THEOLOGY, INSECURITY AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT
No time in history had Nigeria waded through troublous moments than now, when it is sunk deep in the mire insecurity which continues to impinge tremendously on its national development efforts. It is indeed very sad to note that insecurity has brazenly defied almost all the containment strategies and approaches put up by the government and well-meaning citizens of Nigeria in the recent times. There is now an ever-burgeoning feeling of fear, anxiety, uncertainty about one's safety and safety of one's property and family members, among Nigerians. Our national integration and the concomitant unity in diversity are now seriously threatened. This situation is made worst by alarming increase in the rate of moral turpitude and lack of fear of God among the youth, who have been turned into evil tools in the hands of unscrupulous agents of insecurity and terroir in Nigeria. Thus, the youth population needs moral, spiritual and intellectual transformation to be redirected to the path of peace and responsible citizenship. The role of theology in this regard should not be underscored as it can offer our nation the much-graved solution to the malaise of insecurity and doubtful national integration. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to examine 'Theology, insecurity and national integration in Nigeria: Challenges and the way forward. It begins by clarification of key concepts used in the study. It then goes ahead to briefly survey the problem of insecurity in Nigeria; Nigeria's national integration travail, the place of theology in finding solution to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria, and theology and national integration in Nigeria.' It equally examines challenges facing theology and theological education in Nigeria and the way forward. The paper uses a combination of theological, phenomenological, sociological and interpretative methods to achieve its objectives.

Introduction

Nigeria is presently at a cross road as the problem of insecurity has seemed to assume an unmanageable proportion. No part of the country is free from the ravaging influence of insecurity which manifests in different forms, such as Boko Haram terrones attack, armed banditry, kidnapping, herdsmen attack, ritual killing, armed robbery, armed struggle for political independence, inter-communal violence, ethno-religious clashes and so on. Uneze-Amby, Ononogbo and Obunadike (2020) corroborate the above when they observe that insecurity in Nigeria is fast becoming a wildfire horrifically sweeping through the country with an alarming frequency and intensity. Furthermore, apart from the instances given above, there is general insecurity in the country arising from the activities of criminal gangs that are called by various names cult boys, area boys, militants and so on, who molest, rob, main, kidnap and at times kill innocent citizens on the roads, highways and waterways, making road and riverine transportation quite hazardous in the country (Briggs, 2019).

Nigeria, a country reputed to be the giant of Africa, now wallows in troublous moments, enmeshed in the sinister web of insecurity and political violence, which impinge greatly on its national development striving. The present situation has become, indeed very worrisome and challenging that Modumere, Awusaku and Onu (2020, P132) have to remark:

> *No day passes without one hearing blood-chilling news of scores of people massacred by the Islamic fundamentalist sect, Boko Haram, Hausa Fulani Herdsmen, armed robbers, yahoo-plus, Malaysian boys, Militant groups and so on. Nigeria is becoming more and more insecure everyday as on one knowswhat may happen the next minute, people now live in fear and uncertainty every day, including men of the armed forces, who are supposed to guard and protect the ordinary citizens.*

The general effects of insecurity in Nigeria has been devastating. It has caused a sharp decline in national economy, loss of revenue both to private industries and oil companies and reduction in Direct Foreign Investment (DFI). As observed by Enemuo and Eze (2019), unforeseen circumstances arising from insecurity and political instability Niger Delta Zone, have hampered government discharge of essential duties because of shortage of revenue from oil gas supply from oil firms, investors both local and foreign have become scared and certain capital intensive development projects cannot be flagged on and some in progress are put on hold. In addition to the above, Nigeria's public life is currently characterized by despair, despondency, intolerance, grief, acrimony and violence. Nigeria is now a country where peace is in dilemma, people's tempers flare without notice and almost in every public place argument quickly degenerate to insults and bitter recriminations (Onuoha & Amadi, 2019) our national integration and age-long belief in unity in diversity are now seriously threatened.

Nigerian youths, who are the leaders of tomorrow are fast being converted and used as 'instruments of destruction and terror' in the hands of scrupulous agents of insecurity and terrorism, who exploit their moral weakness, unemployment, poverty and illiteracy to enlist a number of them into their mischief-making groups. It is regrettable that moral turpitude and lack of fear of God and crave for sudden riches have increased astronomically among the youth population in Nigeria. The spectator index (2023) cited in Adeiye (2023) put population projection of Nigeria at 217, 079, 601 with the youth population accounting for 70 percent (151 million) of the entire population. When this number becomes vulnerable to to immoral habits, crimes, insecurity, terrorism and related anti-social behaviors, our security, national peace and integration will invariably at stake. Indeed, the youth population needs moral, spiritual and intellectual guidance and transformation in order to become godly, responsible, peace-loving and law-abiding citizens capable to contribute meaningful to national development, peace and integration.

The role of theology in this regard cannot be underscored as it has been an accredited intellectual discipline that studies faith, God, God's character and actions in relation to the universe. The wealth of knowledge embodied in theology is deemed capable of proffering our nation the much-carved solution to the malaise of insecurity and problematic national integration. Thus, paper, therefore seeks to examine 'Theology, insecurity and national integration in Nigeria: Challenges and the way forward.'

Conceptual Clarifications

There is the need to clarify some of the key concepts used in the study to enable readers and various scholars to flow along with the thought-pattern of the researcher. Key concepts such as, theology, insecurity and national integration will be briefly explained hereunder.

Theology:

Theology is defined by Wikipedia (2024) as the study of religious belief from a religious perspective. It is the study of the nature of the divine. Google.com (2020) defines theology as the study of God, God's character, God's actions in relation to the Cosmos, and especially God's relationship to humanity (that is, as it affects the character and history of human kind) in its responsive relationship to God within the panorama of the world and history, space and time. Theologians are committed to examination of different religions of the world and their impact on society. It goes ahead to define theology as the study of religion, which seeks to examine the human experience of faith, and how different people and cultures express it.

Migliore (2004) expresses the view that the study of theology may help a theologian more deeply to understand their own religious tradition and other people's religious traditions. It may help them to explore the nature of divinity without reference to any specific tradition.

Theologians employ different methods in the study or analysis of the phenomenon, such as experiential, philosophical, ethnographic, historical and so on, it is taught as an academic discipline particularly in universities and seminaries.

Insecurity:

Insecurity means a state of being of being insecure unsafe, unprotected and likely to be hurt or harmed. Jando and Ngutswen (2020) define insecurity as the opposite of security, a state of being insecure and vulnerable to physical and psychological harm. Achumba, Igbomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013), cited in Jando and Ngutswen (2020) describe insecurity as the state of danger, hazard, uncertainty, and doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, exposure to trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe, want of confidence and safety.

Uchendu and Obiozo (2020) see it as the feeling of being insecure in one's environment, a state of mind which is characterized by unsafe feelings, feeling of being vulnerable to attack and danger.

According to Madumere, Awusaku and Onu (2020), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Ojukwu and Amusa (2020) conceptualize insecurity from two perspectives, firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger.

Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety: Similarly, Anyadike (2013) describes insecurity as a situation where a person or thing is exposed to any form of danger. In all, an insecure person or a person subject to insecurity is not sure of the safety of his life, his property and all those related to him, found within his immediate environment.

National Integration:

National integration has been conceptualized differently scholars in Nigeria. The simplest meaning and conception of the term is the process of bringing together or assembling different parts of components of the nation into a single whole. Muhammad (2017) conceptualizes national integration as the process of bringing diverse cultural and social groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national unity. Adebayo (1995) cited in Muhammad (2017) defines it as the progressive removal of antagonisms and reduction of cultural and regional decisions and differences in the process of creating a homogenous political unit. National integration aims to foster a sense of unity among citizens, who come from different cultural, religions and ethnic backgrounds and engendering among them a sense of love, tolerance acceptance and appreciation of one another irrespective of perceived differences and establish a peaceful and united community of people with one destiny and shared values.

Furthermore, Akah (2018) sees national integration from a more encompassing perspective. According to her, national integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages, we recognize the fact that we are all one. As observed by Akah, the decision which was made by the people of Nigeria prior to independence to become the Federal Republic required that the people will be integrated with

one another for the purpose of co-existence, unity, national integration, and development. Awa (2013) in Akah (2018) sees it as a process of creating a sense of national consciousness, uniqueness of identity and loyalty among people of different socio-cultural identities – racial, ethnic, language, religion and so on, into a single territorial political society. In fact, proper harnessing of Nigeria's plurality and diversity to achieve stability and socio-political and economic progress becomes the nitty-gritty of national integration.

A Brief Survey of the Problem of Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity has become one of the most worrisome problems plaguing our nation in the recent times: Niger Delta area and Northern Nigeria are no longer the only places where insecurity reign supreme in Nigeria but its foul fragrance has pervaded the whole parts of the country, making everybody to sleep now with one, eye open as anybody can just be a victim regardless of whether he or she is a uniformed person or ordinary citizens. Pages of our national dailies are regularly being inundated with blood chilling news of scores of people killed by herdsmen, or number of communities displaced; number of school children kidnapped by armed bandits and Boko Haram; number of policemen killed and police stations set ablaze by unknown gunmen, number of buses and their passengers kidnapped along Lagos-Ibadan express way and along Abuja express way; number of churches and mosques burnt down and worshippers massacred by Boko Haram or armed bandits, number of oil workers both foreigners Nigerians kidnapped by militants; the number of oil pipeline blown up and vandalized by the militants, the list could continue.

Insecurity and its associated problems worsen every day in Nigeria. Ewetan and Urhie (2014) blame this on the government inability to control or regulate the activities of various ethnic militia, vigilantes, cult groups and secret societies in our various tertiary institutions and communities, political thugs sponsored and used by different political parties to achieve cheap political success and so on. These have continued to fan the flame of insecurity in different dimensions and forms in different parts of the country. The struggle for domination among various ethnic groups and between two major religious groups Muslims and Christians has resulted to persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes which disrupted peace, stability and security of lives and properties of innocent Nigerians.

Madumere, Awusaku and Onu (2020) observe that religious fanaticism has contributed enormously to the worsening security challenges in the country. Religious fanaticism, according to them, is associated with terrorism, religious intolerance, crisis, violent demonstration and confrontation. They describe Muslim's move and consistent struggle to push sharia law into the Nigeria legal code against the will of millions other Non-muslim Nigerians as an aspect of religious fanaticism. Almost all the religious crises we have experienced, including the current Boko Haram insurgency have their link with forceful projection of sharia law in the country. In their efforts to relate crisis of insecurity to sharia-propelled religious fanaticism, Madumere, Awusaku and Onu (2020 p 139) remark thus:

> *In 2000. Sharia crisis reged in Northern states, threatening the security, peace and unity of Nigeria as Sharia law was forcefully introduced ionto the legal codes of states like Kano, Sokoto, Zamfara and so on, without minding the implication for non-muslims in those states. The earliest religious crisis was the maitatsine crisis which occurred in parts of Kano and Maiduguri in the early 1980's which claimed many lives and properties worth millions of naira. Similar religious crisis took place in Jimeta – Yola in 1984, Zango Kataf in Kaduna in 1992, Muslim – Christian clash during a Christian procession at Easter in LloriaKwara State in 1986 and other crisis such as the violent clash with the Yoruba traditional worshippers and Hausa groups in Ogun and Ondo states in 1999 and Gombe sharia violence of 2000, which reportedly claimed 609 lives and over 1944 houses destroyed. A total of 746 vehicles and about 123 churches and 55 mosques were set ablaze.*

In Benue state, violent opposition mounted by the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, the umbrella body of Fulani cattle breeders associated in Nigeria in January, 2018, in their reaction against anti open hraping law established by the state government on 27th May 2017, disrupted peace and security of Benue state and its neighbouring states. The Miyetti Allah mobilized Fulani groups from other parts of West Africa in Benue state to fight against the said 'anti-open grazing law and its implementation: in the process, they killed 73 persons in their genocidal attack in Guma and logo local government area of the state.' Security agents in the state could not arrest mass one of them. The 73 dead persons were given mass burial by the Benue state government on January 11th 2018 (Afaor & Anaana, 2020). In recent times state like Nasarawa, Borno, Yobe, Kogio, Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Benue, Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi and others have witnessed insecurity and breach of peace resulting from farmers – herders (Miyetti Allah) clashes.

According to statistics given by the Amnesty International (AI) (2018) about 3641 persons last their lives with the three years (2015 - 2018) in the activities of the Hausa/Fulani herdsmen attack due to the government week security system. The prevailing problem of insecurity in the country sends a fearful signal to Nigerians as the government could not offer protection to the citizens which is its primary duty. More than 35,000 people are estimated to have been killed as a result of Boko Haram attacks between 2009 and 2020. Their tactics include suicide bombings, abductions, fortune, rape, forced marriage, recruitment of child soldiers and attacks directed against government infrastructures, traditional religious leaders and civilians (Global centre for the responsibility to protect, 2024) . From late 2023 and March 2024, high rate of destruction violence and atrocities have been perpetrated against residents of Northern Nigeria. On 25 November, at least 150 civilians, including women and children were kidnapped in coordinated attacks by armed groups on four villages in Zamfara state.

In Plateau state, similar attacks by suspected herders in 20 communities left at least 190 people dead and 300 others seriously injured. From 23 – 24 January, 2024 at least 30 people were killed in clashes between herders and farmers in several villages in Mangu and Barkin Ladi local government areas of Plateau state. On 3 January 2024, at least 17 people were killed and 42 kidnapped after bandits attacked Kajuru and kauru local government areas in Kaduna state. On 13 February 2024 at least 40 people were kidnapped by armed men in Zamfara.

Causes of the prevailing rate of insecurity in Nigeria are summarized by Madumere, Awusaku and Onu (2020, pp 145) as follows:

- Unemployment and poverty
- Bad governance
- Weak security system
- Political motivated violence
- Pervasive material inequalities and discrimination.

The above situation has continued to impinge tremendously on our national unity and integration because when things fall apart, the centre could no longer hold (Achebe, 1958).

Nigeria's National Integration Travail

Nigerian nation has continued to grapple with the hydra-headed challenges of national unity and integration since its emergence in 1914 via the amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates by Sir Frederick Lord Lugard, the then governor general who represented British government in the area now called Nigeria. In this amalgamation, different ethnic nationalities, different cultural groups, different language groups and people with different religious backgrounds were merged together to form one single whole and one people with one destiny and value.

This has often resulted to lack of trust and unwillingness to wholeheartedly abide by the forced agreement and marriage by incompatibility organized and sustained by Lugard. Today trying to weld together people's diverse cultures, histories religions, value orientations and worldview into one nation-state becomes difficult as their primary and original identities which they still cherish much seem to override national loyalty. Lyttelton on encountering the above problem while governing Nigeria introduced some principles of federalism in his constitution of 1954 to take care of the diversity of the nation.

Unfortunately, those federal principles did not help Nigeria which has remained unbalanced, lopsided in nature, where the North seem to dominate in everything. There has been strong and fierce competition and struggle for power sharing, which was reduced to a struggle for hegemony among the three main ethnic groups namely, the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. Those who fall outside the main three in the course of the struggle were regarded as minorities who were marginalized not only in the allocation of power but of resources as well (Muhammed, 2017).

The perceived differences and diversity have, today been the genesis of the nation's integration travail. As observed by Afaor and Anaana (2020), differences in religion, language, cultural practices and individual prejudice have played key roles in the lives of the people. As people of different religious beliefs, perceptions, codes of conduct, norms, values and laws, Nigeria's integration and unity as a political; entity has been continuously threatened.

The current increase in the quest and agitation for self-government or political independence among some ethnic groups is an eloquent testimony to the fact of a threatened national integration in Nigeria. There are in South Eastern Nigeria, the movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB), the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), in the South-South, there are movement for the survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP) and movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and in the South West, there are agitation in some quarters for the realization of Oduduwa Republic Championed by Sunday Igbogho.

Some of the factors threatening our national integration and peaceful co-existence were highlighted by Afaor and Anaana (2020, pp 159 - 163) as:

i. Religious intolerance

ii. Religious fundamentalism and fanaticism

iii. Ethnicity and religious bigotry

iv. Fulani herds men attacks on Christian communities in Northern Nigeria and

v. Discrimination and social injustice

Other ones include cultural biases, ethics profiling, disregard of federal character principles in making key political appointments and in giving federal jobs in the country, leadership incompetence, lack of patriotism, lack of fear of God, lack of love for one another, greed for power acquisition and retention, bad governance, corruption and nepotism, disregard for our various religious values or tenets of faith, lack of obedience to rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights and what Agunwa and Okoye (2018, p 6) describe as 'desire to actualize ethnic agenda'. The eradication or at least, a mitigation of their adverse effects of the above factors on our fragile national integration will, no doubt, pave a smooth sway for the survival and growth of values of cooperation among the diverse ethnic and cultural power and strength in our diversity as a pluralistic and heterogeneous nation.

The Place of Theology in Finding Solution to the Problem of Insecurity in Nigeria

Theology as an academic discipline that teaches about God, his nature, actions and how he relates with humanity, emphasizes on the nature of God as peace loving, righteous, merciful great, powerful, loves justice and equity, places value of human life and dignity, very caring and ready to give mankind support through his act of providence to achieve their potentials in fullness. It also tries to explain the reason underlying the presence of evil in the entire cosmos and final destiny of evil ones in the society.

Thus, theology has not and cannot lag behind in the struggle for the realization of a secure, peaceful and violence free Nigeria society, where fear of the unknown, anxiety about possible outbreak of war, terrorist attacks, kidnapping, armed robbery, assassination and so on. To achieve this, theology teaches the principals of peace and peaceful co-existence and conflict management strategies both in the church and the larger society. Theology sees Jesus as the prince of peace and that one of the core mandates of the church is peace (Jando & Ngutswen, 2020). Where peace prevails, insecurity travails, fear anxiety and sense of danger plee. Theology lays emphasizes on man's religious beliefs and teachings. Osaji (2016) expresses the view that religion is the sure way out of the nation's security and social problems and firmly avows that since religion is central to the man's existence, its tenants will help to unite man and uplift him spiritually. Sticking to the

tenets of religion will aid man to live at peace with one another and to shun greed, jealousy and corruption. Thus, the teaching on peace which religion (theology) takes as its central role is capable of reducing religious conflicts and insecurity which are endemic in Nigeria in the last two decades. It can create practical awareness that can bring to an end the wars which Muslims and Christians adherents are fighting in Nigeria and cause them to channel their energy towards fighting for peace and national security among the citizenry. Theology, to say the least, is a force in peace making within and outside the church. Theology does not play down the Biblical Israel type of collective national security that helped them secure themselves from attacks by adversarial neighbours such as, the Philistians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Edomites, Horonites, Amalekites and so on. Theology takes practical steps to arouse security consciousness of the learner and church adherents bearing in mind that the first step towards overcoming insecurity is being security conscious. Israel as a nation were also commanded to put their trust in Yahweh for the safety of their lives and property. (Deut 33:27). God (Yahweh) is seen as the eternal God , Mighty and all-powerful to defend, protect, keep and secure Israel from every attack from the enemy and preserve them from all forms of mishap. In Deuteronomy 33:27-29.

> *The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, destroy them.*
>
> *Israel shall dwell in safety along; the foundation of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, also his heavens shall drop down dew.*
>
> *Happy are you o Israel, who is like unto you o people saved by the lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! And your enemies shall be found liars unto you, and you shall tread upon their high places.*

Theology promotes human value and by so doing brings to the awareness of people that 'human life' is highly valued by God and should not be tampered with by man for whatever reason. No body has the right to terminate the life of another person. Theology seeks to humanize persons, making them truly and genuinely human creatures, created in the image of God (Imago Dei), and therefore possess a humanity that is divine (Dan Fulani, Nwadkwon & Danfulani, 2020). Life should, therefore, be protected, safeguarded, and maintained and not be wasted in the name of terrorism, suicide bombing and ritual killing, kidnapping.

Similarly, theology is built on the foundation of teaching and helping learners to understand God's nature, principles, actions and how he manifests and reveals himself to man. The emphasis here is on the inculcation of God's consciousness in the learners, church workers, religious practitioners and so on. God's consciousness has the capability of influencing individuals to desist from doing what is bad and holding unto things that are good and acceptable by God. Perpetration of insecurity and terrorism is bad and is condemned by theology. The fear of God helps the society to depart from the snare of insecurity. Proverbs 14:27 reads:

The fear of the lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Theology also teaches and inculcates in people the required values and moral capacity necessary for good governance and leadership in the society. They include, fear of God, honesty, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, humility, creativity, self discipline, good sense of judgement, integrity and so on. Theology emphasizes on integrity in leadership, whether in the home, church or in the society (Gbinde & Ukpe, 2020). Lack of integrity in leadership has been blamed as one of the causes of soaring rate of insecurity in Nigeria. Most leaders who fight insecurity at the local government, state and federal levels administration often do not mean what they say and sometimes do not say what they mean, just because personal moral weakness and fear. Theology emphasizes that for Nigeria to win the age-long battle against insecurity leaders should incorporate greater measure of integrity in their leadership styles.

Theology and National Integration in Nigeria

The role of theology in national integration in Nigeria cannot be underscored. Nothing unifies people of different cultural, economic, social and ethnic background like religion, which is at the centre of theology. Religion serves as an agent or instrument of social cohesion. Every religion preaches unity and social solidarity. As observed by Madukwe (2014), despite perceived differences in religious affiliations, and the

underlying politics, elements about in the different religions which if properly harnessed have the potential to support and sustain the building of a cohesive nation. Islamic theology, according to Madukwe, emphasizes unity among all irrespective of religious inclination Madukwe (2014) cited the chapter of Al-Hujura contained Alkhateeb (1970, pp 11-12) which reads:

> *O mankind lo, we have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct. Lo Allah is knower of all (Qur'an Surah 49 vs 13).*

Christian theology also emphasizes the need to live in unity and have peaceful relationship with all men irrespective of tribe, religion, social, economic and cultural background. Hebrews chapter 12 vs 14 reads:

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the lord.

Christian theology of love transcends brotherly love and spans into love for strangers (foreigners people of other faith and ethnic backgrounds). Hebrews 13 vs 1 reads:

Let brotherly continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Theological positions of other world religion, including African Traditional Religion, on unity, love for all men are so pronounced that they are difficult to be swept away by unfounded criticisms of denigrators of theology.

Similarly, theology teaches universal fatherhood of all mankind and emphasizes the need for global cooperation, integration, mutual assistance and support irrespective of religious affiliation, ethnicity, political differences and so on.

Theology discourages the maintenance and sustenance of those things that engender division, discrimination, suspicion, acrimony, reactionary response, prejudice and marginalization among people in the society. They are deemed to be breeders of disintegration, public uproar, demonstration, quest for cessation and political independence and associated arm struggle. Such things include but not limited to, abuse of fundamental human rights, oppression, injustice, deprivation, hate speech, fraudulent practices, partiality, lopsided appointment in the state and federal civil service system; appointment based on religious background, electoral rigging and related irregularities; political domination by one ethnic group, lack of accountability, transparency and credibility in the discharge of one political or administrative duties and so on. Nigeria's national integration efforts since 1960 have been marred by corruption and insecurity on the path of our political leaders who have upheld sectional and tribal politics among others.

Challenges Facing Theology and Theological Education in Nigeria

Theology and theological education have failed to win the intellectual and socio-religious interests of many scholars, students, parents, government, church workers and even ordinary people in the streets of Nigeria. It is poor perceived and rated among the academic disciplines that are studied in our schools, college and tertiary institutions today, due mainly to the fact that it lacks bread-baking potentials, its job-catching prospects is adjudged minimal and its thrust of enquiry seems only otherworldly.

Theology has often been abused by its lecturers, instructors, who use it as a proselytizing tool and for projecting and fortifying their church denomination, doctrines, values, beliefs, practices and so on which are generally accepted across the board. In line with the above theological curricular of most institutions are narrow and are oriented towards production of pastors of churches, active church workers, priests church evangelists among others. They do not necessarily make allowance for empowerment with the intellectual skills needed to fit properly into the favourably with spiritual needs of concerned few.

Lack of well trained and qualified teachers also poses a serious challenge to the teaching and learning of theology and theological education in our tertiary institutions. Most lecturers who handle theology in most theological institutions are half-baked, they are not really experts in the field of theology. They just jumped into it because of lack of job and desperate need for money. Therefore, they are bereft of the requisite pedagogic skills for display

of mastery over the discipline and for production of qualitative students capable of contributing to their own well-being and to the security and integration of our nation Nigeria.

Theology and theological education of some institutions in Nigeria are still incapacitated and helplessly silent over women inclusion in the priestly offices of some of the mainline churches in Nigeria. Women are still marginalized, excluded, discriminated against in these churches and theological orientation and prowess have not added to their personal values of their wealth of spiritual gifts, innovative ides creativity which always culminate in positive paradigm shift in every organizational set up they are found.

The Way Forward

In order to reposition theology and theological education for effective contribution to finding solution to the problem of insecurity and national integration in Nigeria, this paper makes the following recommendations as the way forward.

1. There is the need for the review of theological curricula of most theological institutions in Nigeria to make room for panoramic studies, especially as it affects challenging areas of national needs such as theology and security, theology, peace and conflict management, theology and stress management, theology and poverty reduction, theology and crime control, theology and gender studies, theology and national integration and so on. This type of panoramic theological will replace the old theology of indoctrination and denominational projection, mainly oriented towards the production of church clerics.

2. Theological institutions should ensure that only well qualified lecturers and instructors are employed to handle the discipline in their institutions. There should be the use of modern instructional materials such as, personal computer projectors, internet, e-library, textbooks, journals and magazines in the teaching and learning of theology in our higher institutions.

3. Inter-religious education and ecumenical studies should be fully incorporated into the study to make students global citizens with knowledge that cuts across denominational boundaries.

4. Theological education should be structured in such a way as to equip students for effective participation into the secular world and labour market after graduation and not only for ministerial services.

Conclusion

The need for security and sustainable national integration in our pluralistic and heterogeneous nation has, indeed, become an ontological necessity. Our contemporary educational system should be reformed to properly take care of our current challenges as a nation, such as insecurity, widespread poverty, unemployment, political instability, poor leadership ethnics, corruption, ethnic-religious crises, violence against women, child-abuse, cultism, environmental degradation and the host of other national challenges.

The nation's corporate existence since 1914 amalgamation by sir Frederick Lugard has been under serious threat as different cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic group concatenated by Lugard's marriage of convenience from time to time, seek to identify with their original identity which held in higher esteem than the national identity. There is the need for new mindsets among the entire citizenry to enable them appreciate and value themselves, irrespective of faults, difference in tribe, culture, language, values and norms. Theology is indeed the answer to the above need for new national mindset as it is capable of mending the minds of citizens through inculcation of God's consciousness, God's type of love, unity. Love, brotherhood and inter-faith cooperation and others in the citizens to enable use achieve national security and national integration in a rapidly globalizing age.

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