



The Islamic Panacea to Ethno-Religious Crises and Problem of Nationalism as Impediment to National Development in Nigeria

Alawiye, Adegoke Naheem

Department of Religions and Peace Studies, Faculty of Arts, Lagos State University

alawiyenaheem@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper aims at adopting Islamic principles, based on the understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet, with the knowledge of history, to provide solutions to the problem of ethno-religious crises and implication of nationalism in Nigeria. The salient of which would be of great advantage to understand the value of tolerance and create mutual love and unity, irrespective of religions or tribal affiliations, in order to stimulate peaceful co-existence among various religions, ethnicity, and individuals. The paper is library based which includes analyses of various Scholars' views in both primary and secondary sources. It has been observed that ethno-religious crises are part of major impediment of national development in Nigeria, caused by part of the implementation of nationalism inherited from colonialism. However, religious praxis that will generate a cultural orientation of multi-religiosity, needs to be established in Nigeria and Islamic laid down principles of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence would be a panacea, if can be properly adopted, to ethno-religious crises and nationalism problems. Thus, emphases should be made on tolerance, mutual co-operation and understanding of natural and human values, by the religious preachers and scholars, in order to eradicate crises and violence in the society.

Keywords: Islam, Crises, Ethno-Religious, Nationalism, Implications, Panacea

1. Introduction

Nigeria as a nation comprises of many diverse religions, with different ethnic groups, but majorly, the Christianity and Islam provide the substantial percentage. In spite the great Abrahamic faith of monotheism shared by this two religions and universal acceptance in Nigeria, distributed all over more than four hundred ethnic groups, including the traditionalist; Nigeria has resulted in an estimated loss of millions of lives and unquantifiable psychological and material damage.¹ It is observed that from the historical antecedent of colonialism in Nigeria, the nature and motive of nationalism inherited from the colonial master and the political institution given to us at independent, contributed, enormously to ethno-religious crises, which has been part of the major impediment to National development in Nigeria. What is the nature and motive of the colonial nationalism? where did we get it wrong that make Nigeria to be providing rich context for the understanding of cultural, social, economic and political issues that involves in ethno-religious encounter? and what are the menace of these ethno-religious crises and nationalism on National development in Nigeria? These are questions and some other issues to be examined with thorough investigations of scholar's views.

The crux of this paper is to emphasis on Islamic system, based on Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet, with knowledge of history and views of various Islamic scholars, to provide possible solution to the problem of ethno-religious crises and effect of colonial nationalism that is hampering national development in Nigeria. This would be a great advantage for the understanding of religious tolerance and create avenue for mutual love, irrespective of religions, cultures or traditions and, will as well stimulate peaceful co-existence among various individuals, ethnicity, religions, community and the nation as a whole. However, religious praxis needs to be established in Nigeria which will generate a cultural orientation of multi-religiosity, that will develop a re-orientation program to educate Nigerians on the sacrosanct of faith,



love and unity, based on the fear of God in all ramifications.² Meanwhile, Islam has laid down principles for religious tolerance that can engendered peaceful co-existence in any given society, and adopting such system would be a panacea to all the crises in Nigeria and as well encourage the spirit of national development.

2. Islam, Nationalism and National Development

The greatest revolutionist and greatest man in the world history; Prophet Muhammad, culled forth, out of uncompromising materials, a nation that was never united before.³ The inception of revelation in the year 610C.E., heralded not just a revolution of faith for the people, but also ignited a significant factor for socio-political change as well as moral, economic, intellectual and spiritual development. At the age of forty years old, and within just a brief span of twenty-three years, the Prophet was favoured by the Almighty God with guidance and a mission to set up an ideal society in the world.⁴ The simplicity and nobility of his character and the spirit of the “new faith” he engendered in his followers, made him a great social reformer in the world, who transformed a wholly backward people into a vanguard of civilization from which a new epoch of human history emerged. Islam, being a “new world order”, was encouraged by social disequilibrium, essentially religion and spiritual, but substituted the rule of force, worship of money and tribal loyalties with a faith transcendent in God and man’s relationship, emphasizing equality in its nature and structure.⁵

Walter opined that religion is an aspect of the superstructure of a society, deriving ultimately from the degree of control and understanding of the material world; man thinks in religious terms, he starts from the ideal rather than with the material world, which is beyond his comprehension.⁶ This creates a non-scientific materialistic outlook with the development of society.⁷ Thus, Islam being an institution with its own independent, practical, spiritual, political and social system with particular sets of belief, comes into conflict with the idea of nationalism.⁸ Unlike other religions, Islam does not confined to religious rites, and metaphysical convictions; it is also a religion with a social and philosophical world view, and provides for economic and political principles. If Islam had been only a religion, it might have agreed with nationalism with social and political principles based on different beliefs and criteria. The basis of nationalism that language, colour and race are criteria for unity and privilege is rejected as far as Islam is concerned, and that is why Islam became the first ideological system that create a civilization that was multiracial, multicultural and intercontinental.⁹

Nationalism is an act of being loyal to a nation, and if a nation is a community of people who feel that they belong together, in a double sense, that share deeply significant elements of common heritage, such as common language, religion, history, culture, to some extent geographical boundary, and that they have common destiny for future, it means that a mere awareness that one belongs to a particular society is not enough without a strong psychological feeling.¹⁰ It is the emotional attachment to one’s nationality that spurs an individual to be devoted, committed and loyal to one’s national symbols, culture, aspirations and thereby creating a strong solidarity group that is defended to the point of death.¹¹ The people of a given nation need not necessarily, though preferably be in a defined territory, the Jews, for instance, before they settled in the present day Israel in 1947, saw themselves and were seen as a nation.¹² Meanwhile, the concepts of “nation” and “state” are often used almost synonymously to mean the same. Whereas, the state has legal, if not political sovereignty, with its own laws, usually expressed in form of constitution, a defined boundary that separates it from other similar units; police, defense and monetary system.¹³ In view of these explanations, what can we then call Nigeria? with more than two hundred and fifty ethnic groups, varying languages, cultures, customs and religions.¹⁴

The fact remains that Nigeria’s past as being the stuff from which her present history has been shaped,¹⁵ it is not a sudden darkening of the moment, it started with the era of slave trade to the period of



industrial revolution in Europe, in the middle of the nineteenth century. Africa including the communities that constituted Nigeria today were ravaged in order to stop the slave trade and impose a new regime of direct conquests and colonialism, which was the pillage and plunder of the African economies to facilitate the growth, expansion of industry and market in Europe.¹⁶ In order for the Europeans to make the “imperial dream” of African conquest a reality, after the Berlin conference in 1884-1885.¹⁷ African societies were fragmented and balkanized into new state formation without due regard to their cultural contiguity or historical affinities. The colonial conquerors also gave these new countries their own chosen names, powerful kings and chiefs were dethroned or subjugated while new foreign institutions and values were imposed.¹⁸ The period of seventy to hundred years of colonial rule in Africa with disarticulation and dislocation of the African economic and political system was further escalated in a number of ways, often deliberately, but the fundamental implications for Africans, till date, was the way the colonies were themselves carved out.¹⁹

These colonies remain the most violent and enduring colonial legacy that to date have left many tribes, communities and indeed independent countries fighting among themselves over territorial and border claims. This is due to the fact, particularly to the various complexities of African communities, were not taken into account, most Africa boundaries were arbitrarily drawn, cutting into parts, hitherto old existing empires.²⁰ Thus, underdevelopment was shown to be a historical condition, arising in the actual fact; from the incorporation of the African countries into the international capitalist system which simply means that nationalism is just a mere vehicle that transports Nigeria from colonialism into the orbit of neo-imperialism, which is part of major impediment to national development. The focus of national development can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation which can only be achieved through developmental planning, with a country’s collection of strategies, mapped out by the government.²¹ This has been subjected to ridicule due to the implications of nationalist forces, tribal prejudice, ethno-religious violence and lack of proper strategies, and policies on the part of the government to provide lasting solutions to those problems.

3. Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria

Ethno-religious issues are part of the most recurring issues in Nigeria, the issue has permeated the landscape since the colonial period, and up till present time, there seems to be no solution in sight to the accompanying conflicts of ethnic rivalry and religious intolerance.²² In many cases, the dominant and minority ethnic group treat each other with fear and suspicion, on the other hand, different religions clash at the slightest provocation, that has cost an estimated loss of over three million lives and unquantifiable psychological and material damages.²³ With over four hundred ethnic groups, belonging to several religious sects, Nigeria since independence has remained a multi-ethnic nation state, which has been grappling and trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity in one hand, and the problem of ethno-religious conflicts on the other hand. These phenomena of ethnicity and religious intolerance have led to incessant recurrence of ethno-religious conflicts that have given birth to many ethnic militias like the *O’dua* People Congress (OPC), the *Bakassi* Boys, the *Egbesu* Boys, the *Ijaw* Youths Congress (IYC), the *Igbo* People Congress (IPC), *Arewa* People Congress (APC); and the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign of Biafra (MASSOB).²⁴ However, the emergence of ethnic militias, divided between various ethnic groups, made religious intolerance become more violent and bloody with more devastating results using ethnic militias as the executors of ethno-religious agenda.²⁵

Ethno-religious crises is always the result of situation in which the relationship between members of religious body or particular ethnic group and another, in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society is characterised by lack of cordiality, intolerance, mutual suspicion, fear and tendency towards confrontations.²⁶ Nigeria as a country had never known peace since independence, ethno-religious crises had occurred throughout Nigerian history, and it has taken to some magnitude since 1980.²⁷ These crises



include Maitatsine religious disturbances in part of Kano and Maiduguri in 1980s, Jimeta-Yola religious crises in 1984, Zango Kataf crises in Kaduna State in 1992, Kaduna polytechnic Muslim-Christian mayhem in 1981-1982, the cross vs. crescent conflict at the university of Ibadan in 1981-1983, Roman Catholic vs. Assemblies of God conflict in Ifumkpa, Cross-River State in 1985, Abia State Pentecostal Church vs. Masquerade in November 1987, Apostolic Church vs. Ekpo Masquerade at Ikot Epene, Akwa-Ibom State 1988, Eziga (Onitsha) Abia State Christians vs. the rest of the community in 1989 and in 1999, violent erupted between Yoruba traditional worshipers and Hausa Muslim groups in Isagamu, Ogun State, and the reprisal to the Isagamu crisis in Kano, same year.²⁸

The Kwara Muslim Fundamentalist attacked and destroyed over fourteenth churches in Ilorin in December 20th, 1999. In February 2000, Kaduna riots over the introduction of *shari'a*, claimed the life of an estimated three hundred people, Abia Religious riots, Aba and minor disturbances in Umuahia in 2000, and the reprisal for the Kaduna crisis in the same year. In Gombe, the Kaltungo religious crisis erupted over the implementation of *shari'a* in the state. Kano religious riot in protest to U.S. invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden, claims the life of over one hundred and fifty Nigerians in 2001. Borno religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maiduguri in 2006, the Adamawa religious conflict between Christians and Muslim in Numan town in 2014, and Plateau attacks by Fulani Muslims on Christians dominated village of Dogo Nahawa in 2010.²⁹ In the more recent time, the activities of *Boko-Haram* insurgency and Fulani Headsmen are well alarming in Nigeria, the suicide bomb attack in many places including, Abuja, Potiskum, Damaturu, Kano, Maiduguri and coordinated attack on churches, mosques, police stations, and market places were part of the devilish activities of *Boko-Haram* since 2009.³⁰ According to the report in 2018, Fulani extremists were responsible for the majority of terror related deaths in Nigeria at 1,158 fatalities.³¹ The *Boko-Haram* and Fulani headsman are of devilish activities which includes; suicide bombing, kidnapping and destruction of life and properties.

The colonial policy in Nigeria was autocratic which denied the people's participation in the basic needs, equality and social well-being that led to conflicts.³² The separation of governments which British administration introduced in the northern and southern part of Nigeria were designed to lead a growing ethnocentrism. The era of provincial development, though were relatively peaceful, but yet built on the future foundation of an unending conflicts which the country is experiencing till present.³³ The "indirect rule" administration in Nigeria by Lord Fredrick Lugard, the chiefs administrator (1901-1928), was inappropriate decision-making tool for managing tribal tensions and hatred in the colony.³⁴ This method of governance at its implementation distanced ethnic groups, and complicated the task of welding diverse elements into a Nigerian as a nation.³⁵ Herder-farmer conflicts is a typical example, which involves disputes over land and cattle between herders particularly the Fulani/Hausa people and farmers which include Adara, Berom, Tiv and Tarok people since 1998.³⁶ Also, the Yoruba-Hausa disturbances in Lagos, the Igbo massacre of 1966, the clashes between Itsekiri and the Ijaw in Delta State, land disputes between Ile-Ife and Modakeke in the late 1990s, to mention but few.³⁷ In the recent time, ethno-religious violence is sustained largely in Nigeria because it serve the economic interest of certain political and religious leaders who conceal the economic matrix behind the support for fanatic religious values.³⁸ The politicians took the advantage with the believe that religion is an effective tool for controlling the masses and they play religion card whenever it suits them. The politicians, through the religious preaching by the religious leaders manipulate the interest of the people to achieve their aims and sustain their position.³⁹ Thus, ethno-religious intolerance and extremism form the basis for ethno-religious conflicts, upon which other sources rest. The hostility towards other religions and ethnic groups and inability of religious adherents to harmonise between the theories and practical aspect of religion, which encompasses bigotry, obstinate and intolerant devolution to one's creed, opinions and prejudices, especially the exhibition of intolerance and animosity towards persons of different beliefs or other ethnic marginalisation that makes ethno-religious violence inevitable in Nigeria.⁴⁰



4. The Menace of Ethno-Religious Crises and Nationalism on National Development in Nigeria

Ethno-religious crises are a disagreement, misunderstanding, whether violent conflict or non-violent among ethno-religious groups.⁴¹ It emerges as a result of common group awareness to live or urge to achieve some objectives that are seen to be of great value, which are seems to be the best. This encourages segregation, discrimination and polarization of the society, at the detriment of national development.⁴² Ethno-religious crisis has been rightly defined, in view of Edlyne, as one of the greatest obstacles to meaningful development in Africa, especially in Nigeria.⁴³ Many women have lost their lives and many others have lost their children and their husbands.⁴⁴ Houses, and means of lively-hood are destroyed which resulted into abject poverty in many families. Some are displaced and forced to run to another community. The establishment of many Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps by Nigerian government is mainly as a result of the menace of insurgency, which has led to social and psychological effects. The loss of loved ones and uncertainty about the future traumatize many people especially the women. It has left people with horrendous experiences and tales of woes.⁴⁴

Ethno-religious crises have claimed the life of over three million people that are supposed to be part of economic development in Nigeria.⁴⁶ Desertification, dwindling of capital resources, demographic explosion, psychological and material damages social fragmentation and decay, have become serious havoc to national development that have generated a lot of fear for both local and foreign investors that supposed to bring Nigeria's socio-economic development to the limelight.⁴⁷ Many investment have been paralyzed in the affected areas, industries have to go on retrenchment of their workers because they cannot meet up with their salaries as a result of low consumption that hindered the process of production, and these brought about high rate of unemployment in the country that contributed to the high rate of criminal activities. The unemployed youths are among those used by the politicians to cause chaos, especially during the time of election in Nigeria.⁴⁸ Bomb exposure and other weapons of destructions have destroyed so many infrastructural facilities.⁴⁸ The attack, in many cases, had traditionally targeted on the security establishment, personnel, community, religious places and their leaders, politicians, markets, public schools, hospitals, tertiary institutions, media houses and critical infrastructures, like telecommunication facilities.⁴⁹ These no doubt, have serious effect on national development.

The agricultural sector is seriously affected by ethno-religious crises in Nigeria, especially the crises between farmers and Fulani herdsmen.⁵⁰ The farm worth billions of naira have been destroyed and the findings shows that more than 1.5 million people, mostly the farmers, have fled their homes in the face of several ethno-religious crises.⁵¹ This no doubt is affecting food production and shortages. It leads to an increase in food prices, and this making food unaffordable for some people due to the high cost. Education, in views of Peace and Ezichi, is a foundation for national development.⁵² However, ethno-religious crises have far-reaching implications on education with destruction of school structures from where teaching and learning exercises take place. The academic environment is not conducive for both the staffs and students and in many occasions, government strives to manage the conflicts by declaring a state of emergency which leads to temporal closure of the schools in the affected areas. Brain drain, irregular curriculum design, fear of kidnapping and being a victim of death are part of the impeding implication of ethno-religious crises that made some student to drop out from schools.⁵³

The period between 1952 and 1966 brought change in the political culture of this country, transforming the three regions into three political entities, all in the name of nationalism.⁵⁴ The struggle for independence was reduced to the quest for ethnic dominance, ethnic and sub-ethnic loyalties threatened the survival of both the East and West, and the North was divided religiously between Christianity and Islam. It was the period of politicized ethnicity and competition for resources that worsened the relationship between ethnic groups.⁵⁵ The fact remains that the nation builders of the British colonial office understood



as a duty, was the need to ensure continuity in any step that might be promoted with African self-government in view, and the Britain empire, however, “reformed” would still have much to give the mother land.⁵⁶ Thus, despite the pseudo-political independence, Nigeria is still under the bondage of neo-imperialism as it still take international actions under caution and guarded tongue, because the country is surviving under the mercy of imperialist countries,⁵⁷ and virtually all the industrial establishment in Nigeria depend on Western supplies. The idea of nationalism in Nigeria is just a mere mechanism for exploitation by the colonialist and that was the reason for the amalgamation which was to favour the British without any consideration to the growth and development of Nigerian society.

5. The Islamic Solution to the Problem of Nationalism and Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria

Islamic politics proclaimed that the Muslim’s nationality is in his faith.⁵⁸ Muslims denounced nationalism for dividing the Muslim community into fragmentary units, contributing to its weakness in the face of its religious and civilization opponents.⁵⁹ This is because the Islamic idea of community as the political unit is incompatible with the territorial nation state. Islam does not confine to only religious rites and metaphysical convictions; it is a religion with a social and philosophical world view that provides economic and political ideology. The basis of nationalism and states that implies language, color and race are criteria for unity and privilege is rejected in Islam. Islam creates its nationalism base on multi-cultural and intercontinental.⁶⁰ According to the Qur’an:

Hold fast together to the cable of Allah and be not divided. Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you: you were once enemies the He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brothers (Q.3:103).

The profound significant to faith and religion is the basis of Islamic nationalism, and it’s mainly to co-operate with each other, irrespective of tribe, race, tradition or geographical location. In another verse, it stated that: “You are the best community of people, as an example, for mankind, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and believing in God”, (Q.3:110).

Islamic nation (*ummah*) means a supra-national community with common history. There is different between *ummah* (nation) and *sha’b*, the latter means a nation with common ancestral or geographical location while *ummah* is used for the collective community of Muslim people which refers to a single community that shares common religious beliefs, specifically those that are the objects of a divine plan of salvation.⁶¹ The prophet of Islam was reported to have said in farewell sermon that:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor a Black has any superiority over a White, expect by piety (faith) and good action. Learn that every Muslim constitute one brotherhood (nationalism).⁶²

This indicates the directive to build and encourage a strong conglomerated nation based on piety and righteous actions with emphases on the success in the worldly life and the life beyond.⁶³

The prophet of Islam adopted the Qur’an as his guiding principle in his dealings with people, especially the non-Muslims. He was aware of the fact that the will of God on human being cannot be tempered with. In Qur’an: “And if your Lord has so willed, He could surely have made mankind one *ummah* (nation, community, following on religion), but they will not cease to disagree” (Q.11:118). Disagreement



is the natural law of God for mankind.⁶⁴ Thus, disagreement in matters of religion should never be a cause of conflicts. The Prophet of Islam related with people based on kindness principle and was able to convert many people with his character. Islam is a religion of justice and equality that open a new spirit in man and universe, it provides the basis for the establishment of general relationship between the people and declared, comprehensively unity and equality among all people which categorically stated in the Qur'an:

O' mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is, he who is, the most righteous of you, and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted, with all things (Q.49:13).

Islam eliminates all aspects of tribalism, nationalism, racism and party spirit that may lead to conflicts. It has taught all men the essentials of monotheism, though particulars of the law and guidance may vary in accordance with man's circumstances.⁶⁵

The fact remains that Islam is a religion of peace, mercy, tolerance, kindness and benevolence. Islam, absolutely stand against all brutality, violence, viciousness and mayhem in order to promote and protect justice and peace.⁶⁶ Qur'an says:

It is part of mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them, were you severe or harsh-hearted; they would have broken away from you. So, pass over their faults, and ask for Allah's forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, for Allah loves those who put their trust in Him, (Q.3L159).

The Prophet shows a perfect example of how to live with other inhabitants peacefully and treat them in a fair and just manner.⁶⁷ He established the principles that regulate and harmonize the relationships among the Muslims and Christians in a multi religious society. The first assignment in Madina was the collaboration with representatives of other faith; Christianity, Judaism and infidelity, drafted the first constitution which is known as "Madinah charter", which was to end the bitter inter-tribal fighting between the rival clans of Banu Aws and Banu Khazraj and to maintain peaceful co-existence among people.⁶⁸ Islam as a religion, based on conviction and not compulsion.⁶⁹ The Qur'an stated that: "there is no compulsion in religion. Verily the right path has become distinct from wrong path...", (Q.2:256). The divergence of belief and faiths is the manifestation of the will of Allah, non-Muslims belong to two distinct groups; a group of polytheists and idol worshippers, and the other group, Christians and the Jews collectively referred to the *Ahly-l-kitab* (people of the Book).⁷⁰

In a multi-religious society like Nigeria, Islam enjoins Muslims to live in peace with the two groups, in as much as they do not engage in anything wrong against the Muslims.⁷¹ It is even important to note that Islam, Christianity and Judaism has element of similarities and virtues of living in harmony and peaceful co-existence. These religions always call for co-operation and mutual understanding among the followers, and preach virtues, love and brotherhood.⁷² Thus, tolerance and peaceful co-existence are sacrosanct tools for Nigeria and other similar countries that are engulfed with the problem of ethno-religious crises. The increase in crises, violence, mayhem and other social disruption have caused a lot of havoc which seriously one of the major problems destroying national development in Nigeria, it has caused a lot of psycho-social damages and a lot of viable innocent lives and properties have been lost. Meanwhile, Islam believes in a universal polity, a politico-religious system, social policy that based on the fundamental principles in the Qur'an, and Islam call for participation of all, in the growth and development of the earth with the



enjoyment of its goods, and blessings.⁷³ If this can be adopted, there is no doubt that the problem of Euro-America nationalism and ethno-religious crises will be resolved.

Recommendations

- There is need for the establishment of neo-religious praxis, that will generate a culture and orientation of multi religiosity in youths, and as well develop a program of re-orientation of the adults, on the preservation and management culture of both natural and human resources which will help to be well informed about the value of development, rather than destroying lives and properties.
- Religious and ethnic group leaders should work with government to put in place cautions and punishment for any of their adherent and member of their group that involve in any actions promoting violence. Leaders should always preach against crisis and develop the mind of the people on the salient of development in given society.
- Nigerian government should incorporate faithful and honest religious scholars into governmental system to help in introducing and implementing the divine injunctions, in order to improve more benefit from natural and human resources, rather than government being surrounded by sycophant under the pretense of religions and instigate violence in many cases to achieve their parochial interest.
- The laid down principles for religious tolerance in Islam can engendered peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, and adopting it would be a panacea to nationalism implication and ethno-religious crises.
- Religions should be used for the development of the society, irrespective of the ethnic groups, and should not be abused. Religious leaders should emphasizes more in their preaching and sermons, the idea of love, peace, justice, unity and sanctity of human lives and properties in order to encourage peaceful co-existence, rather than chaotic individualism.
- There is need to address the issue of poverty, since the western nationalism had failed us, the Islamic system needs to be adopted, to balance the social disequilibrium, moral degradations, economic and political imbroglio that engulf national development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

It is obvious in this paper that Islam is an institution that has its own independent, practical, economic, and social system. The basis of nationalism, that language, color, and race, are the criteria for unity and privilege is not in conformity with the idea of Islam. Thus, Islam became the first to create a civilization that was, and still, multi-racial, multi-cultural, and inter-continental. The fundamental implication of nationalism inherited from colonial master was the way the colonies were carved, without any consideration to traditions, cultures, and socio-political structures of the Africans, the colonies were positioned to remain the most violence and enduring colonial legacy which left many tribes, communities, and independent countries fighting themselves over territorial and border claims. However, ethno-religious intolerance and extremism form the basis for ethno-religious crises right from the time of colonialism, though it took another serious shape in Nigeria since 1980s. The hostilities towards other religions and ethnic groups, and inability of religious adherents to harmonize between the theories and practical aspects of religions have resulted into different serious violence that claimed millions of lives and unquantifiable damages of properties in virtually every part of the country. The crises involve social disruptions with psycho-social damages that form part of impediment for growth and development in Nigeria. Meanwhile, Islam is a religion with universal polity, politico-religious system, socio-economic institution that based on the principles of the Qur'an and practices of the Prophet. Islam encourages participation of everybody, irrespective of tribe, color or race, in the developmental system of both individual and collective society, with enjoyment of developmental goals and abundant blessings, in which, if it can be properly adopted, the



problem of ethno-religious crises and nationalism would be reduced to the low ebb, if not totally eradicated in Nigeria.

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