

Religious Discontent in Contemporary Nigeria: The What, Why and Way Out

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ABSTRACT

Present-day happenings in Nigeria are reminiscent of the fact that Nigeria, more than any time in its history is at a cross-road political disintegration or fragmentation. This is so from numerous perspectives. The present study focuses on the unending unrest arising from a strong root of lopsided religious configuration discontent. As conceived by this study, religious discontent in Nigeria has gone beyond mere imperceptible hate and disagreements between the two dominant religions in the nation, to include the outbursts of noticeable uprisings, insurrections, and terrorism. This study examines the origin of religious discontent in Nigeria from historical angle, as an offshoot of the 1914 artificial British creation. The study relied upon primary data sourced for from archival documents deposited in the National Archives, Ibadan. And secondary data which include articles published in journals and book chapters. Data gathered are analysed through the use of historical methods where claims earlier made by scholars are re-examined in the light of new evidence to confirm their veracity. The study found that improper management of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria since independence amongst other factors has produced the more recent ones which are more volatile than earlier ones. Consequently, the nation remains in a precarious condition with options of either preserving her nationhood or packing it up.

Keywords: Religion, Discontent, Terrorism, Fragmentation, Ethno-Religious Crises

INTRODUCTION

Current socio-political and economic happenings in Nigeria in stark terms are no doubt a reflection of not just a national edifice with cracked walls but a shattered national polity awaiting an impending topsy-turvy Dom.[1] Consequent upon the territorial crafting of Nigeria by and for colonial administrative and exploitative convenience around the second decade of the twentieth century, there have been differing manifestations of national uneasiness and contradictions touching ideological, ethnocentric and particularly religious manipulations and inconveniences[2].

Demographically, as articulated by a United States' Institute of Peace Special report published in 2015, Nigeria was identified as the largest country in the world with a population of just over 180 million evenly divided between Muslims and Christians along other minority religions which are basically traditional.[3] While the Muslim entity in Nigeria consist of Izala, Sufi, Women and Student's Islamic organization, emirate traditions and common people as well as Boko Haram extremist and Fulani militants, the Nigerian Christian element is made up of the catholic, Protestants group, the Pentecostal charismatics and African syncretism.[4]

Religious sectionalism in Nigeria is quite obvious such that it could be analysed through the nation's geopolitical formation. While the Northern states of the country are literarily owned by Muslims, the

Southeastern and South-southern states are overwhelmingly domiciled by Christians and the Southwestern states are occupied by a crop of a religiously mixed Nigerian population. In addition, that religion has become a quite profound issue in Nigeria since the beginning of the twenty-first century may no more be disputed. Recall could be made, when the nation was preparing for the 2015 general elections, former President, Olusegun Obasanjo with other Nigeria statesmen alongside public opinions called the attention of the ranking political parties viz., PDP (Peoples Democratic Party) and APC (All Progressive Party) to avoid choosing a Muslim and a Muslim, or a Christian and a Christian, as both presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the 2015 elections.[5] A similar orientation have since then been of great influence in the selection pattern of candidates for state gubernatorial election as it concerns the candidature of governors and their deputies. This is quickly cementing a trend that could be termed 'religious character' in the appointment of candidates for strategic government offices.

By this, religious emphasis has gradually enmeshed the fabrics of the Nigerian nation, a consequence of the nature of an ill-managed religious and ethnic composition. The case however, is not peculiar to Nigeria; it is similar to experiences in some multi-religious and political entities in other climes of the world. In the Middle East for instance, Israeli communities feel insecure by the teaming Arab communities around them; also in Northern Ireland the consciousness of dual victimhood has been torturous, with republicans and Roman Catholics in the north as one minority, "living alongside a Protestant and unionist population that is a minority on the island of Ireland".[6] The Nigerian experience of inter-religious collusion between the two dominant national faiths- Islam and Christianity has ended up in producing a trend of discontent. Hence, the religious state of affair in the nation has endorsed the adoption of a religious viewpoint to virtually all social, political and more recently media controversies in the country.

Religious discontent here is therefore presented as a concept that captures the manifestations of such collusion, scuffles and quest for strategic dominance of one religious cabin against or over the other. This no doubt, is the fall outs of the crackdowns, resistance and perhaps persecution of the Christian faith and more extremist trends of Islam continuities.[7] Arguably however, while the focus on large-scale discontent has been Islamic extremism, which has manifested in fundamentalism; Christian and traditional groups are strategically been denied the opportunity for political expression.

It is in view of this that this study considers the 'what' and 'why' questions as well as the way out of religious discontent in Nigeria. While the 'what' question attempts to explore a conceptual consideration of religious discontent as a psychosocial phenomenon, the 'why' question adopts the causation inquiry of historical and philosophical research in tracing the origin, trends and manifestations of religious discontent in Nigeria. The work concludes by offering applicable prescriptions to quell religious discontent in Nigeria with a perspective of mending the broken walls.

RELIGIOUS DISCONTENT IN NIGERIA: A CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION

Interestingly, as a human phenomenon, religion has stayed with mankind much longer than agriculture, ancient cultures and human civilization itself. In fact, religion as a concept appears ambiguous for its lack of precision and objectivity, perhaps owing to its deep emotional involvement.[8] That notwithstanding, religion has attracted various definition to itself from scholars, clerics and laymen from varying perspectives. In Paul D. Williams thought, religion is a particular form of belief system, the key component of which relates to faith in connections between the material world, and an invisible spiritual world.[9] Similarly, Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Harr explained religion to be a belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one that is home to spiritual beings with effective power over material world.[10] From an online dictionary, religion is conceived as a set of beliefs concerning causes, nature and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies usually involving devotional and ritual observances and often containing a moral code

governing the conduct of human affairs.[\[11\]](#)

In sum, religion could mean a specific fundamental set of belief and practices generally agreed upon by sect of persons to influence their ideology about the entirety of humanity, divinity and importantly an afterlife orientation. In addendum, it could represent body of acclaimed truths, dogmas and ordinances by which men are subjected to supernatural beings by act of their will and faith. Close examples of these depictions are Christianity, Islam and African traditional religions as well as Buddhism, Confucianism and Judaism elsewhere.

Be that as it may, to be religious indicates a set of symbolic forms and actions that draws man to the ultimate conditions of his existence. By this, religion establishes strong, inescapable and enduring attitude and impulses in man by formulating notions with such a sensation of actuality that behaviours and enthusiasm seems uniquely realistic; here is the psychosocial aspect of religion.

Religious discontent therefore becomes handy in a society or nation which is not merely multi-ethnic but multi-religious, aptly the situation with Nigeria. Invariably, discontent pictures a situation of dissatisfaction and misery arising from seemingly differing camps- political, ideological and essentially religious as it concerns this exploration. Now, from the religious outlook, this often begins with an imperceptible but strong sense of dissimilarity and perhaps uniqueness of one or both from the other and evolves to noticeable manifestations of intolerance, altercations, hatred, crisis and where not effectively managed conflict becomes preordained. The crust of the matter of religious discontent which is worthy of note is associated with one inseparable element of religion which as to do with its inherent sharp subdivision of the world as Takaya puts it. In his work, *Violence in Africa: Ethnic and Regional Dimension*, he described the clear dichotomies in religious orientation which are; the 'good' and the 'bad', the 'we' versus 'they', the 'saved' and the 'lost'; 'sacred' and 'profane' or 'brethren' versus the rest of the world.[\[12\]](#) This religious orientation of been peculiar than the others often result in creating sect ideologies of uniqueness and condemnation of persons with other faiths. History is replete of several cases of bloodletting atrocities committed in the guise of religious allegiance and prejudice.

Thus, the division of Nigeria to North and South which is dominated by Muslims and Christians respectively has resulted in reflecting certain nature of discontent that has gone beyond the imperceptible state to take an open and more aggressive paradigm. Hence, social and political issues in the country including terrorism and insurgencies are more religious induced than has been anytime in the nation's history.

TRENDS OF RELIGIOUS DISCONTENT IN POST-COLONIAL NIGERIA

While religious extremism is growing, in Islam and in Christianity, dual allegiance (syncretism); particularly of either of the two dominant religions with traditional veneration is noticeably the religious orientation of a majority. The religious division in post-colonial Nigeria is the consequence of the encounters over centuries, between the indigenous religions of the continent with the Arabs and the Europeans.

Historically, the religious discontent in Nigeria has its root in the activities of the colonial masters who sowed the seed of discord among the different ethnic and religious camps that makes up present day Nigeria. In 1861, the colonial lords annexed Lagos and continued to penetrate the Sokoto Caliphate.[\[13\]](#) The colonial masters brought with them Christianity and steadily acculturated the ethnic peoples of Nigeria. They condemned the indigenous religion of the cultural people and alienated them from their homegrown religious persuasions.[\[14\]](#)

In doing this, they labeled African traditional religious practices diabolic, demonic and an act of idol

worship. They further adopted a form of divide and rule strategy for their indirect rule administration in Nigeria like in other British colonies. In Nigeria, the colonialist pursued not just their interest of maximum exploitation but took up an aggressive approach to proliferate their religious creed through missionary activities, which would intensify ethno-religious and cultural fragility of the nation.[15] By this, before the debut of independence, the colonial government had not only laid the foundations for religious crisis in Nigeria but had successfully established an atmosphere of differences and suspicion among the Nigerian peoples and ethno-religious groups. It is the peddling of such ethnic differences and religious variations that often snowballs into disagreements and religious discontent. Besides, it is significant to mention that religious elements have been present in some of Africa's conflicts ever since pre-colonial times, just as European colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries gave rise to resistance movements that were partly inspired by religion – either by traditional religions or Islam. Hence, religions have played a role in various conflicts in Africa and Nigeria particularly since independence.[16]

Having shared in brief a historical background to the religious issues plaguing the Nigerian nation as a perspective to responding to the 'why' question under this study, it could be surmised that the origin of religious discontent in Nigeria is rooted in her early contact with the outside world up to the independence era.[17] Now, attention will be directed at evaluating other causal issues influencing the manifestations and trends of religious discontent in Nigeria.

Starting with Islamic insurrection, this could be traced to 1999 following the establishment of Islamic law in some Muslim dominated Nigerian northern states without consideration of the secular nature of the nation's constitution.[18] This rouses the disapproval of the Christian minority in the area. However, from the year 2000 trends of intermittent uprisings between Christians and Muslims began with an attendant death numbering thousands.[19] In 2009, when the Islamist group Boko Haram became more noticeable with its armed revolt against the state, insurgency has since then spiralled into an intense fundamentalist phase.[20]

It may be of relevance to raise at this point that some elites are of a different opinion on religion as the cause of uprisings in Nigeria. Such thoughts have fostered the idea that ethno-religious differences are actually not the cause of conflict in Nigeria but rather insurrections are more induced by the struggle for scarce resources and political dominance. This is corroborated in the thoughts of Andrew Kakabadse when he wrote that;

In Nigeria, the Christian-Muslim thing is the tip of the iceberg...What's underneath the water is a much more complex socio-political situation, which cannot be explained just in terms of the religious divide.[21]

While this perspective however appears rational and suitable because of the trajectories of conflict exciting challenges bedeviling Nigeria. It must however be borne in mind that the challenge of ethno-religious absurdities is not a mere fluke, it has been strongly fused in the foundation of the Nigerian nation even when the issues of scrambling for scarce resources and political dominance were not as much of concern and interest. In the same way, it has steadily evolved with the nation to eat deep into every stem of its structure. This accounts for why Nigeria, is considered the second most religious nation of the world.[22] Without mincing words, it's obvious that Nigeria is more religious than political because absolutely everything is done with recourse to religion.

Needless to say, the religiosity of the Nigeria nation along sectional lines (Islam and Christianity) have established a trend of discontent that is quickly drawing gratifications to one of what might have motivated Achebe's title of his Nigerian classical literary piece, *Things fall Apart*. [23] At this juncture, it may also be needful to investigate in general terms what the causes of religious discontent could represent. In other words, what are the common reasons for religious discontent? This aspect will be considered in perspective of the Nigerian experience.

The issue of identity appears fundamental in the Nigerian religious palaver. Religion is one of the vital

elements of identity, which is why religious discontent is identity based. Discontent often arises as a result of differences in identity. Without identity, humans would be unable to survive psychosocially and politically.[24] One of the characteristics of identity based crisis (such as religious discontent) is that groups involved are quite passionate about what they are dissatisfied about, so that nobody wants to think that everything they believe is wrong and untrue, that is why humans are comfortable around others who have the same views and identity as them.[25] Due to this, discontent arises not only between people with different religious belief, but also with those that are of the same belief. In other words, conflict arises within Christians of different denomination; when a denomination sees its way of worship superior, better or acceptable than that of another denomination. Hence, they try to protect and identify with only their denomination. Consequently, challenging someone else's identity (religious belief) could lead to conflict. In Nigeria, the religious division has generated discontents over several issues such as oil, land and political representation.[26]

Further, religion in every society serves as a source of integration for any community, and can also be a source of disagreement. This is so because religious beliefs are important in solving integrative problems; it legitimizes value patterns and suggests why certain value should be preferred. The existence of a common religion helps to hold together a group of people who might otherwise being competing politically or economically. However, there are always tendencies to feel that one's religious persuasion is true and all others are false. For instance, the selection of a presidential aspirant for political office is always interpreted in religious terms between the Muslims in the North and the Christian in South in Nigeria.[27]

More importantly, religious intolerance often presents a platform on which religious discontent thrives. Religious intolerance could be described as hostility towards other religions. It is an obstinate and fanatical devotion to one's opinion and prejudices with exhibitions of hatred toward persons of different beliefs. Religious intolerance has been identified as the major source of religious skirmish in all societies. In Nigeria, religious intolerance is noticeable in the reaction of citizens to fellow citizens who embraces another religion or renounces Islam; people like this are ostracized by their families and sometimes rejected by their neighbours, they often get exposed to the persecutions and risk of attack by radical extremist.[28] In fact, the situation has extended beyond inter-religious intolerance to involve people of the same faith having different denominations. A case in point is the incident that occurred on 5/6th January, 2012 at a Deeper Life Bible Church in Gombe when gunmen stormed in during a programme shooting indiscriminately at worshippers.[29] The Boko Haram Islamic sect claimed responsibility for the shootings. Six people were reportedly killed while others sustain injuries of varying proportions.

Closely related to the above is religious extremism, it is a manifestation of religious intolerance. Religious extremist takes religious conservation and intolerance to an unreasonable extent by manifesting violence against those who hold contrary religious views, even within the same religion as earlier mention. Religious extremists are therefore taken the position that, if others do not follow their ways, they will perish. They abhor the preaching of other faiths and resort in violence to stop it. They insist that their religious doctrines must be universally entrenched by brute force, while the political, social and economic systems must conform to their religious tenet. This description appears traceable to the Islamic entity in Nigeria and perhaps West Africa in history and in contemporary times. Consider a statement issued by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in the year 1997;

We are the band that with God's permission we kill and slaughter and we will remain so until the word of religion has prevailed and the Word of God is raised high. Let everyone know that what we do in killing and slaughter and burning and pillaging is close to God...we inform you according to our faith and ways: no dialogue, no truce, no reconciliation.[30]

The mode of worship adopted by some religion is another flora that has caused discontent among religious groups. There is a Christian tradition of organising open-air crusades and revivals on public high or

properties adjoining the high ways. Most of these crusades and revivals have been told off for obstructing vehicles and human movement for long periods of time. Many road users of other faith and even those of the same faith see this practice as an affront to their legal rights to the use of public roads and more as a demonstration of religion arrogance and insensitivity. In the same way, it has been an unwritten law for all public roads in Muslim-dominated areas to be blocked during *Juma'at* (Muslim Friday prayers). Accordingly, all intending road users that need to go through these roads on Fridays have often had the hardship of maneuvering their movements or waiting for the completion of *Jumat'at* prayers. These traditions have triggered religious discontent, particularly in places with evenly distributed numbers of Christians and Muslims. An instance is the outbreak of a riot between Muslims and Christians in Jos on the 7th September, 2001, mosques, churches and several properties were damaged following the attack by an Islamic brigade on a poor woman who attempted to cross a public high-way barricaded by Muslims worshippers on a Friday, the case led to the death of over 300 people. In addition, both churches and mosques have a tradition of erecting large and extremely noisy loud-speakers within and outside their worship places. This equipment generates intense noise pollution, which is not always pleasing to neighbours. Often, these equipments are used for vigils (all night prayers) in the Christendom and *Tafsir* among Muslims during the period of Ramadan and also between the period of 4 and 5am every morning for prayers.[\[31\]](#)

Another issue of concern has to do with method of evangelizing used by the two dominant religions (Christianity and Islam) has triggered religious discontent. Their approaches to preaching have remained mentally or sometimes physically coercive. The most visible approach to Islamic conversion campaigns, particularly in northern Nigeria is that of Jihad. This is epitomised by the Boko Haram declaration that western culture as represented by Christianity is polluting and worthy of spiritual purging. The disposition to enlisting conformity by instinctual force has created religious crisis which has transcended to violence in Nigeria. Some mode of evangelism by the Christians (going from house to house) has intruded into the privacy of non-Christians and Christians as well, which has also generated discontent. In addition, leaders of various religious groups who consider their own belief as superior to others are always likely to spread messages that breed hate and enmity towards the other.[\[32\]](#)

The use of religious symbols has also become a source of religious discontent and violence in Nigeria. Most Muslims insist on the use of *Hijab* in extreme cases. *Nigab Burka*, even when the regulatory regime prohibits their use. A case to mention is the event that occurred in Ahamdu Bello University in the year 2005. Following the prohibition of the use of head scarves by female law students in the faculty of law, a Christian lecturer, Dr, Andrew Akume, turned back a female student who wore *Hijab* from attending his class. This action drew the attention of the Muslim Students' Society (MSS) who mobilised themselves and issued a *tatwa* (Islamic Death Sentence) on the lecturer. The lecturer had to hide for his life. This act caused a great religious tension on the campus.[\[33\]](#) More recently, the religious uprising in Ilorin, Kwara State over the introduction of Islamic clothing for students in Christian established secondary school and the attendant outrage of the Christian community in the state reflects how religious symbols can stir up religious discontent.

Additionally, a case to consider has to do with religious nepotism in government. This is often influenced by the predominance of a particular religious group in position of authority. In many states of northern Nigeria, public funds are used in the purchase and distribution of food items and other valuables for Muslims during the Ramadan fast, the same government does not extend such gestures to Christians during Christmas or traditional religious worshippers during their festivals.[\[34\]](#) It is therefore not strange to hear religious groups complain of marginalisation in political and economic privileges as well as appointments to public offices. This has resulted in deep-seated religious discontent in Nigeria.

The media most times exaggerate details of religious matters and thereby fuelling the intensity of discontent.

Some news headlines are constructed in such a painful, sadden and emotional way that could incite a revengeful thought or action. The media have also made it easy for some of these emotive reports and images of slain persons to be transported far and wide generating intense hatred between religious groups involved.[35] Considering the smart proliferation of social media reporting on happenings anywhere in the nation revealing all the evils of religious prejudice, proselyting and terror, religious discontent is been intensified.

Apparently, discontents between Christians and Muslims have eaten deep into the Nigerian society and this can be attributed to the colonial experience, religious intolerance and extremism among others discussed above. However, considering the causes of religious discontent beyond the religious circle in Nigeria, mention can still be made of certain aspects of the nation that have contributed to the increasing trend of religious dissatisfaction and in general terms conflict in Nigeria.

Further, political oppression combined with government repression is another militating factor that fans the ember of religious discontent in Nigeria. Attempts by government to remain in power have seen them take oppressive policies such as making laws that favour only the interest of a few. In commendation, mention can be made of former President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan who resorted to relinquish power by conceding defeat following the 2015 general election. This approach to politics is not a popular trend in Nigeria politics, politicians will engage all possible means including corrupt and bloodletting approaches to keep tight to power regardless of the people's interest. In fact, Nigerian politicians who profit from insurgencies and crises in order to fulfill their own selfish ambition adopt religion as a tool to achieve such sinister motive. The knowledge that Nigerians are deeply religious has been severely exploited by individuals who are seeking positions of power or profiteering from the attendant crises.

Again, it could have been expected that with the evolution of globalization and modernity in the new age, religion would recede into the background as far as politics and conflicts are concerned but we seem to be experiencing a deviation from the perceived thought. Essentially, economic issues have also influenced the nature and trend of religious discontent in contemporary Nigeria. Even though with so much rhetoric on a diversified economy, Nigeria has not constructively given attention to developing a diversified economy since independence. Few years after independence, the country's economy was mainly agrarian, but since the oil boom of the 70s the agricultural sector had suffered productive decline. This in turn has made the Nigerian economy predominantly stayed on oil; an oil resources it lacks capacity to process. The economic status quo has only benefited a few classes of Nigerian citizens at the expense of others who had resorted to living in abject poverty. The attendant decline of investment in the education and economic well-being of people, especially the young, makes the latter vulnerable to religious extremists and fanatics who make gorgeous promises to them, whether in this world or in the afterlife. For instance, the current and challenging terrorist activities of the Boko Haram arose from endemic poverty and unemployment inherent in the country, an outcome of bad governance and policies.

IMPLICATION OF RELIGIOUS DISCONTENT IN NIGERIA AND WAY OUT

The manifestations and trends of religious discontent in Nigeria have largely jeopardized the nation's efforts towards integration and steady development; in fact, it has painted her unpleasantly in the comity of nations. This is mainly as a result of the various disagreements and uprisings which often takes violence and widespread bloodshed. It has no doubt left the nation on the verge of intense warfare and its collapsing walls continuously aggravated. The issue of religious discontent, if not well-addressed and managed, will further hamper the democratic and integrative heritage the nation have struggled to cultivate since independence, and probably result in a national split along the existing psychosocial divides; people and groups may end up finding their ethno-religious pathways.[36]

However, having captured religious discontent in Nigeria within the framework of this study, giving its presentation of facts and analysis, it is therefore needful to hand down some suggestions that could be helpful in resolving the national challenge. Hence, in a bid to forestall the impending implication of religious discontent in Nigerian with the object of mending the nation's broken walls, the current study therefore makes recommendations in turn below.

To start with, government should be alive to addressing such societal and political factors that stirs up religious discontent, such as discouraging religious nepotism and patronage in state administration. Religious and ethnic affiliation should no longer be considered criteria for appointing persons into public offices.

Again, political stakeholders at the central and state level should desist from floating public policies that are religious sensitive. Much has been discussed about the psychosocial element of religion and the nexus between religion and identity in an earlier phase of this study. Therefore, with particular reference to the Nigerian northern states, polices should be enacted with a 'secularistic' orientation to avoid aggravating the fragile unity of a nation already seating of a foundation of deep seated differences; for instance, the issue of religious symbols which the dominant religions appear unapologetic about, should not be floated overbearingly to agitate discontent at whatever degree.

Besides, avenue should be created at every unit of the society, including the family, for religious dialogue between people of different religions to discuss and negotiate not just in times of grievances, but also to allay the perception of differing religious and ethnic identities and propagate as well as proliferate one state identity within the context of national chauvinism. It is expected that such religious interchange should be carried out at interval. An effort towards this in Nigeria appears to be the establishment of a national ecumenical centre, even though the effort have not been adequately unleashed to experiment its potential in correcting religious anomalies and spicing up cordiality in the nation's religious firmament.

In assonance with the aforesaid, urban and rural commissions could also be set up to engage a profound inquiry into the core causes of religious discontent within their jurisdictions, in order to harness the benefit of in-depth diagnosis to understand the points of intolerance and adopt the most functional approach to quell, reconcile discontent and set the nation on the path of socio-economic and political progress.

Now, to Nigerian ethno-religious peoples, it essential that citizens learn to embrace the orientations of values that make for unity, peace and progress; such values include and are not limited to patience, tolerance, integrity, contentment and fair-play. With these value orientations, citizens will be able to work together with friendliness and tranquility regardless of religious affiliations or belief.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, contemporary happenings in Nigeria is suggestive of the fact that the nation than any time in its history have arrived a crucial point of decision making- either to preserve its nationhood as one political entity or disintegrate into fragmented political enclaves. This is so because of the unending unrest and tussling realities that have engulfed the nation which has taken a strong root in the religious configuration of the nation; hence, religious discontent.

Religious discontent in Nigeria has been conceived in this study beyond mere imperceptible hate and disagreements between the two dominant religion in the nation, but to also include the outbursts of the same into noticeable manifestations of uprising, insurrections, and even terrorism. It has also been presented that the origin of religious discontent in Nigeria is rooted her history, particularly in the aftermath of the

artificial creation of the nation by the British in 1914; thus began the journey of ethno-religious struggles and incompatibilities.

Ever since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the nation has threatened with several phases of tensed religious crisis that have birthed the ‘unexpected’ in the nation’s development process. More recently, the trend appears unbearable with the associated seemingly intractable menace of Boko Haram insurgencies and religious clashes that has left many dead and kidnaped. Consequently, the nation remains in a precarious condition with options of either preserving her nationhood or upsetting it.

On the whole, the point to state is that the nation is likely to be at advantage in preserving her united national identity than breaking it up over such challenge as religious discontent and perhaps others. It is in the light of this that the current study crafted out useful tips that could help to guarantee the survival of religious discontent in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

The Nigerian government should be alive to addressing such societal and political factors that stirs up religious discontent, such as discouraging religious nepotism and patronage in state administration. Religious and ethnic affiliation should no longer be considered criteria for appointing persons into public offices.

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Nigerian populace should be given orientation by existing body like National Orientation Agency set up to sensitize Nigerians along fragile lines like religious acrimony.

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32. Jakkie Cilliers, “Terrorism and Africa”, *African Security Review*, Volume 12(4), 2003.
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