

**THE RELEVANCE OF THEOLOGY AS CULTURE OF FAITH  
TO PROMOTE HUMAN SECURITY WITH SPECIAL FOCUS  
ON NORTHERN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

Theology is a culture of faith rooted in the trinity, with its fullness of revelation captured in the incarnation. God the Son, Jesus Christ, fully divine and fully human places Himself at the centre piece of human history, becoming the best human security as Redeemer and Saviour. Thus, He said, '...I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly, John 10: 10.' The unfolding of the messianic mission of Jesus Christ, wrought through the Paschal Mystery, sets the motion in tune of the relevance of theology as an instrument to engage Catholics, Christians, Muslims and Traditional African adherents to the reasons why He came – Salvation of the World (Jn 3: 16). We seek for this fullness of life within the context of human security in Northern Nigeria. By constructive and historize analysis, the researcher develops the timeline (1900-2021) to capture the perspective of education, religion, politics, and socio-cultural world-view of Northern Nigeria unfolding these indices or perceptions within the interpretation of culture as history, as cosmology, as faith, as education, as justice and as emancipation. Our search therefore focuses on locating the seed of conflicts in Northern Nigeria planted by crude force or by the exploits of the task masters as colonizers: the Arabs/Fulani and the British. The faulty line created by them that differentiates us (non-actors) from them (task maters) on the basis of ethnic differences, doctrinal faith or on the basis of classism. Our quest also will unearth strong issues of injustices that dehumanizes, subjugates and delineate the supposed dignity bestowed by God to every human person at creation that 'we are created in the Image and Likeness of God' (c.f. Gen.1: 26.)

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## **1. Introduction**

Every human religion on earth recognizes the supremacy, the role and the place of God being sacred, holy and as such He is the supreme security of life and property on earth. Within the spiritual and innate psychological realm – Jesus Christ is the corner stone rejected, but has become the key stone (Eph. 2: 20). Thus, it is within this narrative that Christianity celebrates human salvation, security and redemption on the doctrine of the Paschal Mystery positioning it as a permanent human security bequeathed to us. This further points to the centrality of *history as a Locus theologicus* – because, time is situated as *chronos* and at the same time *typos* – culture of faith, all centred-on Jesus Christ. The existential relevance of theology is focus on the Christ-event that captures the salvific event which is ever new, a reality and demonstrative faith of doctrinal and liturgical ritual at every Mass, to this Grech wrote, the redemptive, ‘Saving events continued and became in their turn a fount of revelation, because the resurrection is not a point in time but an ongoing event which bestows the Spirit generously and guides the spread of the gospel message in the Church. The process goes on even today, and we can still speak of continuing revelation; but *current revelation is explicative or clarificatory*, while in the ‘apostolic age’, which was so closely linked to the ‘Christ-event,’ it was *constitutive*.’<sup>2</sup>The task of the theologian is to make this clear message of the Christian faith, lived experience. But the more Christianity carries this in her womb and gives birth to the good news of Jesus Christ in Northern Nigeria with dynamism and vigor, the more the militant Muslims, rise against the salvific mission of the church. This continues to be one central hot-bed of conflict in Northern Nigeria, the expansion of Christianity, by missionary enterprise, opening of new Churches, Mass Centres and Parishes.

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<sup>2</sup>Grech, Prosper, ‘The Beginnings of Christian Theology,’ in *History of Theology – The Patristic Period, Volume I*, Angelo Di Berardino, Basil Studer, eds, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press Collegeville, 1997, 42

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The task of the Theologian in Northern Nigeria therefore, is herculean, explicatory and dynamic. Human beings by nature are progressive, determinant and always seeking to conquer space, time and nature; reasons why both the Catholic Church continue to initiate the creation of New Dioceses, Parishes and Churches as well as other Christians in Northern Nigeria, to this, our envious militant and aggressive Islamic sects are unhappy. We need know clearly that, *Ab initio*, that every civilization in history craves for dominance, expansion and growth. While these are indices (imaginative and real) that are generally applicable as norm or rule of the thumb engage by theologians as Pastor of Souls; this too, is ever true, the source or the point of conflict in the history and antecedents that is found in Northern Nigeria – the Fulani struggle to grab agricultural and grazing land, manipulate and control markets, agro-allied businesses, sales of fertilizer and dominance in politics. Zackarys Gundu, a professor of Archeology, at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria wrote: ‘Fulani feudalism is real and it is why we cannot reason same way. What Islam means to *Fulani is Occupation and Usurpation of the Conquered by Fulani Oligarchy Kingdom*, but what Islam means to others is Religion. Till date, the Fulani may take the sons of Hausa, castrate them and use them as domestic guard over his harem of women. No Nigerian has ever inquired into this.’<sup>3</sup>

To consciously engage in this research being focus on the subject-matter above; the paper explores how through *constructive and historize module* – Northern Nigeria – the landscape that is bedeviled by blood-sucking bandits and terrorists in the name of Islamic expansionist agenda are demonic. Recently, Bishop Kukah bemoans the sickly situation we are now left to face:

Today, a feeling of vindication only saddens me as I have watched the north break into a cacophony of quarrelsome blame games over our tragic situation. A catalogue of unprecedented cruelty has been unleashed on innocent citizens across the northern states. In their sleep, on their

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<sup>3</sup>Gundu, Zacharys, Professor of Archeology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaira ‘*Forty Fulani Facts Most Nigerians do not know,*’ 9 August, 2020, [www.hotintsnaija.com](http://www.hotintsnaija.com)>2020/08 Accessed on Monday, 04/04/2022

farmlands, in their markets, or even on the highway, innocent citizens have been mowed down and turned into burnt offerings to gods of evil. Communities have been turned into gulags of misery, death, pain, and perfidy.<sup>4</sup>

In the current incessant, heartless killings and kidnapping of Priests, Sisters, Baptize Christians we continue to ask these problematic questions: Where do we go wrong? When did this theatre of hate, indiscrete killings and violence began? Who are the architects or craft designers of this gruesome and heartless killings currently going on unabated in Northern Nigeria? Who can stop it?

## **2. Structure of Education in Existence in Northern Nigeria**

In the modern world, in many cycles, it seems the quality and standard of civilization is measured by a person's level of education. Scholars of measurement and quantitative studies or better still, the educational psychologist however, have varied standards of ascertaining, assessing or accessing what informs the ability of one acquiring education. What makes for and set the educational background of a person's knowledge can be what is available to him or her like traditional/native system of learning. But as the persons moves further, having interaction with external culture that is not native to the person, one then can acquire new behavioural patterns of life that might be positive or negative by socio-cultural interactions, which then manifest themselves in the orientation of the person's behavioural actions and begin to show in the religio-psychological manifestations. These can serve as indicators of peace or violence; as these emerge, they add to the person's cognitive attitude – as in the case of *Almajiri*. In Northern Nigeria, we can classify this measurement into four steps:

***African Traditional System of education*** – basically being the process of learning cultural notions, symbols, folklore, songs, jokes, dances, types of food and medicine. The various segment of tribes and

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<sup>4</sup>Kukah, Matthew Hassan, 2021 Christmas Message, 'A Nation Still in Search of Truth & Vindication, PUNCH NEWS PAPER, 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2021. Accessed on [www.punchnewspapers...](http://www.punchnewspapers...)

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ethnicities in Northern Nigeria have each native currency for communicating with the deity (God), Spirit World and the Ancestors. They all have prescribe rites and rituals, sacred meals and drinks, sacred cult and occults, like the Bajju<sup>5</sup> At this level, education is communicated by oral method – historical process.

In the past, prior to an adult departure from families, clans and villages to urban settlements, it is expected for one to be initiated in the ancestral religion, cult or to know specific cultural totems. Prior to the advent of Islam or Christianity, and even now (Hausa/Maguzawa, Bajju, Atap, Gbagi, Nupe, Koro) adherents of Native Religion, by tribe, location and size, exercise and practice their religion in freedom. For them ‘sacredness knits together different aspects of African worldview, its ethics, epistemologies, and the framing of its traditional cosmology.’<sup>6</sup> When people at this African Traditional Religion are converted to either Islam or Christian, they do not leave behind the native, fetish or cultic practices. These generate conflicts amongst Muslim or Christian adherents today and become still a hot-bed of rivalry in villages. We shall examine this part later in this work, to demonstrate that both the Islamic or Christian worldview and religious reality is in direct conflict with the tapestry of Native Religious practices and beliefs as in the case of many tribal set up in Northern Nigeria.

**Arabic-Islamic education** – a child born in a Muslim family, is expected to acquire Arabic education in Quranic school. This is what they called ‘*Karatun allo*’ – meaning reading to reproduce Arabic text written by the student on black slate with charcoal ink. Learning by memory-in-take. It is a process of acquiring quranic verses by heart through memorization, in Arabic language. The student is expected to memorize the whole contents of the Quran before attaining the age of fifteen (15) and at a higher level, acquire sophisticated knowledge on shariah codification, philosophy and application to life in the Hadith

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<sup>5</sup>Aboi, Rebecca Luka, *Bajju Social and Traditional Structure – A Cultural Revival & Reawakening*, revised ed., Kaduna: Image Point Publishers, 2018, 82-92

<sup>6</sup>Henryk Zimon, ‘The Sacredness of the Earth among the Konkomba of Northern Ghana,’ *Anthropos* (2003): 421-443

and Sunnah. Maishanu wrote: ‘Most of the historians agree that the spread of Islam was accomplished through trade across the great Sahara Desert which started more than 1000 years BCE.’<sup>7</sup> By this medium, the Arabs, transmitted by trade, commerce and industry the superiority of Islam to any religion on earth. Every convert to Islam must learn and acquire Arabic as his/her language of communicating with Allah. ‘The appeal to the highest authority of the sacred laws of Sharia, and the disparaging of human laws and constitutions are the fundamental reasons for the beliefs to establish a caliphate where ‘*Allah’s laws*’ rule supreme over other human laws.’<sup>8</sup>

This is core Islamic religious value that is placed before every Muslim, the supremacy of Allah’s law and that of the Arabic culture over and above every native or local culture of the convert to Islam. This is the hotbed of conflict in Northern Nigeria, because, the Fulani<sup>9</sup>, replaced the Arabs and became tax-masters, slave-masters, only elites and rulers over the Hausas and destroyed their traditional institutions, chieftaincy system, suppress their culture by condemning it to be inferior, satanic and fetish. The reasons why Uthman Dan Fodio, in 1804 launched a massive Islamic Jihad, under the guise of purifying Islam in Hausa land. With the current massive terroristic attacks against the Hausa Muslims and Christians (Maguzawa) since the past 13 years from Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, Zaria, Borno and Yobe (Kanuri); the major crack emerged (self-defense) due to the heavy burden of oppression and subjugation. This is a major conflict in Northern Nigeria today.

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<sup>7</sup>Maishanu, Isa Muhammad, ‘Islam in Nigeria up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century,’ in *Islam and the Fundamentals of Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria*, eds, Aminu S. Mikailu, Mukhtar U. Bunza, Isa M. Maishanu, Sokoto: Amal Printing Press, Nig. Ltd, 2014, 1

<sup>8</sup>Clark B. Lombardi, ‘Designing Islamic Constitutions: Past Trends and Options for a Democratic Future,’ *International Journal of Constitutional Law 11*, no. 3 (2013), 615-645

<sup>9</sup>Kukah, Matthew Hassan, *The Church and the Politics of Social Responsibility*, Lagos: Sovereigns Prints Nig. Ltd, 2010, 139

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***Western-Christian education*** – a child,<sup>10</sup> adolescent and the youth are expected to learn the biblical text, doctrines, the creed and structure of the Christian faith. Rahner authoritatively wrote: ‘The official faith of the Church contains data that derive from the history of the Church’s faith, data that have become irreversible and are normative for the faith of the present-day church. The church possesses an authoritative magisterium that is, in principle, normative for the faith of the individual, although this magisterium, while remaining essentially the same, is itself affected by historical change in its existence and its praxis.’<sup>11</sup> This is intellectual pattern that theology employs as vehicle and agent of change to advance and promote human security by mentoring children and the youths to live in peace with people in society. To practice locomotive faith – that is guided by the YCS’s motto of *See, Judge* and *Act* to propel, drive and mentor the Catholic and Christian youths in Northern Nigeria to acquire theological faith for human security.

The Christian structured of bequeathing theological knowledge and instruction is drawn from the Bible and Sacred Tradition; these are properly designed to inculcate morals and faith, leading to formation of conscience,<sup>12</sup> ethics, integration and ensure human development. The classic christian teachings every baptize youth and adult must know, accept and practice in life are the doctrines of the trinitarian nature of God, being Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that in Jesus Christ, He is the Son of God and the Son of Mary by virgin birth. The fourth ecumenical council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) ‘gave the church its classical Christological formulation: in Christ there are two distinct

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<sup>10</sup>*Theological Investigations VIII*, trans. David Bourke, New York: Harder and Herder, 1971, 37-43; a child is a full person, classification of age, statue or gender does not remove the dignity of the child before God in society.

<sup>11</sup>Rahner, Karl, *The Content of Faith – The Best of Karl Rahner’s Theological Writings*, eds. Karl Lehmann and Albert Raffelt, New York: CROSSROAD, 1992, 503

<sup>12</sup>See, Shabayang, Barnabas Samaila, *The Relevance of Theological Education in Forming Religious Leaders of Conscience in Africa*, in *Nigerian Journal of Religion and Society (JORAS)*, Vol. 10, June, 2020 A Publication of Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kaduna, ed. Odafe C. George.

natures, in the union of a single person or hypostasis.<sup>13</sup> As every baptize Christian holds, professes and practices this foundational faith in Jesus Christ being the Saviour and Redeemer of the World as God-Man through the Paschal Mystery. It is on the other hand, a hotbed of conflict for the Muslims in Northern Nigeria who see Jesus Christ as only a prophet not God. Reasons, they accuse and attack Christians preach to them.

***Scholars and Educators maximize on building Synergy:*** In the North, these calibers of persons draw a synergy on objective truth based on their enlightenment and education. The researcher will classify this position as the *Confluence of High-bred Societal Educators*. They deal with issues that promote the truth, objectivity, justice, unity, love, development and advancement of knowledge in human society. At this point, what counts is the harvest of intellectuality, the quest and thirst for justice, for truth to reign and for peaceful coexistence amongst Muslims and Christians. This is the hall mark of human engineering; thus, it is the melting point of the THREE perspectival points or steps just examined above. Very few educated Northerners who are either Muslims or Christians preaches peace, fight for human security and advocate for justice, equity and unity. From over the past one hundred and twenty years, the best of them are Sir Tafawa Balewa, Aminu Kano, Maitama Yusuf, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, Archbishop Matthew Ishaya Audu, Bishop John Niyiring, Bishop Kwashi, Bishop George Dodo, the late Bishop Joseph Danlami Bagobiri, Sheikh Nuru Khalid. The elites, scholars, politicians, and Traditional Chiefs or Leaders exist on this level.

At another level, there are those who are really evil, toxic and become promoters of cruelty and terrorism. They fan the embers of hatred in Northern Nigeria – e.g Governor Nasir El-Rufai and Sheikh Muhammadu Gumi. At this level, relationship between Muslims and Christians is highly polarized by selfish and evil persons who most

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<sup>13</sup>Richard Viladesau and Mark Massa, *Foundations of Theological Study: A Sourcebook*, 206



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often use the status they have acquired in life or in the society to confuse the *talakawa* – masses to get votes during political campaign, or when they are seeking for appointments at the Federal or State levels of government. It is highly polarized by technocrats, entrepreneurs, economists or educationists to gain appointments for contracts, receive loans from banks, acquire well choice plot of land or stores in the market square, or even to become Vice Chancellors, Provosts or Principals at academic institutions. Despite the acquisition of Islamic or Christian education, due to selfish tendency and religio-ethnic differences, a compromise of quality, character and qualification is sacrifice on the basis leading to the wrong choice of an officer, student, client, professional and academic expert to the best qualified person for the task. This happens in Northern Nigeria and even at the National level as the Fulani arrogantly stated that ‘Let your children know the NIGERIA they are born in and her political consequences. There’s nothing like RELIGION as far as Fulani is concerned is a political tool of oligarchic and political control.’<sup>14</sup>

### **3. Efficacy of Theology/Education in the formation of Human Character and Security**

Theology is a science that strives on educating, enlightening and salvaging the human person; thus, it is at the very root and centre of human security. The researcher will explore four basic methodical approaches of connecting the efficacy of theology using education as a vehicle of human security in many facets of life in Northern Nigeria in the interactions of Christians and Muslims. These are:

Theology-Education is pivotal towards human emancipation by its mission, character and content. The role-play of Spiritual or Religious Leaders in human society is clearly to develop the capacity to work for peace and unity of all people in their constituencies. Theology exists as a practical organ to help and assist the youths and adults to acquire skills and entrepreneurial acumen to provide food, engage in industrial work

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<sup>14</sup>Gundu, Zacharys, Professor of Archeology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaira ‘*Forty Fulani Facts Most Nigerians do not know,*’ 9 August, 2020, [www.hotintsnaija.com](http://www.hotintsnaija.com)>2020/08 Accessed on Monday, 04/04/2022

and work for justice. Through the social Teachings of the Church, theology, is able to mediate against unjust structures of labour, demand equitable pay and rise in salaries of the masses against oppressive structures.<sup>15</sup> Theology-Education are twin forces serving as gadfly to catalyze self-conscious development in varied areas of the humanities: Philosophy, Psychology, Anthropology, Ethics and Justice, Justice and Law. By theological discipline, priests, religious and the laity are challenged to explore the constructive ways that leads to human security and growth. Theology-Education mirrors and professionally handles the ugly and strong issues of seizure of lands, force marriages by parents, the gratification of knowledge by cheating against the ethics of transparent conduct of examinations. Finally, theology-Education deals with eternal and spiritual doctrines, faith, eschatons and the spiritual prescriptions that leads one to enter the Kingdom of God.

A careful study of sociology, anthropology and existential theology reveals, that youths and adults are products of culture, religion and belief system that they received while growing up or can get saturated by excessive peer-group pressure to become fundamentalists, psychopathic or even terrorists causing menace against human security in society. A glance below reveals the hot-bed that such evil disposition causes in the world, especially in Northern Nigeria.

#### **4. Militating against Islamic Fundamentalist Propaganda**

*Nostra Actuate* provided a template of relating with Muslims, followed by documents from SECAM.<sup>16</sup> As we know, it is expected by human reason and conscience that every religion in the world ought to maintain decorum and promote the reign of peace, mutual co-existence as these is the whole mark and the principle of respectability. Aside from his life, unfortunately, a small group of fundamentalists in each cell of religious expression does the opposite. Typical of the diverse religious culture of Islam, there exist many facets of fundamentalism that do not only issue death threats to many citizens of the world, but their systemic and dysfunctional religious ethic expel and expunge other people who

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<sup>15</sup>Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*

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live outside their mind-set. We take a plunge to peruse some of these myopic and evil concepts of religious expression by examining what Islam really stood for or against in the paradigm shift of cultural assimilation that is fast gaining ground in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and teaches her estranged followers a like-manner extreme fundamentalism in homes, communities, countries and the world over? If the question need be asked properly: ‘are these cruel fundamentalists all set in the name of creating panic, fear and death in the Holy name of Allah?’

Islam, as a monotheistic religion has many sects, with the *Qu’ran* and the *Sunna* (*The words and sayings of Muhammad not found in the Qu’ran have been collected in the Hadith*)<sup>17</sup> being the basic documents and sources of their teaching. Islam, as a religion does not have a central teaching authority drawn from a single person as a moral spiritual force like the Pope in Christianity.<sup>18</sup> In Islamic religion, the diverse sects and traditions, commonly teach authoritatively based on the *Qu’ran* and the *Hadith*, which contains the authoritative sayings of the Prophet Muhammed and other prophets. The *Holy Qu’ran* specifies completely the life style for a Muslim believer most observe from birth to death. ‘The Qu’ran is believed to have been revealed to Muhammad word by word, letter by letter. The Prophet merely transmitted it to other people faithfully as it was given to him.’<sup>19</sup> What seem to be different is the varied interpretations and application of the Qu’ran, which sometimes contains extremist’s views by the fundamentalists. The cells of extreme and destructive fundamentalism grow up easily in Islam not intended by many good and faithful Muslims. We examine in this paper a case of an extremist view on the doctrinal content of the Christian faith, presented by a Saudi Arabian preacher. This sermon recorded by The

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<sup>17</sup>Theriault, G., *Introduction to Islam*, Compiled and published by AECAWA Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue, Akure: Don Bosco Centre, 1999, 73; See also Kenny, J., *West Africa and Islam*, pp. 72-73

<sup>18</sup>Shabayang, Barnabas Sama’ila, *African Catholic Priest as Elder, Reconciler and Mediator: A Reflection of Christ’s Kenosis in the teachings of St. John Paul II and the African Bishops*, Kaduna: Publishers Benwood Graphix, 2017, p. 418

<sup>19</sup>Theriault, G., *Introduction to Islam*, Compiled and published by AECAWA Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue, p. 65

Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), portrays *maledicta* (religious hate), like this particular preacher declared:

Today we will talk about one of the distorted religions, about a faith that deviates from the path of righteousness... about Christianity, this false faith, and about the people whom Allah described in his book as deviating from the path of righteousness. We will examine their faith, and we will review their history, full of hate, abomination, and wars against Islam and the Muslims.<sup>20</sup>

The Christians in most cities in Africa, every *Ramadan* (the month Muslims fast) are used to hearing such hateful religious and fanatical preaching as above. It is not enough to insult and condemn Christians' ways of life and conduct, but even daring to attacked and condemned the fundamental pillar/ the Christian profession of faith as 'false faith, ... deviating from the path of righteousness.' These are the type of outrageous preaching that demonstrates lack of sensitivity and respect of the religious beliefs and disregard for the profession of faith of the other person.

This is one of the principal reasons why interreligious dialogue is imperative, to discuss and caution all preachers in all religions to stop the direct attack on the core doctrines of other religions in their public (liturgical) assembly. The Muslims use loud speakers in their mosques and other publications to attack Christian doctrines. These can lead to counter-attack, which obviously pave way for violence, conflict and war. As the Saudi Arabian preacher continued to lash out insults on Christianity, he attacked the doctrine of the *Trinity* and the centrality of the salvific redemption received by all through Christ in these harsh with clear words of hate full of evil intent, he uttered:

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<sup>20</sup>See *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, Special Report nn. 10, 26 September 2002, 'Friday Sermons in Saudi Mosques: Review and Analysis. Quoted in Wheatcroft, A., *Infidels: A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam*, London: Penguin Books, 2003, 2004. p. 324

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In this distorted and deformed religion, to which many of the inhabitants of the earth belong, we can see how the Christian deviate greatly from the path of righteousness by talking about the concept of the Trinity. As far as they are concerned, God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three who are one... They see Jesus, peace be upon him, as the son of Allah... It is the Christians who believe that Jesus was crucified. According to them, he was hanged on the cross with nails pounded through his hands, and he cried, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' According to them, this was so that he would atone for the sins of mankind... Regardless of all these deviations, from the path of righteousness, it is possible to see many Muslims... who know about Christianity only what the Christians claim about love, tolerance, devoting life to serving the needy, and other distorted slogans... After all this, we still find people who promote the idea of bringing our religion and theirs closer, as if the differences were minuscule and could be eliminated by arranging all those [interreligious] conferences, whose goal is political ...<sup>21</sup>

Though this very radical Islamic and provocative sermon affects and disrupts the flow of interreligious dialogue, yet it is due to these erroneous and false teachings against the basic tenets of the Christian faith the reasons theological insights into improving interactions with Muslim in Northern Nigeria is a must agenda and programme. We further affirm in this study that the moderate and orthodox Islam, have always maintain constant dialogue with the Catholic Church, especially on ethical and moral aspects that adds to the quality of human life. Christians and Muslims often agree on common issues at the floor of the United Nations and at the level of their various countries' Parliaments and National Assemblies. The Vatican and the Muslim communities the world over have always been united against the imposition of abortion and birth control by pills as a means of

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<sup>21</sup>Wheatcroft, Andrew, *Infidels: A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam*, pp. 324-325

population control. According to Onaiyekan, both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have waged a common ground war against abortion, the use of contraceptives to control birth rates in Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> Yet, the fanatical Muslims do not accept whatsoever a common ground for dialogue with Christians in Nigeria, as elsewhere in the world. This is pure fundamentalism against the culture of human security in the world at worst in Northern Nigeria.

### **5. Christian Theology is against Fundamentalist tendency of hate speech**

The task and mission of theology and theologians in Northern Nigeria is to mediate and clarify the true position of what are the basic teachings and the relevance and message Jesus Christ brought to the world. As examined above, just as Christians are enraged when Muslim's fundamentalists (as examined above) attacked the basic tenets of our Christian faith, so too do Muslims become enraged and violent when Christians attacked their faith and beliefs. According to this erudite Jesuit scholar, Mohammed, wrote that: 'the negative Islamic view of Christianity is due not only the Middle East's experience of Byzantine Christianity, but also to its experience of Latin Christianity through the crusades.'<sup>23</sup> This historical phobia and hatred of Christianity by Muslims is again added to the aggressive hateful campaigns marshaled against Islam by Protestant fundamentalist. Some of their groups, through their pastors promote religious hate in their sermons and activities. "Crusade" in its old meanings still has its public advocates.<sup>24</sup> For instance, a Protestant fundamentalist Dr. Robert

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. Archbishop John O. Onaiyekan of Abuja, Nigeria, in a paper delivered at the HLI/HLPL Training Workshop for Pro-life leaders, held at Awka, 28<sup>th</sup> Feb-March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1992, titled: 'Christian-Muslim Collaboration in Pro-Life Activism,' in *African Enchiridion*, n. 2268 (842), Vol. III: 1988-1993. This book opined that though Christians and Muslims have different approach on the issues of life and health, yet these common denominators area common ground to begin and intensify inter-religious dialogue on sensitive issues in Nigeria

<sup>23</sup>Mohammed, Ovey, N., *Muslim-Christian Relations: Past, Present, Future*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999, p. 34

<sup>24</sup>In 1919, the World Christian Fundamentals Association was founded to advance the cause of a pure Biblical Christianity. One of its progenitors was A. C. Dixon, an editor

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Morey (in the United States of America), a fervent anti-Islamist, has founded a Crusaders Club. Through this organization, he was able to organize them into three tier structure and demanded some financial contributions to be made by members annually to promote the Christian faith against Islamic growth.<sup>25</sup> All the three -tier membership have subscribed to the same statement of principle:

The religion of Islam stands to be the greatest threat against humanity that the world has ever known. I therefore agree with this statement and will pledge my support. I also understand that my donation will further the efforts of Faith Defenders to reach these lost souls for the sake of Christ. I stand firm with Faith Defenders and further understand that at this time in history, we are in a crisis of epic proportions.<sup>26</sup>

This is surely a volatile profession of the Christian faith, restricted to only a non-significant number of the Christian family who think that conversion into Christianity by force is the remedy for more souls to be entering the kingdom of God. The ordained Catholic priest, through the intensive years of formation in the Seminary, must avoid religious rancor by provocative preaching. We therefore declare that through the recommendations of the African Catholic Bishops after the First (1994) and Second (2009) Synods must create an avenue in Africa, and especially in Nigeria, Kenya and Sudan were ordained priests need to collaborate with Imams and Protestant Pastors, to organize seminars to promote religious literacy in order to prevent religious provocations,

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of The Fundamentals. Like the new Jihadists, the Christian ‘fundamentalists’ (a term which they applied to themselves, the Christian linked by a chain of personal connections, discipleship, Bible colleges, Bible-study institutes, seminaries and ‘crusades’. The name was coined by Curtis Lee Laws, editor of the Baptist Watchman-Examiner, Details of current crusades can be found @ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/crusades> Accessed, March 3, 2017

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Wheatcroft, Andrew, *Infidels- A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam*, 327

<sup>26</sup>These details are drawn from the Faith Defenders website @ <http://www.faithdefenders.com/> , Accessed, March 3, 2017

hate speech and violence. A practical solution towards reducing violence must be studied.

## **6. Ethnic Diversity posing as opposition currency in Northern Nigeria**

Culture, is a term that has diverse meaning, connotation and interpretation. In theology, culture is a *typology* – a type of thinking, a constructive analysis of truth and the application of the Christian faith content to a people of given location – African, Asian or American. In Africa and Asia, we refer to Inculturation as a culture of the assimilation and reception of the Christian faith, ethos and legal prescriptions. Culture, is equally a *Chronos*, a recording of a historical chronology of events documented in time and history as applicable to acts of faith as recorded in the scientific study of martyrology, patristic, scholastic, reformation and the achievements of the Second Vatican in Church History. This paper examines both concepts and aspects of culture as instrument of theology to promote a harmonious human security in Northern Nigeria. But first, the scenario is presented of the existence of diversity that carries in her womb the issues of bitter embers of hatred based on evidential proof of harsh slavery campaigns or the assumption of superiority of the Fulani against the Hausa, Tiv, Beron, Bajju, Gbagi, Atyap, Kutep and all the varied tribal groups in Northern Nigeria.

Today, Northern Nigeria is really the Tower of Babel in the geographical landscape called Nigeria. *Ad initio*, the Judeo-Christian Scripture has always referenced the *Tower of Babel* (Gen. 11:1-9) as the generic source of human division of languages carrying in their wombs not only complex diction of sounds, syntax and symbols but politics and ethnicity that covered the face of the earth. Illustratively, it negatively gave birth to xenophobic tendencies, racism and dominance of one culture over and above the others. As much as the above negative indices and polarities exist in many locations around the world especially in Northern Nigeria; nevertheless, we are aware that there equally exist in the public fora a positive modern register, which celebrates beauty in diversity of different ethnic groups as express in sports like football and basketball (World Cup), in cycling, in wrestling,



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in tennis and varied sporting events as can be seen during Olympic competition. But yet, in the world of today, the negative and ugly heads of racism, xenophobic and toxic relationship frequently emerge to destroy the harmony of human culture bequeathed by God. This paper however, does not attribute violence, hate, discrimination, oppression and subjugation of the human person as the dominant culture of one ethnic people in Northern Nigeria. But points to the ugly harsh currency of brutal force, militarization, violence, terrorism and kidnapping that is meted by the Fulani people against others. Gundu once again reiterated that the Fulani seems to claimed that they are a superior race, by far to all other ethnic groups and nationalities in Northern Nigeria. He sarcastically wrote:

All Emirs are Fulani, Most Governors and Senators in Hausa populated territories are Fulani. Most ministerial and juicy appointments under the current government are systematically handed to people of Fulani extraction who are residing in different states in the North. Fulani would rather support Igbo or Yoruba for the office of President for Hausa/Nupe rising to position of power and influence that will alter the status quo – Fulani will never gamble with this. As such, CASTE system is being run in Nigeria by Fulani against the Hausa.<sup>27</sup>

*Ab initio* in 1804, the Fulani created a harsh culture of superiority and dominance in leadership in Northern Nigeria by dethroning the Hausa local chiefs (mainly in the North West). The Sultanate and the Emirate leadership is purely the creation of the Fulani hegemony. The negative and toxic cultural infringement by the Arab-Fulani hegemony in Northern Nigeria; led to the hot-bed of cultural imperialism and subjugation. This indicator has led to the deterioration of the security network in Northern Nigeria to the level of being equated to the *Tower of religio-cultural Babel*. It has caused Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah<sup>28</sup> to strongly referred to the Northern Nigeria fast falling apart due to the hideous crimes against humanity of rape, kidnapping,

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<sup>27</sup>Gundu, Zacharys, Forty Fulani Facts Most Nigerians do not know.

<sup>28</sup>Kukah, Matthew Hassan, 2021 Christmas Message.

massive terrorism sacking and destroying people, villages, towns and properties of Nigerians. Thus, he coined the word Arewa (North) to be the toxic terroristic campaign of Boko Haram in the region to the falling apart of the North as *Arewa-stainism*, like Afghanistan, fell apart in the hands of Taliban's last year October.

### **7. Certain Cultural practices cause conflict in Northern Nigeria**

To refer to the word Culture or to its usage as a term in this research can be understood or is interpreted in two perspectives – as a divine or a human organon. In referring to the aspect of culture as a divine attribute that is rooted in the Christian Holy Scriptures, the best demonstration of this resourceful word and its interpretation is captured in John 1: 14, ‘... *and the Word Became Man, and dwelt amongst us.*’ This floodgate opens God's culture to become human culture, thus, guaranteeing human security by the Paschal Mystery. By the incarnation, God the Son took our human culture, nature, tribe and space. Intrinsically, transforming the frail human nature, culture, tribe and space to the stage of redemption and salvation wrought by the Paschal Mystery. The quest, effort and theological discipline is to ‘set the world afire’ with this culture of truth, even as this quintessential fact, faith and reality is the task and mission of theology, it is ever a source of conflict for other faith who hold to a different culture of salvation, seeking the truth and exploring this same reality their own way.

The Christian (divine) culture of faith that transcends human culture and civilization while it is transient, salvific and eternal, because of its very nature – mystery, is a source or causes conflict with other world religions, especially, Islam in Northern Nigeria. When Catholic and Christian teachings postulate and holds convincingly, that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and Life to the Father (cf. Jn 14: 6) and equally taught that ‘no one can go to the Father, except through him (c.f. Jn 3:16; 10-11ff); it causes conflict with Muslims who though practice a monotheistic religion but believe that God revealed Himself as *One Allah and Muhammed is Only Prophet*. Based on this orthodox faith, some Muslims who at worse are fundamentalist by culture of

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expression, do harass, oppress and even kill in the name of Allah because of the stereo-type and radicalization of faith.

Professing and nurturing the Christian culture of faith is an instrument of security. For the African person, there is no dichotomy between the sacred and secular world, they operate in unison. Matthew Michael writes: 'For most African people, the human life is not merely a biological entity, but a sacred and spiritual one. The human body is seen categorically as a shell, which spiritually housed the human soul.'<sup>29</sup> The symmetrical consciousness and force that governs both the sacred and secular space of African cosmology; is a vital instrument that enhances the security of life and property guided by ancestral cult and belief. So, when the human person, body and soul in terrorized by man-made-conflict, it is the promotion of the culture of dead, which is forbidden by God.

The global interpretation of culture as the harmonious promotion of human security, love and peace defers in nature, but the spirit is the same from persons-to-persons, faith-to-faith. The application of the culture of death as terrorism by Boko Haran in Northern Nigeria is clearly a drawback to harmonious conversation to human security.

Culture as evaluated above as an organon that is deeply connected to faith, belief, praxis and lived experiences of Christians who believe in God. The advent and emergence of Christianity in Northern Nigeria, through the missionary enterprise of European and later American Missionaries, alongside the introduction of basic Western Education and medical services; these efforts change the narratives, culture and orientation of the many ethnic minorities not conquered by Uthman Danfodio in 1804. Prior to the advent of Islam in Northern Nigeria, by A.D 999 in Kano, the Arabs, through the Saharan desert, penetrated the Northern shanty towns and villages, by trade and commerce, introduced Islam. By this act, suppressed, subjugated and oppressed the cultural

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<sup>29</sup>Michael, Matthew, 'African Sacredscape and its Ethnometaphysics: The Constructs and Dilemmas of Sacredness in African Popular Culture and Theology,' in *African Theology in th 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Elisas O. Opongo, and Paul Bere, eds., Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2021, 109

and religious practices of the Hausa people as being inferior, theirs, superior. This action meant that by 1804, through the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio, they took complete leadership (as Sultan and Emirs) of the Hausa vassal states under the guise of purifying the distorted practice of Islamic life in existence in these regions over 800 years.

### **8. Major Doctrinal Differences in Christianity vs Islam as Flashpoints of Conflict**

The major doctrinal points that serve as flashpoints of socio-religious conflict between Christianity versus Islam are centred on the doctrine of the Trinity and most especially, the incarnation. Islam is monotheistic religion, in the Kalman Shahadah she proclaims that ‘there is only one Allah (God) and Muhammed is His Prophet.’ while, Christianity professes in its scriptures (Matt. 28: 19ff) and in the creed the foundational faith, believe and teaching on the trinity – three Persons in One God. The Catholic Church teaches and many theologians like Leonardo Boff asserts that ‘We shall have to begin with the major theo-logical datum of the Christian scriptures: that God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in communion. The only God who exists is the Trinity of persons. The divine oneness is communitarian; each person subsists in total, absolute communion with the other two.’<sup>30</sup> For the Muslims, both scholars and all adherents, it is forbidden to address God as trinity.

### **9. Conclusion: Fostering the Way Forward**

Jesus Christ, in commissioning His disciples for greater spirit of evangelisation after the resurrection said: ‘Do not be afraid, I have conquered the world, go therefore, and announce the Good news.....’(Matt. 28:19ff) The basis for fostering our way forward in Northern Nigeria in these terrible times of constant terroristic attacks, deaths and violence is first to put our faith in God as the pillar; to fight for self-defense to protect lives, land and properties. But we do this by preaching love, unity, peace, education and cultural revival. We cannot allow the enemy to take over our cultural, intellectual, spiritual,

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<sup>30</sup>Boff, Leonardo, ‘Trinity,’ in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, pg. 84

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economic and social space by violence, hate, terrorism and culture of death. In theology, we cannot afford to use the same weapon of hate, violence, classism, terrorism and brutal force as the extremists (Fulani) enemy are currently doing. For Mehmet Ghadhi said: *'An eye for an eye, makes the world go blind.'* Constant quest for education of all the masses by the Catholic Church in the North, through religious and social interactions with the youths and leaders, through the drive for agricultural enterprise, it changes the focus of militant and extremist Fulani on the psyche of the Hausa, Beron, Kutep, Gbagi, Nupe etc.

In our conversation and narrative above we have discussed the unspeakable and excessive display of violence by the Fulani, bandits and terrorists which is a daily recording on main stream media and social media. This sickness has continuously drawn a line of ethnic coloration in Northern Nigeria which obviously cancerous and must be stop by every available means. The reasons this novelty work is made to openly encourage and continuously sustain a constructive intellectual dialogue with the government functionaries, the academia, economists, agriculturalists, journalists, the youth, spiritual and traditional leaders. The quest affirms the plethora role and the pluriform character that theology had assumed after the Second Vatican Council.<sup>31</sup> The continuous role, task and mission of theology (of Christian and Islamic) in Northern Nigeria is to sharpen the task of (both Christians and Islamic theologians) to persistently seek the pathway to peace, harmony and mutual coexistence. The continuous quest of peaceful co-existence of Muslims<sup>32</sup> and Christians in Northern Nigeria is the *sino quo non* for growth, development and sustainability in the twenty-first century.

### ***Constructive narrative for human integration***

We propose the application of a counter-narrative against the culture of death introduced by the Fulani, Boko Haram and the other terrorist cells

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<sup>31</sup>C.f. Austine Flannery, ed., Vatican Council II, *Ad Gentes*, no.

<sup>32</sup>See details in *Islam and the Fundamentals of Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria*, being an Internal Conference organized by Sokoto State Government in conjunction with the Muslim World League, held in Sokoto, 28<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, eds, Aminu S. Mikailu, Mukhtar U. Bunza, Isa M. Maishanu.

in Northern Nigeria. This organon focuses its energy on creating wealth, employment, education, social and ethical balance. At present, the socio-cultural space is distorted by the varied application and interpretation of what education is and what it ought to do for the human person as a child, youth or an adult. Bob Marley is famous in his philosophy captured years ago: *'Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, no man ever wins ... redemption song.'*

***Formation of Small medium market and Agricultural Cooperatives***

Presently, the deluge of out-of-school children and youth in Northern Nigeria is at a crises level. This serves clearly as one of the indices or the hotbed of conflict in many parts of Northern Nigeria. Thus, this research is an advocacy for the creation of wealth by families, villages, town unions and communities. By developing entrepreneurial skills amongst the youth, it will change the narrative of violence in Northern Nigeria. This comes from the background, that 'an idle mind is the devil's workshop.' In Southern Kaduna, beautiful initiatives have emerged like the establishment of 'Deekay Bakonica Innovative Initiative for Youth, Woment and Sustainable Development – being an Agric-Based Non-Government Organization' is located in Anturung Village, Takad Land, Kaura Local Government, Kaduna State. Another similar initiative started in Zonkwa is Chat Bayaan Agricultural Investment and Credit Cooperative.

***Promotion of Common Cultural Values of Neighbourliness and respect***

This can be sustained by holding just peace principles. The researcher advocates for these principles that promote the civility and secular character of the Nigerian state to prevail. Opongo wrote that 'these principles work together, and each has several practices associated with them.'<sup>33</sup> For example, Daniel Philpot notes that reconciliation is realised within six political practices: 'building just inter-state relationships; accountability for the past wrongs; reparations to victims,

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<sup>33</sup>Elias O. Opongo, *'Spiritual-Diplomatic and Just Peace Approach to Ending Protracted Conflict in South Sudan,'* in *African Theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – A Call to Baraza*, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2021, 79-80

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punishment of individuals who bear most responsibility for human rights violations; public apologies and forgiveness.<sup>34</sup> The harm the Fulani have and are currently causing in Northern Nigeria, will certainly take them long correct by mediation.

***A Practical Role of Theologians***

The role of theologians in Nigeria is to develop consistently a political philosophy to re-interpret, re-invent and construct the culture of faith base on radical content that Jesus Christ took his generation and audience by storm. It seems, in Nigeria, we enjoy ‘arm-chair-theology’ a situation where we only engage government when there is an infringement on places of worship, wearing of *hijab* by girls in catholic schools, the taboo of combining occultist rituals of the dibias with baptize Catholics reception of Holy Communion. Theology in Nigeria, even exercise is only based on ‘writing communiques’ (except John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah and Bishop Godfrey Onah) who most often steer the hornet’s nest. Many of us theologians, write papers, go for local and international papers, making our salient points quietly, or only reacting to what is said by Government or individuals. We need a more constructive and provocative theological and philosophy engagement to handle human security and promote the culture of faith if only Catholics and Christians are ever to remain with us and be proud that they have intelligent shepherds.

***Formation of College of Intellectuals and Think-Tanks***

In Northern Nigeria, as other parts of Nigeria, no doubt we have plenty, numerous and large numbers of intelligent, erudite and well researched scholars, professionals and consultants in theology, philosophy and other sciences. But it seems, there is no cohesion. If the centre does not hold, there will only be an array of display talents, with little or no effective intellectual machine that need to be a tower and a formidable force that becomes a ‘school of thought.’ The sustenance of the culture

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<sup>34</sup>Philpot, Daniel, 2015, *Just and Unjust Peace an Ethic of Political Reconciliation*.

of faith that is Catholic Christian, is the one that comes with sacrifice, determination, vision and alacrity.

***Eastern Africa are pace-setters***

A cursory and a survey of the high caliber of collective publications, cohesive mentoring and think-tanks coming from this region in Africa calls for envy, jealousy. Through their ecclesiastical structures, institutions, policies, the adaptation of African language (Swahili) and many organon and indices, they seem to have amass for themselves from Rome, America, Louvain, France, Spain and many intellectual organizations a massive influence of having a cohesive culture of theological clarity, consistency and force.