily terrorists, but when taken to the extreme (impositional) they are capable of engaging in explicit acts of terrorism. This emphasis is necessary because, on the first glance, many observers might want to completely dissociate Christianity from fundamentalism in Nigeria. But going by the hypothesis which this work is anchored on several activities of Christians within the polity are in tandem with at least the first two phases/forms of fundamentalism previously identified: 'passive and assertive fundamentalism'. An assessment of religious interactions between some Christians and the other will not only demonstrate that fundamentalist elements exist, but that they have followed different trends over the years leaving the country in danger of explicit terrorism.

The effective practice of Christianity in Nigeria started in the mid-nineteenth centuries through the activities of the Christian missionaries from, particularly, Britain and the United States. Having successfully propagated the gospel in much of the southern part of the country by the late 19th century and early twentieth century, nationalistic sentiments expressed by Nigerians within these orthodox churches as well as their new found 'understanding' of 'true' Christianity through revelations and visions led to a secession of some members from these mainstream missionary churches. The seceded groups founded their own churches, which today are categorized as African *'Independent'* Churches (AICs). The AIC became a movement that was vastly popular between the 1920s and the 1950s.[25] One notable feature of the AICs is that it operated based on an African worldview and, therefore, provided answers and succor to some of the immediate needs of the people such as healing, racial and cultural pride and

so on. Significantly, however, it created a 'self' and 'other' distinction between these AICs and the orthodox churches despite both belonging to the same broader religious tradition, Christianity.

Arising from the above, it is not surprising that the first set of Christian fundamentalist in the country can be traced to this group of AICs. As early as the 1930s, members of this group had started depicting orthodox churches as professing a watered-down version of Christianity.[26] In particular, they decried and lamented the tolerance orthodox churches seemed to give to traditional practices.[27] To these AICs, there was no place in the Christian faith for any form of practice that allowed for traditional religion. One of the first groups to express these sentiments was the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) under the late Rev. John Ayo Babalola. The Church began what may be considered as the first revivalist mission in Nigeria and it launched verbal diatribes on traditional idol worshipping and allied practices. For a long time, until the late 1970s and early 1980s the CAC remained the dominant radical (or fundamentalist) Christian church in Nigeria. Abiodun Alao, a scholar in the field, has in fact claimed that many key individuals who were later to occupy prominent positions in advancing fundamentalist Christian views in the country had the roots of their development in this Church.[28]

In the late 1970s and early 1980s a new wave of Christianity called Pentecostalism spread in the country. The decade was by no means the period in which Pentecostalism arrived in Nigeria; indeed, the CAC as well as other AICs lay claim to belonging to the Pentecostal fold.[29] However, the wave witnessed during this period was different in many respects. While the AICs attracted people of all generations but mostly adults, by the 1970s the new wave of Pentecostalism attracted mainly youths. Members of these groups also belonged to the Scripture Union (SU) and they were dominant in academic institutions, especially Universities and Polytechnics across the southern parts of the country. Founded in 1867, the SU is an international, inter-denominational evangelical Christian movement which has as its stated aim, the use of the Bible to inspire children, young people and adults to know God. Indeed, the origin of the union is traced to Josiah Spiers, who in 1867, spoke to 15 children in a drawing room in Islington, London, and began the work of sharing the

Christian message with children in a way that related to their real needs. This led to the founding of the Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM) which was later to become "Scripture Union". The movement only became popular in Nigeria during the 1970s, thus coinciding with the sweeping spread of Pentecostalism in the country.

Another clear distinction between this new wave of Christianity and AICs had to do with members' perception of Islam and Muslims, and how this impacted on their inter-religious relationship. Before the 1970s, even at the peak of AIC activities, there was no serious friction between Islam and Christianity. They both competed to win converts into the faith. Islam appealed to the Africans as some of its activities were in line with traditional African culture, for example the use of amulets and polygamous marriage.[30] Christianity did not appeal so much to Africans as the missionaries and (most) AICs advocated for one man one wife and condemned some aspects of African culture as fetish and barbaric. It is therefore not surprising that in 1931, when AIC activities were prevalent, the percentage of Christians in the country was a paltry 6.2%—even though their activities in subsequent years helped boost that figure to 34% by 1963.[31] However, the number of Christians exponentially increased by the late 1970s, so much so that it almost became proportionately even with Muslims that had hitherto been an overwhelming majority in the country. This had been as a result of the radical evangelism undertaken by members of the SU and *'born agains.'* The expression 'born again' was a term that became popular with this wave of 'new Christianity'. The term was generally used by Pentecostals to represent adherents that had undergone a 'spiritual rebirth'. While members of the SU all professed to be born again, the term extended to all Pentecostals that had experienced this 'spiritual regeneration', and therefore incorporated both the young and the old, and literates cum illiterates. What is central to our study here is that it was the manner of this radical evangelism—which sometimes manifested fundamentalist traits—that pitted the new wave of Christians against Muslims.

It is apposite to mention at this juncture that given the proliferation of Pentecostal churches during this era, mainstream orthodox churches in the country—so as not to be outbalanced—

started falling under the influence of this movement. Members of mainline churches, who happened to come in contact with members of the Pentecostal churches through their membership of the non-denominational or interdenominational fellowships and ministries such as the Scripture Union (S.U.), soon became influenced by their practices.[32] In the bid to revive the prayer life, worship and preaching of their churches, and to disprove the then wide-spread notion that orthodox churches were on the decline, the newly Pentecostal-influenced members of the churches gradually began to introduce the rapturous practices of their fellowship and ministries as well as ideologies and agenda into their churches. The import of this is that the influence of the Pentecostal churches encouraged some of these orthodox members to demonstrate fundamentalist traits that had hitherto been alien to them.

One of the notable features of this new wave of evangelism was its exclusivist claims as well as member's vociferous assertions of a condemnatory or judgmental sort on Muslims and Islam in general. Though there had since the late 1970s been reports of such development in different locations of the country, one of the most widely publicized early manifestations of this trend happened in 1987 in Kafanchan, Kaduna State. It started with the plan by the Federation of Christian Students (FCS) at the College of Education, Kafanchan to hold a weekend of religious activities marking the end of its annual week of Christian activities. As advertisement for the occasion, the FCS pasted a banner in front of the College which read "Welcome to Jesus campus".[33] The scenario had been reminiscent of what had taken place a decade earlier during one of the advertisements for one of such Christian programmes (Mission 77) at the University of Ife Campus, Osun State, Nigeria. Perhaps, because of the relatively limited number of Muslims on the Ife campus, the issue passed without much uproar.[34] In Kafanchan, however, some Muslim members of the Muslim Students Society (MSS) found this very offensive and protested to the School authorities. The FCS leaders were told to remove the banner and they acted accordingly. The pertinent question to ask in these two separate situations is: why should one religious sect try to appropriate a campus for itself in a secular and multi-religious polity? The answer to this, I argue, is that there was a manifestation of an *exclusivist* feature of

fundamentalism, which was at an *assertive stage*, in these young Scripture Union 'born agains'.

There was another event that further exacerbated the religious tension in Kafanchan in 1987. The FCS had invited a certain Rev. Abubakar Bako, a Muslim convert to Christianity, as the guest speaker for the occasion. Being a convert, Bako had reasonable knowledge of the Quran and, therefore, made reference to it to elucidate his point on the *supremacy* of the Christian faith to Islam. In doing so, he allegedly misinterpreted some portions of the Quran, including Chapter 3:13 and 43:46.[35] This action degenerated into a fracas as a Muslim lady, Aishatu Garba, who had heard the Reverend's reference to the Quran accosted him and further mobilized other MSS members to the scene. The rest of the story is well known and opinions are divided as to the guilty party in the crisis. While Bako's case is notoriously popular, there are other Christian pastors in and outside the Pentecostal fold who form the habit of putting other religions down in order to extol theirs. These incidents again beg the question, must any individual disparage another religion to promote his? Or why at all should reference be made to another religion when proselytizing? The answer again lies in their fundamentalist tendency.

In the 1990s this expression of Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria wore a new dimension. The deprecating remarks about the religious 'other' was no longer merely expressed on the altar, but published and circulated in books and pamphlets. One of the most striking of them was Rev. Father, J. O. Odetayo's book, *Battle for Nigeria: the Cross or the Crescent*. In the book the author made the claim, among other things, that Allah is the name of the chief of the pagan Arabian deities being worshipped before Mohammed was born; and the spirit called by the name would make its worshippers violent and blood thirsty: Muslims put no value onto human lives and they are intolerant. Hence they can kill even when hired to do so. He further asserted that if any person becomes a Muslim, his or her name is struck off the list of possible renowned achievers in any human endeavour.[36] Another of such disparaging books was published by G. J. O. Moshay, titled *Anatomy of the Qur'an*. The entire book of ten chapters was devoted to the criticism of Islam and the Qur'an. The book made scathing attacks on the personality of the Prophet Muhammad, which included branding him a liar.[37]

Since the 1990s the habit of using media outfits like videos, cassette radio and television to demonize the 'religious other' has been present. More than ever before Nigeria started witnessing the unreserved use of these outfits to transmit disparaging messages based on the conversion accounts of new converts.[38] This of course attracted the outrage of opposing religious groups, so much so that it sometimes snowballed into visible hatred between two members of opposing religions. Indeed, the internet age ushered in by the new millennium has in more recent times exacerbated the trend. The web is now littered with a plethora of hate messages and fundamentalist ideologies that demonize and condemn Islam and other religious sects within the polity. To make matters worse, in the 'comment' section of web pages that originally might have little or nothing to do with religion per se we find some Christian zealots still using the platforms to express their fundamentalist disposition.

It is important to mention here that while the essay has concentrated thus far on the fundamentalist traits that some Christians have exhibited in Nigeria over the years using Islam as a paradigm, the 'attack' is not by any means limited to that 'religious other'. Fundamentalism as we have seen identifies every form of 'otherness' and goes on to loathe (*when it is benign*) or outrightly condemn and demonize it (*when it is assertive*). Christian fundamentalists in Nigeria have expressed these sentiments to other forms of 'other' outside Islam.

When are Nigerian Christian fundamentalists likely to *throw bombs*?

We have seen from the above evidence of fundamentalist activities displayed by some members of the Christian fold in Nigeria since at least the 1930s. The case can be made, however, that these acts were at best *benign* and *assertive* modes since there was not in any case a legitimization (or exhibition) of violence. This partly explains why the polity is yet to experience Christian terrorism. But going by the explanations on fundamentalism provided earlier, when fundamentalism is at the benign and assertive stage it is very capable of metamorphosing into an impositional sort thereby facilitating terrorism. So at what stage does fundamentalism become impositional? Or put more accurately, when will Nigeria be in danger of experiencing

Christian terrorism? In making this prediction it is inevitable that we draw reference from religious terrorism outside Christianity, particularly those perpetrated by Islamic fundamentalists.

John Esposito, an Islamic scholar, articulates the Muslim extremist ideology of Islamism in terms of six elements. First, Islam is a total and comprehensive way of life. Second, the failure of Muslim societies is due to their departure from the "straight path of Islam" and their following a Western secular path. Third, the renewal of society requires a return to Islam and the advancement of an Islamic religio-political and social reformation or revolution. Fourth, Western-inspired civil codes must be replaced by Shari'a, which is the only acceptable socio-legal design for a Muslim society. Fifth, although Westernisation of society is condemned, modernisation as such is not; that is to say, science and technology are accepted, but they are to be subordinated to Islamic belief and values; and finally, the process of Islamisation requires organisations or associations of dedicated and trained Muslims.[39]

If we were to expunge Islam from the dynamics and discuss Esposito's categorization in general terms, as Douglas Pratt has done, it could be said that Esposito's paradigm of religious extremism suggests that (a) the extremist's ideology is all-inclusive and totalitarian; (b) it is cast in a context of the perceived failure of the wider society of which it (the extremist group) is representative, having failed in its divinely ordained destiny and therefore suffering the consequences; (c) the renewal of society requires an intentional and successful "overthrow" or "re-ordering" by way of direct intervention; (d) society's godless laws and legal system require to be replaced with that which has been ordained of God; (e) modern technology is to be subordinated to, and utilised in the service of, the higher calling of the religious extremist; and (f) in order for the programmatic goals to be achieved there needs to be a growing cadre of dedicated, trained, and committed participants.[40]

I will argue that all six elements are encapsulated in one theme: the feeling that the society in which they belong is being lost to the things of the *'world'* (things that are irreligious) under the watch of the secular government that endorses the loss. It now behooves of them, as divine soldiers, to salvage the situation. Having studied religious terrorism in the world's major religions—including Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism—Mark Juergensmeyer, a scholar in religious violence, affirms that in all cases of religious terrorism there was always a common ideological component: the perception that the modern idea of secular nationalism was insufficient in moral, political and social terms.[41] Consequently, we can surmise that religious fundamentalists in Nigeria will resort to terrorism when their faith in the secular government, as an institution to uphold morality and fundamental biblical injunctions, is exhausted.

Again, it is imperative to subject our analysis to the local context. Acts of terrorism in Nigeria have been exclusively perpetuated by Islamic fundamentalists. The most frequently provided explanation by analysts and observers for this anomaly is either that Islam is inherently violent or that the religion has been hijacked by politicians to achieve political means. Very few explain it in terms of juxtaposing the complementarity of Islam with the secular state as opposed to Christianity. For example, westernization, introduced through colonialism severely altered the Islamic culture that had existed in the northern part of the country in pre-colonial times. An instance is that contrary to the western educational system that sets aside Saturdays and Sundays as school-free days, the Quranic school week runs from Saturday to Wednesday, and has Thursdays and Fridays as free days. These schools also did not operate on any elaborate curriculum, but relied exclusively on the Quran as syllabus. Holidays were also fixed along Islamic lunar months and religious festivals. The annual vacation, as an example, was fixed to align with the Ramadan period, while a shorter break was given around the time of the *'id-'l' kabir* festival.[42] The Gregorian calendar, which is of a Christian import, is also what is adopted in the country rather than the Islamic one. Sharia had also been the accepted laws of the land not the common law which the independent state inherited. All these are added to the notion expressed by many that Islam is not compatible with any secular state since the religion is in itself a way of life. The point being made here is not that Islamic fundamentalists have a justification for acts of terrorism but that, given all antecedents, they are likely to be more inclined to impositional fundamentalism than their Christian counterparts because the perception about the deficiencies of modern secular state is more acute in them. There is, therefore, the nostalgic craving for a return to the Islamic pre-colonial state.

Finally, having identified that Christian fundamentalists are likely to resort to terrorism when their faith in the secular government—as an institution to uphold morality and fundamental biblical injunctions—is lost, there is need to identify the things that they will interpret as physical manifestations of the secular government's inadequacies. One example might be the perceived or actual oppression of the Christian faithful. For example a government coming into power and setting up policies that are perceived as placing Christians in a disadvantage like, perhaps, implementation of Islamic Banking, taxation of churches, restrictions of the religious expression of Christians and so on. Two, it could also be that a segment of the society— which to Christian fundamentalists is condemned by God—is given more liberty and acceptance by the government. Take for instance, the acceptance of gay marriages, nudists, and such other related segments of the society. It is also instructive to note that the government of the day might not necessarily be the one granting such freedom and admittance, but Christian fundamentalists believe them to be on the ascendency and that the secular government had been complicit in not checking their excesses. This latter example might extend to prostitutes and abortion clinics. Admittedly, the average Christian might find some of these examples repulsive but the fundamentalist, who had already demonstrated fundamentalism at the benign and assertive level, will be the first to *throw bombs*.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this paper to demonstrate that while not all fundamentalists are terrorists, fundamentalism is very capable of breeding terrorism. We have also seen that over the last century or so some Christian elements have displayed fundamentalist traits which, as argued, are capable of snowballing into outright terrorism. It is important to state, however, that the aim of this discourse is not to disparage the broad tradition of Christianity or the sub-sects for that matter, but to help check the spread of fundamentalism and possible terrorism. The present researcher is also aware that some of the examples of Christian fundamentalism cited in the essay are responses to hostilities from the religious other, particularly Muslims. Fundamentalism also is by no means exclusive to Christians. In fact, examples of Islamic

fundamentalism within the polity are legion. A discussion on this has been deliberately limited since it falls outside the scope of the essay. The fact remains, nonetheless, that it is not only overt terrorism that the country is in danger of but fundamentalism, which is encapsulated in the twin plague of intolerance and rigid claims to possessing absolute truth.

Given the danger of fundamentalism metamorphosing into overt terrorism, what is the panacea? The solution to this, I suggest, comes from both within and without. It is accepted that whoever is convinced of the truth of his religion is indeed never tolerant. However, adherents of religions must accept that they live in a polity which they share with members of other faith (including atheists and agnostics). They should therefore conceive themselves as being on the receiving end of such intolerance. Should everyone claim to possess absolute truth and demonize the 'other' based on such position, would the world not be chaotic? From the outside, the government has a significant role to play in curbing fundamentalism. The paper has identified that the soul of fundamentalism is intolerance and the expression thereof. The Nigerian government needs to re-affirm the secular status of the country. The word 'secular' has been controversially excluded from the constitution but its spirit remains, particularly since it is expressly stated that no religion will be adopted as a state religion. Matters pertaining to faith, therefore, should be restricted as much as possible to the private sphere. In most of Europe, as in other developed climes, it is inconceivable that any adherent of a particular religion will publicly disparage another in a bid to promote his own faith. There is nothing preventing the government from placing a sanction on people that disparage other religions or others on religious basis. Because in the end it is these people that have the highest propensity to become terrorists.

Endnotes

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17. Douglas Pratt, 'Religion and Terrorism: Christian Fundamentalism and Extremism', p. 439.
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