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# Philosophical Papers and Reviews

June 2019  
ISSN: 2141-663X  
DOI: 10.5897/PPR  
[www.academicjournals.org](http://www.academicjournals.org)



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*Full Length Research paper*

# **Existential phenomenology of religious liberty and security in religion and politics: A case study of Nigeria**

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Received 3 March, 2019; Accepted 2 May, 2019

**That peace and justice is the solution to the flux and insecurity in the church and in the state cannot be denied. In fact, it is exigent to ask this question thus: can there be peace and justice in the religious institution in the first instance, without religious liberty and of course, civil liberty untwisted? There is no gain-saying the fact that sacred and secular histories have tended to answer this question in a clear and precise illumination. In answering the aforementioned question as a stimulus to conversation and discussion on this topic we have to remind ourselves that this is a question that had been tinkered about and had received rigorous and provoking thoughts in the evolution of mankind. Religious bigotry is a global flux and spike leading to social, ethnic, racist, political and religious wars of which the insecurity in the religious institution and among nation-states are effects. Global insight into what we have called Adamic crisis or flux must begin with appreciation of the historicist and phenomenological trajectory of its essence as well as the ontology and theodicy of its origin. In this essay religious liberty as far as insecurity, injustice and instability in the religious institution and in the state are concerned, is a prime liberty among civil liberties, and as far as religion has become interlaced with social and political generation and development, religious liberty must not be compromised.**

**Key words:** Existential phenomenology, religious liberty, security, religion, politics.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The first response to this question of religious liberty was when Jesus Christ, acclaimed by Christians all over the world as the Lord and father, admonished the Pharisees thus: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" Mk. 12:17. This message was at the point of conflict between the sacred and the secular and by implication, addresses the question of liberty in general. This predated the Enlightenment's Social Contract Theory when civil society emerged through the philosophies of Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679), John Locke (1632 - 1704) and J. J. Rousseau (1712 - 1778) as well as the interventionist

theory of social and political liberty by John Shart Mills (1806 - 1873).

One solemn lesson from Jesus Christ's admonition that one should give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar is that religious liberty is the King of all liberties, and of course, a prime liberty in the charter of the United Nations. Extemporaneous, there cannot be peace and justice qua security without religious liberty qua civil liberty. In the same vain, church history teaches us that religious conflict has always been associated with political conflicts from the early religious institution through the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Modern to the contemporary

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time. Religious liberty is, therefore, the essence of peace and justice, the catalyst for security and panacea for insecurity in the religious institution and the state of Nigeria.

A watershed of insecurity has been reached in the history of man with the emergence and proliferation of terrorism and insurgency. Terrorism is a political act ordinarily committed by an organized group, which involves the intentional killing or other severe damage to the property of non-combatants or the threat of the same" (Coady, 1985: 52). It is unfortunate that in contemporary world terrorism through science has become a partner with both religious freedom and religious intolerance in decapitating mankind. This is critical to human existence.

Since the creation episode the interlocking phenomenon has been the question of truth in all human encumbrances and predicament. Contemporary philosophy which is a confluence of science and the transcendental has subjected all branches of knowledge to the critical cynosure of phenomenology. From Brentano's dissertation, "on the manifold meaning of Being since Aristotle" and Edmund Husserl's "logical investigations" to Martin Heidegger's Existential Phenomenology, "the Quest for Being", Phenomenology as "fundamental science", "transcendental subjectivity" and "experiences of consciousness" has become a "thematic realm of investigating the structure of acts of experience together with the investigation of the "object's experienced" (Kaufmann, 1956: 237). Martin Heidegger's phenomenological and ontological thinking is the cultivation of meditative thinking in place of calculative rationality that promotes science at the expense of peace on the planet earth. This is a phenomenological attitude for unearthing the truth about human existence from Adamic disobedience to the present dysfunctional human society.

#### **HUMAN PREDICAMENT AND GLOBAL INSECURITY FROM THE BIBLICAL AND QURANIC PERSPECTIVES**

Jesus Christ would not have been concerned with the issue of Caesar and other ethical and moral issues but for the historical consequences of sin and disobedience that predated him and other prophets like Muhammad. And analysis, explanation or understanding of man, being and history has always been better undertaken as a phenomenological and ontological subject matter because of the undergirding necessities and possibilities. That is why theologians would concur in interpreting human predicament as being caused by existential and phenomenological ontology of "Adam exists in the mind of man". And because Adam exists in our minds, "it seems that there is a phenomenological road map from the Abrahamic tradition to the present crisis ridden world order which can be called Adamic plague or crisis. To

distilla new order of justice fundamental enough for the renewal of ethical life in a globalized world, we should appreciate the Adam in our existence, its phenomenology and the consequent pathology of sin and disobedience" (Dukor, *Ibid*).

Nigeria is under the heavy weight of Adamic plague or crisis which renewal of ethnical life is the only recipe for peace, justice and security. The message of redemption and salvation is predicated on humanity's descent into precipice caused by the Adamic compromise. That is why ancient and early Christian theologies explain the current human misery and insecurity as episodes of unnatural actions, but reducible to human nature, intuition and wisdom not found in science and technology. Also in African theodicy, unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles (Parrinder, 1954: 28).

Scripture has it that when God formed man from the ground, he warned him that of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, "ye shall not eat of it, neither ye touch it, lest ye die" (Gen. 3:3). But a serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made..." (Gen. 3:1). And the serpent said unto the woman "ye shall not surely die..." (Gen. 3:4-5). The woman obeyed the serpent and ate of the fruit of knowledge and evil but also gave same to the husband. God therefore, cursed serpent and man. A version of this creation story is told by the Margi of Nigeria that in the past, the sky could be touched and there was no need to work because God filled men's calabashes without their working. Unfortunately, a woman put out a dirty calabash and infected the finger of one of the sky children. God, out of anger, returned to a distant place (Parrinder, 1954: 40). Man since then has been in the regime of sorrow as well as in insecurity and injustice that requires social contract, civil society, redemption and salvation. The Holy Bible and the Holy Quran agree that Adam and Eve were forbidden to take fruit in the Garden of Eden. But according to Quran, Adam and Eve did not intentionally transgress the law. They were seduced by Satan. Holy Quran says; "but Satan caused them both to sleep (Quran, 2:37).

The diachronic and synchronic imperatives of human salvation yield to the sacred and the secular which Jesus Christ bifurcated in an answer to the question of Caesar's tax, and ineluctably separated the state and religion. While theologians are sustaining the message of Jesus Christ with regard to the sacred heart of humanity, modern and contemporary philosophers are grappling the issue from the secular and state binoculars in form of social contract and existentialist theories. In other words, Sin and disobedience have not only created phenomenological and existential quagmires and pathologies in individual predicates and group affairs in the world but has also influenced human history so negatively for it to be called providential destiny as an aspect of philosophy of history or Hegelian philosophy of history.

Osun (1996) in his paper “women in Aladura Churches: A socio-religious perspective” corroborated with the thesis on human predicament as a consequence of the original sin thus: “existentially, the private environment in which Adam and Eve were located, that is, the Garden of Eden, was a Utopia on earth, an extension of God’s kingdom making it possible for God and man to share fellowship and communion on daily or regular basis. There was spiritual bliss or equilibrium which further informed man’s domestic peace. But this relational arrangement placed an obligation upon man to abstain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The consequence for man of contravening God’s law was loss of unity, separation or estrangement” (Osun, 1996: 43). Extant in this Osun’s analysis shows obedience to God as the condition for peace and justice. It is also the condition for security in the church and the state as well religious liberty. Generally, it is an existential insight into the problem of humanity. In order to prove that corruption immediately followed the Garden of Eden tragedy, Nnaji and Andy Philip traced the English word, immoral” to the Hebrew Old Testament “Amora” which means ancient human barbaric and homo-sexual abomination transliterated as Gomorrah” (Nnaji and Andy Philip, 2016-2018:11). Perhaps, it is on this ground that the modern German philosopher, George Hegel would unify the secular and the sacred in the state as invisible hand of the absolute spirit” in the quest for man’s redemption. Hence, for the church and the state, as much as the Nigerian condition, insecurity and conflict are historically becoming.

### **SPIKE IN THE HISTORIES OF CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM**

The consequence of the original sin in the Garden of Eden started manifesting in the flux and conflicts within and outside the church and mosque severally and collectively. Church history would subscribe that the immensity and deluge of large scale events and evils in the world are a shadow of the event at the Garden of Eden despite the intervention of the holy prophets - Christ and Mohammad. Before and after 500AD till date, it is the same story of conflict within and outside holy places which is construed as insecurity in the Church or Mosque and the state. Islam has to be addressed because it is the biggest problem of the church in Nigeria.

That is why extant histories of the two religions from early church (0 and 500 AD) through middle ages (500 - 1500AD), the reformation and the early modern (1500 - 1800AD) to the contemporary (1800 - date) are significant as much has been insouciantly left to be desired.

From the history of the early church, that is, before 500AD, persecution of Christians was widespread and did not even begin with the Roman authorities. The New Testament writings tell of fratricidal strife between Jesus

and Christians and the new dimension to this has become what is today seen as strife and spike within the church and among religions in Nigeria. Beginning as despised, illicit religious sect Christianity endured 300 years of hostility to emerge as the dominant force in the Roman Empire. However, at the margins of state hostility to Christianity, as reported by the New Testament writings, were fratricidal strife between Jesus and Christians. When Jesus stridently extolled the virtue of love or *agape*, it was to endow unity among Christians. This is because in the midst of chaos, God, in his unfathomable wisdom, has restored His church on earth at the second out pour of the spirit. And since the coming into being the church has gone through a difficult period of laying the foundations of the extant unity or *agape* of the church. Therefore, the early church is for the state and the state for the church as declared by the stand of the Founder of Christianity in his “giving to Caesar what is Caesar’s”. This is extemporary sacred and secular condition of security for the individual, the church and the state in post-Adamic world.

Despite Jesus’ recipes for peace and unity in the church and the state the early church expected suffering from the inherent regime or world of post Adam and Eve’s sin of disobedience, exemplified by Jesus Christ dying on the cross, so there was no higher honour than to imitate the death through martyrdom. Since then, martyrdom has become a mortal symbol of conflict and insecurity in the church and in the state. “out of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ, only John died a natural death. The others were killed as martyrs. The church suffered persecution until the church in Rome enjoyed some relative peace during the reign of Emperor Constantine (c. 280-337)” (Fr. Omonokhua, 2018: 18).

Religious liberty extolled by Jesus Christ in the Caesar case remain an immortal reference in finding solutions to human predicament, mortality and social morbidity. The church history has it that the Roman religion was not intolerant, but in the early second century the Roman governor of Bithynia had no hesitation ordering for immediate execution of those who had been denounced as being Christians. The name Christianity alone was a sufficient death warrant: that means that in the early period the state had become conscious of its interest in so far as religion is part of the superstructure of the society and the state. It is in this context that Christian theology become concerned with the question of faith and freedom.

Religious liberty, as an issue in Christian theology and consciousness, a constant variable in the Garden of Eden and a normative traducer raised by Jesus to settle the Burt in the turf of conflict between the state and the church over Caesar’s question, is seemingly so historically and controversially ubiquitous to become an underlining provocative threat to human existence. This Adamic morbidity and mortality is so obvious that the schisms of the middle age and especially the protestant

reformation generated severe conflicts among Christian denominations to the point of persecuting one another. The fact that this conflict within the domain of Christianity is a gloomy indication that Christian theology is failing in its primary concern about God, is a concern which according to Ogden is that the issue of “faith and freedom of understanding how faith in the God whom we encounter in Jesus Christ, is itself the answer to the question of human liberation” (Ogden, 2005: 17). In the same vein, Islam is losing the grip of synthesizing faith and freedom on the social domain without also Muhammed as the answer to the question of liberal theology, the more reason there are splinter sects warring one another over sectarian and scriptural issues in Islam.

If sectarian conflicts abound in the main orthodox religions in the world, their rapprochement or agreement on one and only one encounter with one and only one God would be a herculean task which theology of liberation would be the solution. Also the history and ascendancy of Islam is synonymous with her acerbic interaction with Christianity, despite the fact that the founders were of the descendant of Abraham and from the Middle East or desert region of the world. For example, Jerusalem failed to the Muslim military in 638 AD. In 717 AD, Caliph Umar II began general persecution of non-Muslims. In 807 AD Caliph Haron al-Rashid ordered destruction of all new churches, to mention but a few.

It is not only strange but also phenomenological that two religions with the same parentage and in the same region of birth are entangled in the viral contradictions of mutual distrust and mutual misunderstanding; even when the founders did not show any human and spiritual violence against each other. What would later become another manifestation of Adamic consequence of sin and disobedience is the emergence of states and politics along these religious orders – Christian states as western civilization and Islamic states as Islamic civilization which is today ravaging the Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, Iraq and so on. In these countries, the problem is the freedom of secularism or the power of religious fundamentalism. Secularism is based on humanism which perceives the individual human being as something over and above the entangling dogmas of race and religion” (Dukor, 2007: 23). However, some humanism would have been interjected in the face of the growth of contemporary philosophy and science, historical consciousness and liberal theology to curb extremisms through social Christianity and Islam as well as social gospel and Quran. The apparent failure of this social action means, religious intolerance, dogmatism, absence of liberty, insecurity in the church and in the state.

### **SECURITY AND INSECURITY: A MATTER FOR THE CHURCH AND THE STATE**

One may ask, since when did security and insecurity

become a matter for the church and the state? Over the years, from the early church through the medieval, the renaissance, the modern to the contemporary time the trouble in the church has its equivalent and opposite counterpart in the state, all originating from the Adamic disobedience through the “state of nature”, “antiquity”, “inquisitions”, to the emergence of the “state or civil society” which is an extension of secular hand of fellowship to the hand of Christ or Muhammdian redemption.

Apparently, from the dispositions of the church and the state on matters of security are two notions namely; the church as the handler of the sacred and the divine flourishing of the soul security in the world of sin and, the state as the social handler of individuals’ needs and life. In most governments and countries, the state has assumed both responsibilities as in the case of religious states, either Christian or Islamic, simply for reasons of total security under the cynosure of the state.

Accordingly, the state perceives and drives civil societies with security policies that employs reliabilism, that is, an “ethical virtue which is an aspect of first nature” and a man’s second nature, a character-based notion of intellectual virtue and security” (Dukor, 2015: 133) which is the capacity or faculty man is born with that produces true security. From the modern period to the contemporary time, the states with awesome or leviathan powers has since taken over the sacred and secular domains of security as its sole responsibility because of the threatening capacities of religion in undermining power. Challenging as these were, either there are true separation of state and the religion or both are combined in one. Suffice it, however, that the security of the first human nature, the human spirit or the soul remains the primary buffer of the second human nature which is the driver of the rule of obedience to law or the supremacy of the rule of law in the state. The first human nature’s role in the security of the individual is the function of the church, the citadel of the sacred, in encounter with “truth as God” expressed in the Bible thus: “into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou has redeemed me, o Lord God of truth” (Holy Bible, Psalm 31:5). This is where there ought to be a common witness of both Christians and Muslims, but which has failed in the world, re-enacting the Adamic sin, through the antiquity and state of nature to the emergence of the civil society, the rule of law and separation of the sacred and the secular.

### **SEPARATION OF THE SECULAR AND THE SACRED: PANACEA TO INSECURITY IN THE CHURCH AND NIGERIAN STATE**

So far there has been a poignant and passionate element of historicism in this discuss, and now we are at the junction where the inextricable relationship between the church, or broadly speaking, religion and the state need to be established as a panacea to insecurity and a recipe

for peace and justice in the church and the state qua Nigerian state. In this historical trajectory, a very important period in the evolution of human liberty interlaced with the religious is the Enlightenment period of 15 - 18th centuries where and when discussion on justice and peace was an inevitable fallout of man's desire to redeem or salvage himself from serial, destructive, conflictual, conflagrating consequences of Adamic disobedience and sin immortally embedded in world historical consciousness, otherwise, symbolically and phenomenological explained as "Adam exists in the mind of man". The "state of nature" as the subject of the Enlightenment philosophy is aimed not only at establishing peace and justice in form of civil society but also to find solution to insecurity engendered by Adamic disobedience and its cataclysmic existence in the mind of man.

It is important to remark that the Enlightenment concern is still alive in Nigeria. But the truth of this historical consciousness is still elusive in Nigeria where the separation of religion and the state is blurred and there is no peace and justice. Why we say that the western Enlightenment concern is an obsession in Nigeria is because the flame of the period has of necessity become rekindled in Nigeria.

Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and J. J. Rousseau among others were obviously not satisfied with the intellectual and philosophical interventions by philosophers and thinkers before them on the Adamic predicament especially those of the schoolmen, the scholastics of the middle ages who were wont to explain the state away as synonymous with the divine mandate. For the Enlightenment the "state of nature" was a historical and a devouring social anomy dating back to the antiquity or to what we call Adamic creation, but needed to be contained, for peace, security and justice. For the trio-philosophers of the civil society in the Enlightenment period the state of nature is characterized as poor, solitary, nasty, short and brutish" (Hobbes, 1959: 33). In the absence of reason in the state of nature, therefore, man desired a civil society where consent and mandate is given to regulatory entity and body with reason to govern the affairs of men. It is a rational navigation out of anarchy. It is a state where individual liberty is tailored to cohere with that of others.

We believe that there is yet no truce in the phenomenal escalation of the consequences of Adamic sin and disobedience, not to talk of an end to the same Adamic state of nature. Neither is Nigeria's post-colonial experience of the Adamic cataclysm and state of nature been nipped in the bud. In Nigeria, neither the religious institution nor the religions are at peace and justice with themselves, a clear replication of the Adamic predicament and the state of nature. This phenomenon often passes as irritant and destructive intolerance among Christian sects on the one hand and Muslim sects on the other hand.

Within the Christian fold, a supposedly body of Christ, there is a carryover of the flux of antiquity and state of nature in the doctrinally irreconcilable arguments pertaining to liturgy and precepts; there are modicum of in-toleration in the procedures of worship, apparently resulting in absence of both God and Christ's witness. Voltaire assertion is uncomplimentary about the supposedly body of Christ: "of all religions the Christian is undoubtedly that which should instill the greatest toleration ... although so far the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men" (Love, 2008: 55). This is critical of the religious institution in Nigeria, and the re-evolving need for quest for justice and peace in the religious institution in Nigeria and by implication the Nigerian state, albeit, compounded by the faceoff with the Muslim religion. This means that there is a panorama of insecurity in the church and in the state. With this, a whole lot of conceptual, social and constitutional matters are in question. These are, as with the case in history, separation of the church and the state, the sacred and the secular and the state and the religion.

The question of insecurity in the religious institution and in the state cannot, however, be articulated without reference to the status of individual liberty, the constitutional power of the state, the separation of the church and the state and or, the state and the religion.

The same question would lead to an x-ray of the origin of religious liberty. Now, the horizons of the social contract theory started opening up in the early 19th century, precisely 1819 over the danger to liberty by the evolving democracy in America. John Stuart Mill was alerted to this danger earlier by Alexis de Tocqueville in his great book, *Democracy in America*. This danger is the "tyranny of the majority" "not over the body, but over the mind" (Watkins, 1966: 155).

In contemporary Nigeria, the greatest threat to liberty is religious intolerance, buoyed by the majority, over the mind. It could be recalled from the Enlightenment thought that a more liberal articulation of liberty consistent with panacea to insecurity in the church and the failure of the state's ombudsman was Montesquieu concern that liberty "can consist only in doing what we ought to will, and in not being constrained to do what we ought not to do" (Beck, 1979: 55). Therefore, the Enlightenment thoughts on liberty principally being that of John Locke, J. J. Rousseau and Montesquieu as well as John Stuart Mill's and his contemporary political thinkers cumulated to American revolution which is a precursor to contemporary constitutions in the world, albeit, secular reflection on the Adamic sin and disobedience and its consequences, taking into consideration the flip side of the sacred and the divine.

The American debate on the separation of the church and the state during the American Revolution is an attempt at hewing or spewing water from the rock in response to the human existential problem of Adamic serial catastrophes. Setting the stage for contemporary

world constitutions and liberal political democracy, Samuel Adams of the Massachusetts Assembly, infused with Enlightenment libertarianism and Christian revival spirit, maintained that the principles of political liberty and religious liberty were inextricably intertwined thus: “the religion and public liberty of a people are so intimately connected; their interests are interwoven, and cannot exist separately” (Church Forest, 2004: 8).

It is with the objective of promoting religious toleration and security in the state that the declaration of American independence sought to establish a clear line of demarcation between church and state, not to abridge the former, but to fulfill the nation’s spiritual mandate expressed thus: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights” (Church Forest, 2004: ix). In furtherance of this philosophy, Thomas Jettison, citing as his authority “nature and nature’s God” establishes for liberty and equality a clear metaphysic, grounded in nature (Ibid). Therefore, with great debate, rational, rigorous, American liberal democracy seems to have reduced the traumas of Adamic spiral and historical predicament. How far has Nigerian state tried to achieve order out of global disorder?

### **INSECURITY IN THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION AND IN NIGERIA STATE: MATTERS ARISING**

There is no gain-saying the fact that peace and justice is the recipe for security and peace in any nation; indeed, it is the panacea to the smothering and escalating insecurity and instability in the contemporary world. Nigeria is a major case in the matters arising from well over three millenniums’ predicament of human existence since Adamic sin and disobedience. Nigeria is not, however, an isolated example in the world, save that it is an interesting subject of this study not only in sub-Saharan Africa but in Africa as a whole. In the world, uglier cases may abound like the cases of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, to mention but a few. All these countries could be said to be by, divine providence or by misuse of free will, steeped, in the valley of Adamic crisis which, perhaps, Muhammadian or Christ injunctions would redeem, if the secular approach of social and political contract theory is not adoptable. The secular political option in the form of Francis Fukuyama’s “The end of history and the last man” (Fukuyama, 1992) which means liberal democracy is the final form of government for all nations, in the search for human social problems, albeit, existential predicament of Adamic nature, is seemingly a critical but naïve voice to the flagship theological and historical drive out of Adamic sin and disobedience. We then ask, wherewithal Nigeria in handling of this global strife.

Nigeria’s example of insecurity in the religious institution may not be an exceptional case in the world.

When Voltaire asserted that of all religions the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men, he, in our hermeneutical thinking, is alluding to intra-sectarian intolerance among Christians, now, the Nigerian Christian experience.

This experience is wherein different denominations of Christianity hold one another in suspicion without a common witness in Christ as several components of one body; without a common obligation to Christian liberation theology and without the same historical consciousness of Christ redemption from the Adamic sin and disobedience. In other words, the long chains of sectarian proliferations have not added spiritual and Christian value. Among members of each of the mainstream orthodox Churches, Catholic and Anglican, there exists “bad faith” and among the orthodox and the Pentecostal churches, it is a regime of mutual distrust, anger and the absurd. This is a brand of intolerance most inimical to security, peace and justice in the church. A good illustration of this existential problem is the cold blooded massacre of innocent worshippers inside the precinct of a Catholic Church cathedral at Ozubule, Anambra state, Nigeria on Sunday, 6th August, 2017 by gunmen on alleged revenge missions targeted at one business mogul. The aftermath of this brutal murder left blood and corpses on the floor of the temple of God, with worshippers crying and on their heels seeking escape from the church of Christ instead of singing Halleluiah to the thrown of grace. The invaders to all intent and purpose, and with high probability were Igbo and by and large, Christians. This episode and the disunity in the church are an index of insecurity within the Nigerian Christendom.

Nigeria is also a religious and political stratosphere which is replicating the conflict of Islam against Christianity between 638 and 1244AD. This period was characterized by the rise and fall of Jerusalem, persecutions of Christians, invasion and destructions of churches and temples by different caliphs and sack and deportations of different Christian cities and leaders. With modern technologies of guns and ammunitions, drones, airplanes and satellite surveillances, there is reincarnation of the early Christian and Muslim crusades. Between 1980 and 1985 Matatsine Islamic sect emerged and caused inflaming ethno-religious conflict between Muslims and Christians in the Northern Nigeria.

Matatsine is a Hausa term for “He who damns”. The movement opposed Nigerian state, Christianity and the church with the savage application of their weapons. The uprising inflicted a brutal destruction of lives and properties, unleashed terror, horror and violence characterized by looting, maiming, burning, raping and killings.

In response to the millennium technological advances and innovations Boko-Haram which is dubbed the grandson of Matatsine has magnified the firestorm of insecurity in the church and in Nigerian state. Since 2009,

Boko-Haram has claimed the lives of over 30,000 Nigerians in the North East of the country, internally displaced thousands, caused wanton destructions of properties and retarded the development of an entire region. In all this the Church, the Mosque and the state have remained at the receiving end of this cusp of insecurity.

The conflict has assumed war proportions between the state and the Islamic fundamentalist actors who have been variously described as insurgents, extremists and terrorists. As a contemporary threat to peace and security in the religious institution and in the Nigerian state, the civil society in the affected areas in the North East has collapsed under the heavy weight of the “state of nature” occasioned by Adamic sin and disobedience. Since 2013, more than 1000 children have been abducted by Boko-Haram in north eastern Nigeria including 275 girls taken from their secondary school in the town of Chibok in 2014 (Malick in Fall, 2018: 4). Again, on 18th February, 2018 111, school girls from the town of Dapchi were kidnapped and later released on 21 March, 2018 on exchange for a large ransom payment. Since then, Leah Sharibu, one of the 110 school girl was denied freedom for allegedly refusing to denounce her Christian faith (The Guardian, 2018: 4). All this is a chronicle of the woes of Adam existing in the minds of man, signpost of a bleak future for Nigeria without peace and security, failure of Muhammadian and Christ’s redemption recipe and a classic failure of social contract and governance.

### **PEACE AND JUSTICE AS PANACEA TO INSECURITY IN THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION AND NIGERIAN STATE**

The condition of peace and justice as a panacea to insecurity in the religious institution and in Nigerian state, that is, the whole country, is a function of social contract, renewed hope, restructured Nigeria and religious liberty. Something new must come out from this epoch normally referred to as contemporary time. If the modern world was dominated by scientific breakthroughs the contemporary world is a consolidation of this with some alternative ideologies like Postmodernism and Existentialism. All have their takes or heritage from the distant past, “from the ancient world, from Egypt and Babylonia, from Palestine, from Greece and Rome; from the distant East; from the middle ages, from the renaissance” (Mills, 1939: 3). Preceding these heritages are Christendom and Muhammadanism from which humanity also shared its civilizations. Each civilization made its own contribution. In this age, what have the contemporary postmodernists, theologians and philosophers got to contribute to peace, security and justice in the religious institution and the Nigerian state? Religious liberty is the ombudsman answer?

There should be a vision of reconciliation, re-

constitution and reformation with clues from the Jesus of Nazareth and Muhammad of Mecca and at the same time a reappraisal of all previous civilizations in order to effectively tackle the historical consequences of Adamic sin and disobedience. This Age in Nigeria and elsewhere is the age when the task of Christian theology should understand the mystery encompassing human existence to be none other than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the spirit of redemption from the original sin. This commitment to historicism as a way out of the historical flux of insecurity in the state and church also applies to the equal and opposite number in the conflict, Islam, which we can “characteristics in the epoch and world order as Islamic liberation theology, involving issues of the relationship between the sacred and the secular ...” (Dukor, 2007: 23).

Any religion has by “its very nature a metaphysical as well as an existential aspect (Ogden, 2005: 47). Ogden would assert that faith is the existence of freedom by which he means that “the distinctive way of understanding ourselves in the world that is properly described as Christian faith in God, is a way of existing and acting on freedom and for it (Ibid: 49). According to C. O. Osun, Aladura Churches in Nigeria has been upbeat in this direction, especially with regard to women. He said “the extent to which women have been accommodated to function either as office bearers or prophetic figures in Aladura Churches is a demonstration of the changing patterns in thought and attitude in Aladura circles and in Nigerian society, especially in the light of socio-cultural changes, making possible the religious change” (Osun, 1996: 50).

Anchored on this social aspect of religion is the concern of the theologies of liberation in the practical issues of action and justice as an aspect of the ethical and existential dimension of the Adamic human predicament. Theology of liberation should be seen as a process theology and process philosophy which discovers in man his ability to be free from dogma and oppression in faith and freedom for God. This is the pillar of the Latin American liberation theology and could as well be the pillar of Nigeria’s Muslim and Christian theologies in the spirit of religious liberty, justice, peace and security. This is the spirit that has been burgeoning the Christ Apostolic Church, Apostolic Church, Aladura Churches and the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and it could also crystallize African traditional religion.

Maduabuchi Dukor has interrogated African philosophy and synthesized it to what is known as Theistic Humanism of African Philosophy which “is a philosophical principle or doctrine designating African ideas of man, universe and God... African culture is an example of a culture that is humanistic while at the same time holding the belief in transcendent beings like spirits, gods and so on. It is shown by the idea that though Humanism and Theism appear as contraries yet both can be true in African and Asian cultures” (Dukor, 2001: 65). Idowu and

Cornwall (2001: 1) has said of man including the African that "religion is very much and always with us". These are critical world views that should guide faith and freedom in contemporary liberation theology for justice, peace and security, albeit, a redemptive phenomenology.

The Existentialist turn of the 19 and 20th century, if properly appraised in consonance of contemporary challenges, is certainly critical to the phenomenology of "Adamic exists in the minds of man". This is an Existential phenomenological approach to the question of insecurity in the religious institution and in the Nigerian state. Some Existentialists response to human predicament is arguably not fair to an all-round development of man, but some are, and predicated on reason's sovereignty. Corruption is the issue in the Garden of Eden and the same corruption is the propeller of all re-incarnation of small and large scale evils in the world. Existentialism abides by the canon of reason which as "an ontological category in human nature cannot be corrupted, reason is the source of all good things and development" (Dukor, 2018: iv).

Stakeholders, priests, academics and theologians can leverage on the continental and regional strife's bedeviling the world to bring continental and regional solutions to human existential predicament. One of the ways of doing this is not only to think existentially but also employ existential phenomenology as a tool to stem the tide of religious intolerance, extremisms, fundamentalism and bigotry. As a philosophy of despair and crisis, it is a reflection on Adamic absurdity.

Theologians and Christians have a stake to borrow from Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) who as a religious personage and author taught man not only the mainstream Existentialist tenets like authenticity, freedom and choice but also how to be a good Christian against false values. The modules of human existence, in Kierkegaard are the aesthetic life (innocent appreciation of nature), ethical life (cultural and environmental regulation of life) and religious life (quest for salvation at old age) emphasis is mine. To save Nigeria and other Africa countries from the menace of insecurity in the church and Islamic insurgency Kierkegaard and Karl Jasper's theistic existentialist phenomenology and ontology instead of Martin Heidegger's atheistic existentialist phenomenology would add a radical flip to the propagation and sustenance of liberation theology as it concerns faith, freedom and justice.

However, Martin Heidegger phenomenological ontology of meditative thinking as a means for the attainment of authentic peace and harmonious state of affairs through recognition, acceptance of unique individualities and differences is definitely an epitome of freedom in faith and liberation theology. In a wider canvas, Heidegger's home coming" or return to man's essential nature or origin and "releasement" or calmness, composure and detachment could be interpreted as another way of promoting faith in God, human liberation and religious liberty. Viewed from

the prism of theistic existentialist phenomenology and ontology, peace and justice is a consummate political value and saving principle for the society, which in terms of Heidegger's *Dasein* is Being-with, that is, search for others in other to make sense of its own existence (Heidegger, 1962: 70-71).

A politically and religiously restructured Nigeria would engender the much sought after peace and justice and in turn evolves as model for regional and developing countries who are equally plagued by religious extremists. Justice may be considered in two ways: as a set of abstract rules and as structures of justice within historical conditions. Rules of justice are instruments of community serving to establish obligations that go beyond merely egoistic ones and to develop synthesis of interests (Beck, 1979: 152). Religious liberty in this context is both abstract and concrete framework and opportunity to achieve peace and justice in any nation state, for instance, Nigeria. Incidentally, Nigeria and other African countries are "incurably religious people" (Parrinder, 1954:9). For Bertrand Russell, religion is "primarily a social phenomenon" (Russell, 2013: 27) While Bolaji Idowu, in the opening sentence of his book, *The Study of Religion*, says that religion is very much and always with us, Karl Marx draws attention to this fact by postulating that religion is part of the superstructure of the society and at same time "the sign of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it the spirit of spiritless conditions" (Marx, 1978: 39). In other words, there is religion's interrelation with democracy or politics.

It has been argued that the rise of modern democracy was strongly influenced by the Jewish-Christian religious heritage. This is so apt that Karl Marx, no friend of religious dogmas and inclined to trace historical events to economic rather than religious reasons, acknowledged that "democracy is based on the principle of the sovereign worth of the individual, which in turn, is based on the dream of Christianity that man has an immortal soul" (Brecht, 1965: 456). Undoubtedly, religion has been a historical force in the genesis of modern society. Religion is a moral and character builder, the normative agent in the superstructure of the society. It is an integrating force. As a concept it is for peace. Sadly, in Nigeria "Christianity and Islam have unduly influenced the cause of political and social events. Whenever, for example, the choice of presidential or governorship candidate is to be made in any political party, petty-minded and selfish people are concerned first and foremost with the religion the candidate professes" (Dukor, 1988: 62). Nigeria, therefore, is susceptible both to religious amity and religious fundamentalism, but need to be salvaged from these historical forces by social action and theological engagement which border on faith and freedom.

The Charter of the United Nations and the Nigerian constitution are precursors to social engineering on the

fragmented humanism, idolatrous community of church and body of Christ set in motion by Adamic sin. Nigeria's constitutions from Lord Lugard in 1914 amalgamation to Macpherson's 1951 regional government constitution were able to nip the embers of religious conflagration in the bud by establishing semblances of regional governments and regional religions (Webster et al., 1967: 298-311). But the 1966 military constitution and the 1979 constitution eroded not only the freedom of faith inherent in the regional governments but also forced the multi-religious and plural component units of Nigeria into a nation-state with a politically dominant religion with neither amity nor opium. Despite the spread of secular constitutions in the world belief in God existentially has continued to influence political ideas and institutions; this is shown by the resistance to totalitarianism, the rise of separate governments in India and Pakistan, the birth of the state of Israel, and the lingering conflict about the status of Jerusalem" (Brecht, 1965: 456).

It is against the aforementioned foreground that we call for true federalism in Nigeria and in nation states in Africa with a clear and perceptible ideal of the United Nations charter stated thus: Fundamental human right, and dignity and worth of the human person... universal respect for, and observances of human rights and freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. This, must conform to and abide by religious liberty, social justice and equal economic opportunities as conveyed by federalism thus: "Just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty in matters spiritual and temporal, is a thing that all men are clearly entitled to by the eternal and immutable laws of God and nature, as well as by the law of nations and all well-grounded municipal laws, which must have their foundations in the former" (Church Forest, 2004:13).

A restructured body without soul is blind and vice-versa. There must be a restructured Nigerian body politics to cohere with religious liberty. Party politics cannot thrive in a system and society where mass poverty is so acclaimed to earn Nigeria the poverty capital of the world. There cannot be religious liberty where development is sliding, education is an exclusive preserved of the few, healthcare is completely non-existent, no social and financial inclusion, where there is under employment and unemployment and consequently incipient and manifest restiveness that often lead to religious bigotry and insurgency. This is the bane of Nigerian society that must be reversed. To achieve these there should be strategic road map for promotion of education, micro, small and medium enterprises, human capital development, poverty alleviation, information and communication technology, financial inclusion, infrastructural surplus, political participation, youth employment, corporate governance, good leadership and accountability at all levels. This is imperative because a soul without body is like a thought without action, hence it is empty. Economic and social empowerment would save

religion from being opium of the masses, as Marx would argue. The destiny of Nigeria is in the hand of her people. Walter Rodney would argue that every generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it (Fanon, 1963: 166). The problem of insecurity in the church and in the Nigerian states is challenge theologians, philosophers and all stakeholders must confront in this generation.

## CONCLUSION

The insecurity in the church and in the nation-states, especially in Nigeria is, in this essay, perceived to be a function of sin and disobedience in the golden and bliss age before Adam and Eve. Religious dogmatism and bigotry as forms of religious intolerance exacerbates rather than reduces the consequences of the original sin and disobedience. This has assumed a global flux and spike leading to social, ethnic, racist, political and religious wars of which the insecurity in the church and among nation-states are effects. Global insight into what we have called Adamic crisis or flux must begin with appreciation of the historicist and phenomenological trajectory of its essence as well as the ontology and theodicy of its origin. In this essay religious liberty as far as insecurity, injustice and instability in the religious institution and in the state are concerned, is a prime liberty among civil liberties, and as far as religion has become interlaced with social and political generation and development, religious liberty must not be compromised. It is on this basis that the message in this paper is predicated on the existence of faith in freedom, theology of liberation, theistic humanism of African philosophy, religious tolerance and a re-structured polity in Nigeria with due respect to religious liberty of Christians and Muslims alike.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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