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RELIGIOUS FACTORS EMPLOYED FOR AFRICA'S EXPLOITATION AND IMPOVERISHMENT: A CALL FOR THE CHANGE OF STATUS-QUO

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ABSTRACT

The explorers that invaded the serene, gradually developing African environment imposed themselves on the African societies, distorted the indigenous patterns of development, and permanently implanted a system of perennial exploitation. These invaders wore the garb of religious deliverers, and engendered an atmosphere for persistent conflict, with the colossal losses in human lives and resources. In Africa today, immigrant religion has become a full-time work, detracting from productive activities, complete will all sorts of intrigues that engender vicious strife, leading to crises that end up destroying the few resources existing. Children are, on some religious platforms, denied requisite education, and employed as ready tools for armed conflicts and wanton destruction of lives and property. This paper examines how religious factors are deliberately employed for the exploitation and impoverishment of Africa, and suggests how this situation can be changed so that Africa, especially the Sub-Saharan region, can be lifted out of squalid impoverishment to an enviable height of development.

Keywords: Religion, Exploitation, Conflicts, Destruction, Poverty, Africa.

Introduction

It is already a well-known fact that the primary interest of Europe in Africa was trade, and this trade was not to take into account the future, development, peace and economic growth of the African people. Not even the fact that some of the Europeans, or groups within them, introduced some religious orientation, predominantly Christianity, changed very much from this objective. According to Forsyth (1977), Sir George Goldie, a British trader had, by 1879 "succeeded in uniting the British merchants along the coast into a fighting front, not against the Africans but against the French who were their more natural rivals" (p.14). Goldie thus applied to the British government to set up a colony in the region (later to be known as Nigeria) primarily for the protection of the British trade operations against their rival French. This began the story of the Amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914, into what is known today as Nigeria. Nigeria was not alone in this amalgamation crisis. Meredith (2005) explained how the Europeans played a game of chess using the African nations created by callous amalgamations, just to satisfy their (European) economic aspirations;

> Officials sent to the Belgian Congo eventually identified six thousand chiefdoms there. Some kingdoms survived intact; the French retained the monarchy in Morocco and in Tunisia; the British ruled Egypt in the name of a dynasty of foreign monarchs founded in 1811 by an Albanian mercenary serving in the Turkish army. Other kingdoms such as Asante in the Gold Coast

> (Ghana) and Loziland in the North Rhodesia (Zambia) were merged into larger colonial units. Kingdoms that had been historically antagonistic to one another, such as Buganda and Bunyoro in Uganda were linked into the same colony. In the Sahel, new territories were established across the great divide, between the desert regions of the Sahara and the belt of tropical forests to the South – Sudan, Chad and Nigeria – throwing together Muslim and non-Muslim peoples in latent hostility. (p. 2).

So, ironically, from that early stage, the present religious crises bedeviling Africa and preventing her from making any economic progress had been identified, and were rather deliberately infused into the very foundations of African nationhood. This means that from the point of formation, African nations were deliberately designed to be homes to foundational intractable religious rancour that would prevent them from making any progress.

Evangelism, Colonialism and Imperialism

Achebe (1958) has summarized his perception of the coming of the "Whiteman" to Africa in his well-chosen, lamentable words: "The Whiteman has put a knife to what holds us together, and we have fallen apart".

Achebe however has used the omnibus term, "Whiteman", to depict the different groups of Europeans that came into Africa with ostensibly different missions, namely;

(i) The Christian missionaries who came to introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ, and by implication, the Christian faith to Africans.

(ii) The European traders who came into Africa for trade purposes and explored all manners of items for trade, including human cargoes, in the inhuman era of slave trade; and who eventually brought in experts to prospect for mineral resources which they carted away for the development of their nations. It has been shown, (e.g. Forsyth, 1977) that it was these traders that invited the European governments to establish colonies in Africa, in order to protect, by fierce military might, their trade regions; and then subsequently,

(iii) The colonialists, agents of the governments of the European countries who brought together the already stable ethnic nationalities into political nation states with hardly any ethnic affinity or internal cohesion, and with deliberate amalgamation of hostile religious group, creating the condition for perpetual intractable conflicts. These colonialists were also responsible for setting up imperialist and apartheid, discriminatory government policies which kept Africa in a state of perpetual underdevelopment, slavery and exploitation even long after the so-called Independence of the African nations from colonial rule.

Some African scholars have already argued that it is an exercise in futility to attempt to make a distinction in terms of purpose, between the Europeans that came into Africa, stating that it is rather reasonable to take them as one and the same group of people using diverse instruments available to them to achieve the one and the same objective of permanently incarcerating Africa and maintaining her in a state of perpetual servitude, while her wealth of natural resources, including human, were being carted away for the development of Europe. For instance, Okeke (2006) was content to describe the groups together as; "The association of people with altruistic, materialistic and religious motivations which was to transform, for

better and for worse, the history of the peoples of the lower Niger basin" (p. 4). Hildebrandt (1981) quoted in Uzuegbunam (2015) has captured in more gory details the pattern of cooperation between these European groups:

> During the period of 1840 to 1878, while many missionaries had been opening up new mission stations in Africa, there had been other Europeans who were busy in Africa too. These people were explorers. The periodic reports they generated about the African terrain stimulated interests among mission societies, trading companies and politicians in Europe. Between 1878 and 1914, many European traders and explorers came to Africa for wealth and fame. Between that interval also, the greatest scramble for the African terrain by the European countries took place (p. 560).

The implication of this is that irrespective of whatever other motives that may have been used to placate the European exploitation of Africa; the objective was basically to plunder Africa. This plunder, sad to say, has fundamentally disoriented the African terrain and made it perpetually susceptible to further plunder and devastation.

The pattern of cooperation between the various European groups that invaded Africa is further captured in Kalu (1980) thus;

> Missionaries gave ideological support to alien colonial rule and assisted it in many overt and covert ways to rivet its regime of force upon Nigeria's people, also that they were guilty of frustrating the African members of the priestly class. Nigerians were not properly educated and they were denied advancement to positions of responsibility…education given was in one hand more literary than practical and so did not fully equip Nigerians to control their own destiny in modern world. (p. 196).

Religion as a Tool for Perpetual Subjugation and Conflict

Kukah (1993) has shown how, in 1803, long before the period of the European invasion, an Islamic Jihad of the Usman Dan Fodio, the Fulani Scholar, had led to the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate, and this has remained the focal point of the history of Islam in Nigeria. However, the centrality and dominance of Sokoto caliphate in Nigeria has remained an issue of debate. For instance, the people of Bornu Empire have argued that Islam in Bornu predates Sokoto by over seven centuries. Similarly, it has been argued that Islam had existed in Kano since the reign of Yaji in the 14th century. What is of essence to us is that the Europeans when they came to Africa met a thriving Islamic faith. In the case of Northern Nigeria, the Europeans did not make far-reaching efforts to vanquish the religion they met, as they did in other places, especially Southern Nigeria. Rather the Europeans made a truce with the Islamic leaders to use their (European) might to prevent the incursion of Christian religious activities in their (Islamic leaders) domain in the Northern Nigeria. It is rather ironical that this was happening side by side with the aspiration of the Islamic leaders in Northern Nigeria to "dip the Qur'an into the sea", by which they meant to convert all the segments of Southern Nigeria, (to the furthest ends of the seas and oceans) to Islam by forceful Jihad.

Agi (1987) has in fact argued that the colonialists that came to Nigeria met thriving religious and political structures in Northern Nigeria and not only worked so hard to preserve them

but also endeavoured to use them as instruments of control and exploitation of the Nigerian nation. He argued further that the disparity in Christian penetration of the Southern part of Nigeria and the Northern part became a yawning gap the colonialists exploited in exercising control over the region, as the people could not unite their efforts and resources against the colonialists. This disparity has continued to widen in Nigeria, on religious and socio-economic planes, forming the fundamental roots to intractable conflicts that culminate into massive bloodshed, instability and under-development in the polity. Advancing this point further, Siollun (2021) argued that religious consideration became a major factor in military recruitment in Nigerian armed forces in the period preceding the official amalgamation process, and prior to Independence. According to him;

> British officers believed that Islam imposed a natural civilization and discipline on Hausa troops, but were apprehensive about the religion's potential for being a rallying point for mobilizing rebellion. In 1910, there was only one Christian among the 3,142 troops in the Northern Nigeria Regiment. Mutiny by Hausa troops was less of a concern while they were deployed in Southern Nigeria, but might become a serious danger if they were ordered to attack fellow Muslims in Northern Nigeria (Pp. 109-110).

So from the earliest origins, the Western colonialists set out, not only to conquer the African nations they had invaded, but also to permanently set them against each other in such a way that they could never unite against the colonialists. And religious differences have been discovered to be veritable tools for achieving this internal dislocation and conflict. It is this perpetual internal dislocation and conflict that have continued to keep African countries under-developed, long after the Europeans have withdrawn, and the African nations have attained their so-called Independence.

Till today, in this age of extensive development of laws on human rights, including the right to freedom of expression of religious conviction, it is rather worrisome that some still believe in, and aggressively advance the tenets of forceful religious conversion. This is at the base of the far-reaching, irresoluble conflicts in different parts of Africa, culminating now, in the third decade of the twenty-first century, to all sorts of religious terror organizations. These religious terror organizations believe that only when religion is given a fierce terrific coloration does it amount to religion indeed. The proponents of this religious position work so hard to convince others to their position, a process called radicalization. For this reason, religious conflicts are now engulfing the world, and it is strongly feared that these conflicts might eventually lead to a war of global dimensions that will wipe out every human life from the face of the earth.

Intractable Conflicts

Northrop (1989) has explained intractable conflicts as conflicts that defy every resolution attempts. He argued that intractable conflicts defy resolution even when the best techniques are applied. Such conflicts are protracted, destructive, resolution-resistant, intransigent, gridlocked, identity-based, need-based and complex. The possible agreement often requires giving up some very fundamental values of the groups, and that is why such conflicts are impossible to resolve. Their point of emphasis borders on the fundament *raison d'etre* of the groups. Religious issues give rise to such intractable conflicts. Religious groups are as parallel lines that never meet. Religious maxims, with their absolutist and exclusivist orientations

leave little or no room for reconciliation. The instincts that bind people tenaciously together in a religious group also, at the same time, and by the same token, strongly alienate them from others. Religious truths are held in such absolutist and exclusivist heights that those who do not subscribe to such specific religious truths, irrespective of their level of commitment to other religious faiths, are believed to be, and treated as, completely lost and bound unto perdition. In some religious climes, they are in fact treated as undeserving of life, and slaughtered at the slightest opportunity.

In the last six decades, the whole of the African region has been embroiled in armed conflicts that not only impede socio-economic growth and development, but also amount to a calculated wanton destruction of the scarce resources available. The fundamental relationship crisis created by the amalgamations of diverse ethnic nationalities of pronounced religious disparity, is still bedeviling Africa till today. All sorts of national conferences have been convened to work out agreeable socio-econo-political structures that would be agreeable to the ethnic nationalities so amalgamated, but at the end of the tortuous and wasteful exercise, the people or regions benefitting from the faulty structures overturn the table and go ahead to perpetuate the existing exploitation. Imagine that for over six decades, Africa is still unable to resolve the fundamental questions of the pathway to econo-political stability and development. And there is no promise that the issues are about to be resolved in the near future.

Politically Independent, but in Economic and Religious Fetters

When we speak of Independence in Africa, we do so only in relation to the ability to organize local administrative frameworks. This is because in Africa, colonialism is perceived only from the perspective of external interference in local administration. But a clearer understanding of the real impact of the foreign invasion would help to explain whether or not the word, 'Independence', should in fact be used in relation to the African situation. First of all, in the case of the European invasion, the already existing stable structure of the ethnic nationalities was fundamentally distorted in order to achieve the lob-sided amalgamations in which human beings were treated like packs of cards. So in reality, we cannot talk about Independence without the restoration of the already existing stable structures of the ethnic nationalities. In the case of Nigeria, for instance, a so-called federal structure was created in which a strong government at the centre forcefully acquires the resources of the federating units, and gives them peanuts from their own indigenous resources. So how would one speak of Independence when one simply emerged from the expatriate colonial situation to a local colonial situation? So it is only a change in the nature and orientation of the oppressive colonialists.

Secondly, the exploration of Africa by the Europeans yielded the result of discovery of natural resources. Africa thus became the prime exporter of natural resources which are, in the main industrial raw materials. But why did African countries not prosper from the sale of the industrial raw materials to Europe and the industrialized countries? The answer lies in the balance of trade deficit instituted by the Europeans to the detriment of the African countries. Rodney (1972) has already explained in gory details how the balance of trade deficit created by the Europeans in their bi-lateral trade with Africans, among other detrimental economic maneuvers crippled the economies of African countries, rather than allowing them to grow at par with Western economies. Rodney has shown that the invasion of Africa by the Europeans

has engendered massive exploitation of the African territory and has created grounds for more perpetual exploitation. According to him;

> All of the countries named as 'underdeveloped' in the world are exploited by others; and the underdevelopment with which the world is now pre-occupied is a product of capitalist, imperialist and colonialist exploitation. African and Asian countries were developing independently until they were taken over directly or indirectly by the capitalist powers. When that happened, exploitation increased and the export of surplus ensued, depriving the societies of the benefit of their natural resources and labour. That is an integral part of underdevelopment in the contemporary sense. (p. 16).

Not even the claims made by the defenders of colonialism, to the effect that it created avenues for developmental projects in Africa, explains away the exploitative tendencies. Rodney has equally shown that many of the so called developmental projects were, in the main, aimed at servicing the colonial exploitative tendencies. Besides, many of those projects were established with foreign loans which were exclusively deployed to the payment of the highly inflated expatriate salaries, to the detriment of the local economies. That was, in fact, how the African nations began to accumulate foreign debts which eventually led to the devaluation of their currencies, while engendering huge debt-servicing burdens on the local economies.

In addition, the taste of Africans for foreign goods escalated beyond control. African income from export of industrial raw materials went into servicing huge import bills which are sometimes well in excess of the GDP and revenue earning. It was this situation that gave rise to huge borrowings in Africa, orchestrated by irresponsible leadership. Huge foreign debts became a new form of slavery or colonialism on the African nations. This is because huge foreign debt necessitated currency devaluation in African countries, until African currencies became altogether worthless. It is rather ironical that in Nigeria today, for instance, petroleum products are still high on the import list, in spite of the nation being a robust exporter of crude oil.

It should also be placed on records that the white collar jobs introduced in Africa drove out indigenous farmers from the farms to the cities in search of white collar jobs. Today, many African nations are far from attaining self-sufficiency in food production. The situation is even being worsened by the religio-political terrorist groups that escalate their terrorist activities, and prevent farmers from going to their farms. In Nigeria, for instance, effectively from 2009 till date, the Boko Haram religious terrorists have completely sacked the large-scale farming communities in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, displacing them from their communities and making them refugees in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. The same displacement of food-producing communities is presently taking place in the Middle Belt parts of the country, and gradually shifting to the Southern parts of the country.

The next form of colonialism in Africa from which there is hardly any hope of survival is religious colonialism. The Jihad staged in Nigeria in 1803 by the Fulani scholar, Usman Dan Fodio has not only established Islam in the country, but has also led to the displacement of the Hausa and the minority ethnic nationalities in the North by the Fulani. The intention of the Fulani in Nigeria as in other African countries, for example the Central African Republic,

is to use their religious and political will to dominate the entire country. This is what is behind the escalating threats of further invasion of the nation and sections thereof by the Fulani Jihadists. The immigrant religions (Christianity and Islam) have displaced the indigenous religions and permanently distorted the values and aspirations of the indigenous African people. They have fundamentally eroded the foundational basis for African morality, without putting in place a requisite alternative. Today, it is clear that the African has neither regard nor sufficient fear or trust in the structural elements of the immigrant religions. For instance, African office holders are sworn into office with the Bible or the Qur'an, and, for lack of regard or fear for these elements, they defy their oaths of office with impunity, and with minimum restraint. It is also evident that the only oaths which the African feels bound to is the oath taken before the shrines of the indigenous African religions. This shows that although the immigrant religions have taken over the public space in Africa as vestiges of foreign invasion and colonization, yet, the heart of African is still tied to, and still reveres the facilities and elements of the indigenous African religions. Can we then truly speak of Independence in Africa when Africa is still basking also under the terrific pangs of immigrant religions for which they have little or no intrinsic value? Or can we truly speak of Independence in Africa when the real indigenous values and morality of Africa have seen fundamentally and structurally eroded and annihilated, without an appropriate alternative firmly put in place?

What Immigrant Religions Have Turned Africa Into

Igwe (2002) has rightly observed that;

> Both Christianity and Islam have been introducing into Africa, mostly as instruments of colonialism, feudal conquest, and the destruction of local culture and traditions. These foreign religions sowed strife where peace used to prevail; the killing of the innocent had become part of the African cultures. They cite their "civilizing missions" without mentioning the local civilizations they destroyed. They are silent on the mass consciousness they introduced (p. 379).

This fact of feudal conquest mentality and orientation introduced into Africa by the immigrant religions explains the crises that Africa has been steeped in for over sixty years of nationhood of the various political entities. In these sixty years, not really much has happened in Africa except the exacerbated servicing of these conquest intentions subtly dominating the political, social, and economic landscape, assiduously serviced in the altars of prayer. So called places of prayer have turned into avenues for mobilization for one form of religious feud or another, culminating in unbridled carnage of lives and wanton destruction of scarce facilities meant to enhance development.

Kukah (1993) has shown in gory details, with particular reference to Northern Nigeria, how the religious platform is surreptitiously employed for all sorts of political mobilization and power sharing in pursuit of the feudal conquest aspirations injected into the polity by religious means. The implication of this is that the primary qualification for putting people into the exalted offices ostensibly for delivering quality services to the people, is simply their religion. This is the major undoing of Africa. In the developed countries, aspirants to public offices are assessed on the basis of their maturity, experience and pragmatic capacity for delivering the necessary goods to the people. By so doing, none but the best is placed in

position of leadership to give the people a well-deserved service. In Africa, the reverse is the case. Candidates are accepted for the exalted offices of service only because they belong to the cherished (immigrant) religion. For this singular reason, people who lack the slightest qualification for holding leadership positions are hoisted over the people simply because they qualify by the singular modality for measurement which is religion. The net result of this is that Africa, especially in the Sub-Saharan region, is crumbling economically. Standard of living is at the lowest ebb. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is at the abysmally low level. The level of indebtedness to the developed world is so high, and for that reason, the currency value is low. Large proportions of the national budgets of African nations are deployed for servicing the foreign loans. Servicing foreign loans means dutiful payment of the annual interests accruing from the loans, without any capacity for repaying the loans. In Nigeria's 2021 national budget, as much as forty percent of the budget is set aside for servicing the foreign debts, just paying the interests accruing from the debts. And yet till presently, more debts are being negotiated, not for embarking on any meaningful capital projects such as would improve the revenue earning of the country, but for servicing the recurrent expenditure.

In Nigeria, the religious divide and its coordinate feudal conquest orientation are multifaceted. On one hand, there is the escalating conflict between Islam and Christianity which is already attaining the level of full blown war, with daily death tolls already reaching astounding levels. In the Northern part of the country which has Islam as the dominant religion, the rival sects in Islam, namely the Shi'ites and the Sunnis are often caught up in crisis, often leading to armed conflicts with attendant carnage to lives and destruction of property.

In the South-East Nigeria that has the larger preponderance of the Christian religion, the war is between Catholics and Anglicans. The level of strife between these rival Christian denominations in the Christian dominated areas of the country is almost as vicious as that between Islam and Christianity, except perhaps that it has not started degenerating into protracted killings as often recorded in the Muslim-Christian conflicts. Here again, people are appraised for election or appointment to public offices only on the basis of their religious denomination. Their capacity for delivering the goods completely escapes mention. That is why Africa is suffering under the pangs of pronounced underdevelopment.

Religion Obscuring Education

It is only now beginning to become a source of worry to leaders around the world that there is in Africa a system of religious discipleship which completely repudiates, rejects, and is structurally and fundamentally opposed to contemporary education, so called Almajiri system. It is a system in which parents release their children at the age of five or less to become disciples of religious leaders. From this tender age, until adulthood, they receive only religious instructions and are made to memorize religious books. They completely reject Western education (so called) because they believe that it will corrupt their faith, being product of a civilization championed by their rival religion. Ironically in Northern Nigeria where this system persists till date, many of their leaders are people who have enormously benefitted from the so called Western education. And yet, quite astonishingly, they preside over systems that deny young people education simply on account of their religious convictions. The labour system established in Africa, which operates presently, is one in which people are appraised

on the basis of their education, (Western, so called). It means then that someone who has not obtained this type of education is not employable within the existing formal sectors of the continent. Even the non-formal sectors are equally driven by some form of education. The result of this situation is that the religious platforms in Africa, especially Nigeria, have been used to create large populations of people who are uneducated, and as a result not employable. Such people form ready tools for all kinds of violent conflicts and terrorist activities.

Huntington (1996) has succinctly argued that;

> Human history is the history of civilization. It is impossible to think of the development of humanity in any other terms. The story stretches through generations of civilizations from ancient Sumerian and Egyptian to classical and Mesoamerican to Christian and Islamic civilizations and through successive manifestations of Sinic and Hindu civilization. The objective element which defines civilizations however, the most important usually is religion. To a very large degree, the major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world's great religions, and people who share ethnicity and language, but differ in religion may slaughter each other. The crucial distinctions among human groups concern their values, beliefs, institutions and social structure (p.40-42).

Huntington here admits, albeit in passing, that religion generates such passions which, while holding some people intimately together, alienate them from others, to the dastardly painful extent of invoking the most savage instincts between like people of the human family who even share common ethnicity. But Huntington also unravels the civilization component in religion. Nowhere else in the world are people denied education on account of religion, except in Africa. And as already shown, this system is callous and lob-sided. The people who preside over the evil system are proud products of the best institutions in Europe and America, but while here in Africa, especially in Northern Nigeria, they recognize that the same Western education they have benefited from is evil and forbidden. By this, they amass for themselves ready human tools for violence and terrorism. But this is at the expense of economic growth and development because with such large populations of people without education or any learnt skills roaming the streets and not contributing to economic growth, the nation suffers untold economic devastation.

Religion Becoming Full-Time Work

By far the greatest challenge that faces Africa in this post-modern era is the attraction to religion as full-time work. The motivation behind this arises from the growing population of people who have made fortunes, (and who unwittingly flaunt such fortunes) made from full time practice of religion, especially Christianity. An increasing population of people in the continent receives a "call" everyday unto full time profession of religion. The economies of African nations are at the lowest ebb, and yet the major thriving institution in Africa is the religious institution. Religious projects, in form of meeting places, not even projects that render essential services, gulp up huge sums of money. In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, the major aspiration is building large auditoriums with sitting capacity estimated in hundreds of thousands. People in the industry, essential service sectors, production concerns, defence and

security are daily drafted by "call" into full-time religious practice. These days, every day, not only Sundays, is devoted to prayer; twenty-one days of prayer to deal with witches; ninety days fasting and prayer to terminate accidents, and so on. And hours of productive time are invested in prayer for one need or another. And of course, because this impacts negatively on work ethics and further reduces the low level of production, poverty in Africa is being further escalated.

The Need for Re-orientation

Africa is tottering on the precipice of total economic collapse, and painfully, religion is one of the instruments being deployed for the economic exploitation and impoverishment of Africa. It would be wrong to think that people in the developed nations of the world do not subscribe to any religious conviction. That is indeed fallacious. They do in fact hold religious convictions. However, in doing so, they realize that life runs on some vital compartments, and no matter how effective one compartment is, it does not compensate for failures in other compartments. For instance, no amount of prayer replaces the role of military devices and strategies for guaranteeing national security. And no matter how religious the armed forces of a country could be, they do not remain in prayer while the nation is being invaded by hostile nations. They have to rise up from prayer and go out to defend the nation.

Two evil components of religion are threatening to permanently wipe out Africa. One is the conflicts arising from religious divisions. The other is the toll which religion takes on the productive mechanisms in Africa. For both omens, one vital solution is radical reorientation which can most effectively be championed internally by the religious leaders.

Religious tolerance would obviously happen when the religious leaders themselves believe that even people that hold contrary religious opinions are equally entitled to life, and such leaders inculcate this understanding in their followers.

Secondly, African religious leaders must address this fact of religion turning into a full-time work. The religious leaders are no doubt the ones favoured in the scheme of making religion a full-time work. The religious leaders are sustained by the offerings contributed by worshippers. But what happens if the worshippers are at prayer every day, as directed by the leaders, and are no longer able to do their work? They lose their jobs and join the uncountable number of the unemployed in the continent.

Conclusion

Overwhelming evidence abounds to the fact that Africa is being deflated and economically impoverished by the seed of destruction sown through the immigrant religions. On one hand, these religions have remained the singular basis for all forms of armed conflicts and insurgent activities in Africa. At the moment, religious intolerance has provided the platform for all sorts of local and international terrorist organizations invading and operating in Africa. These terrorist organizations include, on the local scene, Boko Haram, Bandits, Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) and on the international scene, Al Qaeda, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) among numerous others. As inter-religious crisis are gradually wiping Africa, so are intra-religious crises. In South East Nigeria where there is a preponderance of Christian religion, the Catholics and the Anglicans particularly, do not see eye-to-eye in the political sphere. They have turned the political space into a war field, with nearly the same level of

vicious maneuvers that one sees in the religious insurgence activities, except perhaps that one has not started to observe armed conflicts between the rival Christian denominations.

The twin religious evil in Africa is that religion is fast assuming the status of full time work. While on one hand, scores of people are daily receiving the call to abandon service-providing professional duties to opt for full-time religious work, on the other hand, religious activities are stretched far into working periods such that literally massive man-hours are spent servicing religious duties with an escalating toll on the productive capacities in an already deteriorating economy. Unless religious leaders in Africa rise to the occasion and device a new and productive orientation to religions life, Africa may soon be wiped out through the instrumentality of immigrant religions. Indigenous Africans engaged in far reaching productive concerns while practicing their religion. The new trend in which religion now takes over the centre stage of life in Africa, without a matching impact on the morality of life is at best deceitful as it is counter-productive. The excesses of religion in Africa must be brought under checks so that Africa can also grow on other useful facets which must include industrialization and economic stability.

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