



**Tolerance of “Others” and Intolerance to
“Disorders” as Impetus for Peace and Dialogue in
Multi-Faith Nigeria**

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Abstract

The focus of this article is on specific and salient religious concerns which have caused division among adherents of the three major faiths in Nigeria. The views of scholars on tolerance and intolerance to these concerns differ greatly and sometimes generate heated argument due to the religious, cultural and spiritual dimensions associated with them. This article categorises these concerns as “others” and “disorders” and evaluates the need for tolerance and intolerance to them correspondingly, as this can serve as an impetus for peace and dialogue in the pluralistic Nigerian society. The concepts of tolerance, religious tolerance and tolerance of others are discussed from the perspective of African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam. Also, areas of relationship, interaction, and activities, where tolerance should be displayed by adherents of the three major religions in Nigeria are examined. Furthermore, the disorders that should not be tolerated with examples and how they have caused hatred, discrimination and religious crisis in multi-faith Nigeria are analysed. The article concludes that tolerance of “others” and intolerance to “disorders” will help to mitigate religious differences and its attendant crises and promote peaceful relations and dialogue.

Keywords: *tolerance, intolerance, others, disorders, peace, dialogue, religion, ethnicity, diversity, pluralism, Nigeria*

Introduction

The quest for continuous peaceful relations and dialogue is inevitable in societies and countries where religion is easily and frequently used as a basis and tool for division, discrimination, and all forms of atrocities and fanaticism. It is highly indispensable in the light of this, for political leaders, scholars of religion and more importantly religious leaders and their followers to re-evaluate the necessity of tolerance to certain religious and cultural practices which have the impetus to sustain good relations in multi-faith Nigeria. If this re-evaluation is not done, peaceful coexistence, good relations and dialogue will become unachievable among Christians, Muslims, and African traditional religionists in Nigeria.

Although, both Christianity and Islam manifest tendencies for tolerance and intolerance, and this is mostly associated with the interpretation of certain scriptural texts on religious exclusivism, the objective of this article is to challenge the unwholesome attitude of tolerance of disorders and intolerance of others which is fast becoming a standard in religious circle and to present the “others” that should be tolerated and the “disorders” that should not be tolerated by practitioners of the three major faiths at different levels of relationship.

Clarification of Terms

For emphasis, there is a need to clarify the terms that underlie this discourse. These are: religious tolerance, intolerance, “others” and “disorders”.

Religious Tolerance and Intolerance

Tolerance is the “ability to endure, disposition or willingness to tolerate or allow permissible range of variation” (Chambers 20th Century, 1971, p. 1418). According to Sinclair’s Collins Concise Dictionary (1999:410), the word ‘tolerance’ is derived from the Latin ‘tolerāre’ (in English, ‘to sustain’ or ‘to endure’). Potgieter (2014) and Koffeman (2016) note that tolerance is an aspect of the balance between power and freedom.

Religious tolerance is simply the disposition or willingness of religious adherents to tolerate or allow religious views, opinions, ideas, or practices other than their own. It is also the ability of religious adherents to harmonise between the theories and the practical aspects of religion. It can also be the ability of religious adherents to suppress their feelings of repudiation and hostility towards religions different from their own. Toynbe (1969), a great exponent of religious tolerance, expresses the idea when he states that “all religions while retaining their historic identity will become more and more open-minded and open-hearted toward one another as the world’s different cultural and spiritual heritages become, in increasing measure, the common possession of all mankind.” Van der Walt (2016) notes that “religious tolerance or intolerance arguably must have begun with an individual who subsequently influenced others to be similarly tolerant or intolerant, thereby forming a religiously tolerant or intolerant group.” This affirms that tolerance is an attitude that can be cultivated and transmissible to other people and this is the main thrust of this article.

Intolerance is the direct opposite of tolerance. It is the unwillingness to give room, space,

accommodate and accept people, their weaknesses, strengths, beliefs, practices, life style and institutions. Religious intolerance is the unwillingness or refusal to accord respect to a religious faith, its adherents, leaders, teachings, books, and practices. Intolerance is also described as “a psychologically interesting phenomenon because it is symptomatic of insecurity and fear” (Potgieter, Van der Walt, & Wolhuter, 2014, p. 2). However, this article views it as a rejection of the wrong and inappropriate in a multi-religious society. Lack of religious tolerance emanates basically from bias, hatred, prejudice, and competitiveness displayed by adherents of different religions in a bid to defend, protect and sometimes preserve the legacies inherent in their faiths. It is also born out of perceived superiority, discrimination, manipulation and negative worldviews and ideologies. Dopamu (1989) posits that “it is glaringly clear that there is a great deal of religious intolerance within the fabric of the Nigerian society.” This has polarized the country along religious lines and obviously affected all round development.

Others and Disorders: A Clarification

It is noteworthy to give a clarification of the terms/words: “others” and “disorders”. In this article, the word “others” refer to people, young, old, friends, family members, colleagues, acquaintances, visitors, and strangers. It also includes citizens of one’s country, non-citizens, members of one’s faith/tribe/ethnic group, non-members of one’s faith/tribe/ethnic group, different people one meets in diverse social, political, religious, educational centres where interaction takes place, and everyone living within a community. More significantly, “others” also refer to acceptable beliefs, practices, institutions, tenets, right actions, and efforts that stimulate good relationships, harmony, friendship, and peaceful co-existence chiefly as it concerns a pluralist society like Nigeria.

Disorders are actions, dogmas, and ideologies contrary to the proper way of life, essentially a misnomer. A disorder is also a state of chaos, a situation that is negative, inappropriate, wrong, and generally unacceptable. The word “disorders” in this paper is used to refer to certain religious actions that are negative, extreme, radical, irreligious and do not seek the common good of all. Disorders in religion give an incorrect picture of that religion and the misuse by its adherents.

Historical Overview of Religious Encounter in Nigeria

Dopamu (1989), an exponent of African Religion opines that in “Nigeria, religion has proved to be the most sensitive and the one that has often led to hatred and division.” Nevertheless, adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR) relate peaceably with one another despite their diversities and have steadily tolerated both Christians and Muslims from the time of their entrance into Nigeria. He further attests to it that the adherents of *Afrel* (African Religion) who are still many in Nigeria seldom engage in unpleasant practices or indulge in mutual bickering (Dopamu, 1989) that leads to religious crises. African traditionalists are tolerant because in the view of Dopamu (1989), the religion provides internal cohesion among its adherents when not misused by Kings and chiefs and it expresses this internal cohesion externally when relating with adherents of other religions.

When Islam was introduced to Nigeria around the 14th century, it challenged the ritualistic and cultural practices inherent within ATR (African Traditional Religion) that do not conform to Islamic traditions and teachings. These practices were basically the worship of idols (gods), divinities, ancestors, spirits, and the use of certain mysterious powers. Followers of the Islamic faith that migrated into different parts of Nigeria through trade and other means discovered that the traditional religious practices of the people (Hausa and the Yoruba) aligned with their culture and customs and they were not willing to give them up. The Hausa people who were the first to accept Islam practised a syncretised form of Islam which the Fulani clerics, teachers and *Ulama's* considered as unorthodox, and this is one of the reasons that necessitated the *Jihad* of Uthman Dan Fodio in the 18th century. The religious impact of the Jihad was to purge the Hausa states of certain un-Islamic practices. Kenny (2001) claims that the Jihad launched in 1804 to conquer large tracts of northern Nigeria had the religious motivation of purifying the ruling society from its casual attitude towards Islamic practice and its continued patronage of traditional religious practices. The Yoruba people, however, accepted Islam but still held on tightly to their culture as the Muslims accommodated certain similar cultural values and practices like polygamy and the spirit of brotherhood.

When Christianity came into Nigeria, the first part it penetrated was the southern part of Nigeria (Warri and Benin) in the 15th century through the priests/chaplains that accompanied the Portuguese explorers who came to the Western part of Africa. Christianity however did not tolerate many practices of the people that conform to ATR (African Traditional Religion) and this was one of the reasons that led to the failure of the first attempt at planting Christianity in Nigeria. Later in the 19th century when Christianity was finally planted through the efforts of European missionaries and freed slaves among the Yoruba people, it was still at dissonance with certain African traditional practices and customs. These practices were depicted as idolatrous and uncivilized, while the Pentecostal movement later denoted them as demonic, cultic and satanic. The missionaries spread Christianity by using education as a major attraction for the people and through the help of the colonial masters. Nevertheless, the traditional and cultural practices of the people were not completely abolished as many still identified strongly with theirs. Contemporary Christianity has only succeeded to minimise the influence of African Traditional Religion and culture because of the rate of conversion, spread, and growth in Nigeria.

Tolerance of “Others”

The three principal religions in Nigeria teach and believe in the concept of tolerance (accepting and accommodating people) as enshrined in their corpus and scriptures. In ATR (African Traditional Religion), this is exemplified in their commonly used wise sayings, proverbs, and attitude. Their tolerance paved the way for both Islam and Christianity to become significant reference points in the world at large and to develop their theologies and expand their influence. Christianity and Islam have relegated to the background some of the ethics, teachings, heritage, and cultural practices which symbolize the religion and are still highly relevant and needed today.

Christianity believes in tolerance and living peaceably with all and this can be substantiated with different biblical passages and principally, the teachings of Jesus on love,

peace, and relations with people of other faiths. In Islam, there are Quranic passages that teach tolerance and accentuate the need to tolerate people of other faiths. Prophet Muhammad also demonstrated a level of tolerance at the beginning of his mission to non-Muslims and at some instances encouraged his followers to show them love. Abdullah (2011) attests to it that “the broad thrust of the Qur'an and hadith supports religious liberty, but many parts of these texts can be, and traditionally have been, interpreted as denying it.” Also, he notes that the bedrock of the Islamic case for religious liberty is the Qur'an's vision of the human person (Abdallah, 2011). This vision is predicated on Quranic passages that encourage good relations with non-Muslims.

The fact remains that religious tolerance in a pluralistic society like Nigeria is not without its challenges and one of such is syncretism which is apparent in Christianity and Islam in southern Nigeria. Galadima (2001) lends credence to it: “Christianity needs to interrelate with African culture and African Traditional Religion if Christianity is to survive in Africa” and Africans cannot exist apart from their cultural heritage. Another challenge is the method and manner of tolerance which is sometimes not done willingly and in a friendly manner but with coercion and intimidation. This is seen in many local communities where religious minorities have been subjugated to accommodate the growth and expansion of other religions. Hans Kung (2007) notes that religious tolerance should not be exercised on the basis of strict subordination; it should be done with due consideration for others. Another challenge is the doctrine of exclusivism strictly emphasized by some denominations and groups in Christianity and Islam. Nonetheless, tolerance is the most acceptable attitude desirable in Nigeria today.

Tolerance of Cultural Values / Ideas / Heritage

The tolerance of cultural values, ideas and heritage is highly inevitable in a multi-faith society like Nigeria which has witnessed so much chaos all in the name of religion. Scholars of religion in Nigeria like Bolaji idowu, Awolalu and Babs Mala have at different times advocated and emphasized on the need to *de-westernize* Christianity and *de-Arabize* Islam in Nigeria in order to tolerate and sustain African cultural heritage and values such as, language, traditional education, dressing, wise sayings, music, festival and certain practices as this will aid in sustaining mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence. These cultural values and heritage are core representation of African identity and worldview and are inseparable from the lives of Africans. Christianity and Islam should tolerate the use of local names, cultural dressing, and the use of certain traditional symbolic elements during ceremonies like naming and weddings. It should be noted that tolerating such values is not a call to compromise but the charge to see the good in some African traditional values which are sometimes tagged “devilish and irreligious”. There are Christians who change their traditional or local names to biblical names and there are Muslims who also refuse to be called such names. These names do not necessarily have any direct relationship or covenant with any divinity, ancestor, spirit, or god but are loaded with good and significant meanings, signifying certain events and occasions. Ayantayo (2010) noted that change of name has the tendency to create class within religious community and this leads to identity class that can polarize people along religious lines. Here are few examples of such names particularly among the Yoruba’s of south-west Nigeria:

Fagbenro (Ifa / Oracle divinity upholds me)	Oluwagbenro (The Lord upholds me).
Fakoya (Ifa / Oracle divinity rejects suffering)	Olukoya (The Lord rejects suffering).
Adeyefa (Crown belongs to Ifa / Oracle divinity)	Adeyoluwa (Crown belongs to the Lord).
Ogunbiyi (The god of Iron gave birth to this)	Oluwabiyi (The Lord gave birth to this).
Ogunseemi (The god of Iron has done it for me)	Oluwaseemi (The Lord has done it for me).

There should also be tolerance of certain dress patterns which are not necessarily demonic but purely African. There are instances when people are looked down on by adherents of other faiths because of their traditional mode of dressing. Christians and Muslims should not only embrace western and Arabian form of dressing but should also embrace traditional African attires which reveal our identity, background, and showcase African creativity, originality, worldview, and beauty. There are also certain elements and materials which are symbolic of good life, prosperity, happiness, joy, morality and with profound spiritual meaning that Christians and Muslims do not tolerate during occasions like naming ceremony for a new born child. Symbolic elements like honey, sugar, sugarcane, salt, palm oil, and alligator pepper, kolanut, bitter kola, water, etc.

Fig I. Elements / Emblem for Naming Ceremony in Yoruba Land



These elements are figuratively used for prayers to bless the new-born and wish the child a great future. It should be tolerated, reawakened, and allowed to stay. Traditional African music and songs that teach morals should be encouraged and taught to the upcoming generation in order to preserve them. African heritage should be tolerable to African Christians and Muslims.

Tolerance of Social and Political Institutions

There is a need to tolerate some social institutions and political structures in multi-faith societies because they have become a part of the society. There are many socio-cultural groups and activities that are seemingly not religious in their outlook that Christianity and Islam have to tolerate. Some of these institutions help in social, educational, moral, and economic development of the society. There are a number of socio-cultural and political structures and groups all over Nigeria and they help in sanitizing and maintaining peaceful relations in the society, promoting unity and brotherhood, helping local communities, and giving voice to minorities. Some of these groups have structures that help in stabilizing the polity when there are civil disturbances and unrest. They help to reach out to people beyond the religious border lines, create awareness, and ensure peaceful co-existence through traditional mediation methods. Religious leaders should not discriminate against these groups and organisations but should make effort to find out what they really stand for and relate with them in a way that will not diminish their spiritual integrity and the sacredness of their offices. This will help such groups to continually seek the common good of all without religious bias in line with their vision and mission. Groups like Afenifere socio-cultural organisation, Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE), Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Ohaneze Ndigbo, and many others should be tolerated by Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional religionists. They should not be labelled as an unspiritual / secular group but should be seen as partners in progress for the common good like similar religious groups involved in social-economic responsibilities.

Tolerance of Peculiar Religious Practices

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria mostly campaign against the use of certain religious attires, eating of selected food because such practices are peculiar and are not inherent in their faiths and they lack understanding of what they stand for. Some of these doctrines are held in high esteem by the adherents of different religions and have spiritual implications with scriptural backings and interpretations. Muslims and adherents of ATR (African Traditional Religion) should not misconstrue, speak ill of, and not condemn practices like the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) or Holy Communion which is peculiar to Christianity as this is a sacred religious act with deep spiritual meanings. Also, speaking in tongues either "*Glossolalia* (speaking in languages not interpretable except through divine utterance) or *xenolalia* (speaking in foreign languages that is comprehensible and interpretable)" which is a peculiar feature among Pentecostal Christians should be tolerated. The recitation of the Quran in Arabic language should not also be seen by Christians as a form of Illiteracy among Muslims but as a unique way that reflects the originality of the Islamic scriptures. The wearing of "*Hijab*" by Muslim female students to schools; this is seen by many Christian religious leaders, groups, and owners of schools as a violation of the provisions of the Nigerian constitution which designates Nigeria as a secular state where no religious identity should be promoted above the other. It is regarded by some as a religious identity for distinction during religious crises and violence which can be used for targeted attacks and an indirect ploy to Islamize Nigeria. This should be tolerated as long as it is a peculiarity inherent

within the religion. There are two states in south-west Nigeria where the Christian Association of Nigeria, and Government and Muslims organizations have gone to court to challenge the legality and illegality of the use of *Hijab*. The cases are yet to be finally decided in Nigeria’s Supreme Court at the time of writing this article. It should however be noted and taken into consideration that Catholic nuns who teach in some schools and work in certain organizations - both government and sometimes private - also wear their *Habit* without any form of restriction. If the use of certain religious dress is prescribed and required by a religious faith, it should be tolerated by all and sundry and if there are security reasons behind non-usage, it should not be enforced through coercion but with dialogue. In addition, the consumption of certain foods and meat products which are forbidden and acceptable and the introduction of prayers and religious worship in government schools should be tolerated for peace to reign and for cordial relations.

Tolerance of Efforts of Inter-Religious Relations and Dialogue

Due to the several cases of religious disturbance in multi-faith Nigeria which at some time led to the loss of many innocent lives and destruction of several properties, there is a need to embrace and tolerate efforts and groups that promote inter-religious dialogue. There are a number of faith based organizations, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, programs, denominational / group campaign for religious dialogue / harmony and individual efforts by religious clerics which should be tolerated by adherents of the three major faiths in Nigeria. They are groups like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Dawah Institute of Nigeria (DIN), Programme for Christian Muslims Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), and Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC). Inter-religious / inter-faith efforts by these organizations should be tolerated and overwhelmingly supported as they contribute in a great way to foster and enhance the quest for religious harmony, inter-religious dialogue, and peaceful co-existence in religiously pluralistic society. Inter-faith cooperation and partnership should be embraced by groups and sects who hold on dearly to certain extreme beliefs and do not see the need to relate or interact with adherents of other religions either at the inter / intra religious level platform. The groups and people who do not tolerate them do not believe in ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue and their intolerance to it is mainly based on their personal / special interpretations of the scriptures. It should be noted that there are scriptures that support cooperation, interaction, partnership, and friendship with people of other faiths, and these efforts and groups should be tolerated by all.

Tolerance of Inter-Religious and Religious Education

Inter-religious education should be tolerated in schools and other learning centers particularly from the early stage as this will help children in their formative stage to develop spiritually, morally and academically. Religious education that de-emphasises radicalism, fanaticism, and particularism but promotes virtues, good morals, and behavior in the society should be tolerated. Religious education creates awareness that helps people to appreciate, accept and accommodate people of other faiths in the spirit of love and friendliness. Awolalu (1980) affirms that “all-round religious education that affects the body, mind and spirit must be given to

young people... from childhood as it helps them to develop holistically and creates the fear of God in them, which in turn makes them to develop good morals which is needed for the development of every society.” Muslims and Christians in Nigeria are always of the opinion that inter-religious and religious education can be used as a tool for conversion. Nevertheless, it can be regulated by the religious and educational authorities by ensuring that teachers of religious education in schools and colleges follow the curriculum and are monitored. Religious education should be tolerated by the three religions without fear, suspicion, and bias. The curriculum for religious education should be balanced and well-crafted by knowledgeable experts from all religions who believe in religious dialogue and embrace the attitude of tolerance towards people of other faiths. This will stem the tide of fanaticism and aid respect for adherents of the other faiths.

Intolerance to “Disorders”

In Nigeria today, there are so many disorders which have bedevilled the nation and fanned the flames and ambers of religious violence, hostility, and rivalry. These disorders stem from religious teachings, beliefs, scriptures, historical antecedents, and adherents in different form. Dopamu (1989) lends credence to it: “Religions which are meant to be the platform for peace and unity, as well as forces of reconciliation have mutually been used by many to disrupt the total well-being of people and society” (p 61). There are adherents of the three major religions in Nigeria that use religion as disorders to foment trouble and disturb the general well-being and peace of the nation.

Intolerance to Manifestations of Religious Fanaticism and Radicalism

It has become a norm for certain adherents of religious faiths to manifest fanatical and radical tendencies which are disorders that are not acceptable in a pluralistic, law abiding, sane and democratic society. These tendencies and manifestations bring about a misrepresentation of the religion to the world at large thereby giving non-adherents a different / negative worldview about what the religion preaches and stands for. Dzurgba (2010) describes such traditions as traditions that are diametrically opposed to religious tolerance and effective development which can be categorized as religious parochialism, particularism, chauvinism, bigotry, and fanaticism. This manifestation creates fear in the heart of people (citizens, residents, and visitors), increases prejudice and hatred in volatile communities that are prone to ethno-religious violence, and encourages others to tow such path of radicalism. Religious clerics, leaders, adherents, organisations, monarchs and community leaders, political leaders and institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and the world at large should not tolerate such acts of bigotry as it is inhuman in all forms. Such acts are unlawfully occupying places and communities for religious purposes, obstruction of the flow of traffic and movement (which affects many travellers and road users), taking the law into one’s hand in the name of justice, disturbance of the general peace and serenity of the populace, and community with noise and sound and the hate preaching and programs that incite young people to cause civil disturbance and riots.

In many communities and locality in Nigeria, religious activities are carried out at odd hours of the day and night with so much noise and sound, using *Public Address System* and horn

speakers (loud speakers). These activities are also carried out in spaces that are unlawfully occupied at odd hours of the day. This should not be tolerated but be regulated by relevant religious and government agencies because it is a disorder to so many people. The Lagos - Ibadan expressway in south-west Nigeria which is one of, if not, the busiest highway(s) in Nigeria is occupied by many Pentecostal Christian groups and churches as well as a few Muslim organizations. The rate of religious activities on this highway and the non-provision of proper, adequate traffic control mechanism at different times have caused several troubles to innocent travellers and road users which engender traffic grid lock and prevent many from getting to their destinations on time along with missing several appointments. This is also a disorder that should not be tolerated in a pluralistic society.

An example of a case of religious fanatical disorder which should not be tolerated in Nigeria happened in Kubwa, a satellite town in Abuja, Nigeria’s federal Capital on July 19, 2016. Some Muslim youths displayed acts of religious fanaticism towards a Christian female preacher that attends the most popular Pentecostal church in Nigeria and probably in Africa (Redeemed Christian Church of God). She usually goes out early in the morning to preach with Megaphone. This woman was brutally stabbed and murdered by these suspected Muslim youths. It is a disorder that should not be tolerated in any civilised society. There have been instances when worshippers of African Traditional Religion were beaten by adherents of other faiths during their annual masquerade festival which almost led to a chaos. This happens particularly in south-west and south-east Nigeria because of the insensitivity of some religious bigots who detest such cultural practices.

Another occurrence of the manifestation of religious fanaticism was when the Chief of Army staff of Nigerian Army was denied passage by members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (Shiite sect) on a major federal highway. Although, there are conflicting narratives of what truly transpired on the said day but the media (social and news) reported that the Army chief in company of some of his aides appealed severally to members of the movement to allow them passage but were denied because they were embarking on a rally. The army chief was eventually allowed passage to and fro but the soldiers who were members of the Army Chief’s entourage who were seemingly displeased with what happened attacked the Shiite members (probably to discipline and caution them) and this led to the death of several of their members and destruction of their religious community. My aim is not a justification of the acts of the members of the Nigerian Army but considering the complaints by residents of the city of Zaria in north-west Nigeria who attest that such religious fanatical acts and unruliness are prevalent among members of the group. Some of the residents similarly noted that they have been living in fear for a long time in the community and are always intimidated by members of the group who chose to maltreat fellow Muslims who are non-members of the group and non-Muslims alike. It is also important to clarify here that it is not the Shiite Islamic sect that should not be tolerated but fanaticism by members of this group who believe they are above the law and do not respect the Nigerian Constitution, most importantly the aspects on freedom of religion.

Intolerance to Particularism and Discrimination

Religious leaders, clerics, organizations, and adherents of different religions must display

intolerance to religious particularism which is a major disorder in the Nigerian religious space. Particularism is when a religious faith sees its own religion as right, correct, genuine, orthodox, and complete and others as inferior, fake, and man-made. Religious particularism is usually seen and used as a tool to promote religious discrimination and this makes other religions of no worth and value. Particularism is acceptable only when it has to do with certain religious practices pertaining to a specific religious tradition without being used to threaten the existence of other religions; and some scholars refer to it as “acceptable particularism.” The challenge with the Nigerian situation is that adherents of different religions over-stress the particularism taught by their religion in public and non-religious spaces in a way that it mid-wives disorders of religious segregation, manipulation, discrimination, and dissonance in religiously pluralistic societies. Religious segregation and manipulations which are offshoots of particularism have polarized the Nigerian religious space which has led to disorders that caused inter-religious and intra-religious divisions, crisis, hatred, and prejudice.

Intolerance to Domination in Religious and Non-Religious Platforms

Religious domination is another common disorder prevalent in multi-faith Nigeria. This occurs when practitioners of a religion believe they are superior to non-members of their faith either because of their numerical growth, financial strength, political influence, social status, government support, educational achievements, and religious / spiritual exploits displayed in the media. This disorder refers to other religions as non-existent and irrelevant, hence their activities and adherents are subjugated forcefully and denied their own due rights and privileges which is against the provision of religious freedom in the Nigerian constitution. There is intra-religious domination as well as inter-religious domination and this should not be tolerated as every religion has its own uniqueness and is beneficial at a level. Intra-religious domination cuts across the three major faiths in Nigeria but is seen mostly in Christianity and Islam. The Christian Pentecostal denominations sometimes dominate the mainline churches and mainly the African Indigenous Churches when there is an ecumenical service or project. The mainline churches also dominate other denominations when there is a need to relate with the government and in certain socio-political and educational fora. This is because they are well established and have been in existence over a long period with greater experience and more structures to accommodate certain religious and social programs.

In Islam, the Sunnis dominate the Shiites in Nigeria because of their numerical strength and their leadership roles in almost all Islamic organizations which serve as umbrella bodies for the two sects. The only exception to the Sunni domination of Shiites is in the city of Zaria in Kaduna state which is regarded as the headquarters of the Shiites where they forcefully dominate the Sunnis and adherents of other religions and do not always respect the democratic, secular government. Similarly, there are times when intra-religious dominations also happen across organizational lines in Islam, e.g. members of the Ahamadiya Movement being dominated by members of Muslim Students Society of Nigeria during a general program for the *Ummah*. This sort of intra-religious domination also happens in tertiary institutions where there are two or more Muslim student groups. This is also apparent and even more prevalent among Christian student groups in tertiary institutions because of the numerous Christian student groups on campuses and

their many socio-religious activities (Mala, 2012).

African Traditional Religion is the most dominated religious faith in Nigeria; this is not unconnected with the fact that it is not a missionary faith that goes about looking for members and converting people into the faith. The federal government and even the state governments in Nigeria do not recognize their existence, and their leaders and adherents are dominated during inter-religious worship and government functions. This form of disorder that relegates to the background a religion with universal strength should not be tolerated. Muslims also dominate Christians and Christians also do likewise when the principal head at the three strata of government or in any agency, organization, or institution is either a Muslim or Christian. Sometimes it is so obvious, other times it is not, and this domination occasionally leads to in-fighting, persecution, demotion, inefficiency, under productivity, and breeds hate and prejudice. Nevertheless, it is a disorder which should not be tolerated in a democratic and religiously pluralistic society like Nigeria – a country that is easily engulfed with religious crises.

Intolerance to Organizations and Individuals that Promote Fundamentalism

In the last twenty years, there has been a notable surge in the emergence of religious movements and organizations that promote religious radicalism, fanaticism, fundamentalism and even terrorism generally in Africa and particularly in Nigeria. These organizations and individuals are institutions of disorders and as such should not be tolerated. If tolerated by religious or government institutions, they would cause the ambers of war and terrorism to burn all over the world. One of such organizations is the gradual emergence of the Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and *Jihad - Boko Haram* (western education / civilization is forbidden) which has caused and is still causing several havocs and wanton destruction of lives, properties (government, religious groups and private) and displacement of people and destabilization of governance in some northern states of Nigeria and other West African countries. Also, groups like the Al-Shabbab in East Africa, Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb and certain religious clerics with hate messages that encourage violence and enlisting into such organizations by unsuspecting and sincere and tolerant members of their religious faith and group. Johannes van der Walt (2016) opines that individual perspective towards tolerance and intolerance is responsible for the forming of religiously tolerant or intolerant group. These groups and individuals are disorders that should not be tolerated by all the three major religions in Nigeria and they should either be proscribed by the government or cautioned by the umbrella religious organizations they belong to.

Recommendations

In a religiously pluralistic country like Nigeria with intra- and inter- religious differences, tolerance of others and intolerance to disorders are highly inevitable to ensure continuous peaceful co-existence among the adherents of the three religions. From the foregoing, the recommendations below are made to reinforce the idea and practice of tolerance of others and intolerance to disorders.

There is need for a re-examination of the level of tolerance and intolerance particularly the

harsh stipulations in the scriptures and corpus, with a view to repudiate and revise them in line with the present realities. This will definitely call for a *re-reading* of the various written and unwritten scriptures of the three religious faiths as the case may be.

Also, it is pertinent to ensure that a conscious effort is taken to re-formulate a more dynamic, purposeful, humanity-conscious religious and moral education geared towards building religious understanding, mutual sharing, tolerance and even dialogue. Holding a regular dialogue meeting among the religious leaders and scholars who are the models of the three religious communities at the three strata of government will help to spread the virtue of tolerance.

More so, intolerance to disorders should be done peaceably with dialogues and in a friendly manner so that it will not cause intolerant disorders in the society.

Finally, the government and religious institutions should put up mechanisms that will help facilitate cordial relations and guide against intolerance to adherents of other religions.

Conclusion

If the recommendations made are adhered to, it will help to stem the tide of religious fanaticism, bigotry, and discrimination in multi-faith Nigeria. It should be noted that tolerance for others and intolerance to disorders are not a call for discrimination or destruction of certain religious values that are not in line with one's faith but an appeal for appreciation and accommodation of practices that promote love and the good of the society, and the rejection in simplicity of disorders which are associated with religion and not healthy for the common good. This is because of the copious evidence of intensive rivalry, differences, and conflict in almost all strata of life among the Muslims, Christians, and African Traditionalists.

This paper has therefore succeeded in emphasizing the need for tolerance of specific religious values and cultural practices, and intolerance to certain disorders associated with religion.

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