

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM:IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR
CHRISTIANITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Fundamentalism: Impacts and Implications for Christianity in Nigeria is the concern of this study. It is an open secret that Islamic Fundamentalism is a major challenge in our contemporary world that needs urgent attention from all and sundry. The purpose of delving into this study was the need to identify what Islamic fundamentalism is, it causes, its manifestations, history and also assess the impacts and implications for Christianity in Nigeria. The researcher employed the use of empirical research apparatus and oral interviews to arrive at his findings. Questionnaire served were analysed through the use of percentiles. The research revealed that the likely causes of Islamic Fundamentalism include but not limited to the existence of some Quranic verses which propel Fundamentalists to carry out their dastardly acts, the sponsorship and running of Madrassas (Quranic Schools) in various parts of Nigeria where pupils are taught to hate other religions is another. The determination by these fundamentalists to force Sharia on the whole country was also revealed. Economic challenges which stem from lack of access to and/or neglect of qualitative western education is another. The study also revealed that successive governments in Nigeria did not help matters as insincerity pervaded their tenures. Also, some of the Islamic Fundamentalists actions and activities also have political undertone as agitation for governance was one of the reasons given by some them for their actions. The impacts were discovered to include loss of precious lives of Christians in the country, wanton destruction of churches and worship centres, burning and looting of businesses of Christians, houses were burnt and /or destroyed, destruction of farm produce, assets were burnt down, food stuff were destroyed, Christians were and wounded and brutalised, dreadful massacres became the order of the day, genocide of Christians became rampant. The research further revealed that the implications of all these impacts for Christianity in Nigeria include decimation of the Christian population, increased violence which makes youths to carry weapons instead of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, increased illiteracy as schools are closed down, increased poverty since many can no longer settle down to earn a living, increased diseases- there are many displaced persons in the church who have developed health challenges like kidney failure, depression and high blood pressure all linked to the hardship they went through. Other implications are that, there would be increased dependency and also increased armed robbery cases because many people now have access to weapons. There is increase in the number of orphans and vulnerable children in the church, evangelism and discipleship had to be halted in many parts of Northern Nigeria which may result to backsliding of some Christians. The researcher finally made some recommendations which include the need for strategic evangelism and discipleship starting from areas not affected, participation in politics by Christians, forgiveness and the need for Christians to have some level of knowledge about Islam.

5.2 Conclusion

This work has indeed revealed that every Christian needs to have a level of knowledge of what Islam as a religion is, in order to have a better understanding of how and why Islamic Fundamentalists behave the way they do. This research has shown that the reasons are inherent in Islam as a religion and also in economic and political factors. These reasons are however not tenable for any adherent of any religion to unleash terror on Christianity or any other religion for that matter. Christianity has suffered much in the hands of Islamic Fundamentalists in the last few decades but much more in the past six years in the hands of Boko Haram.

These attacks have negatively affected Christianity in Nigeria generally and Northern Nigeria in particular. The impacts manifested in loss of precious lives of Christians in the country, wanton destructions of churches and worship centres, burning and looting of businesses of Christians, houses were burnt and /or destroyed, destruction of farm produce, assets were burnt down, food stuff destroyed, Christians were wounded and brutalised, dreadful massacres became the order of the day, genocide of Christians has become rampant.

The implications of all the above include but cannot be limited to the following: increased evil in our country, increased deaths especially of Christians

leading to decimation of the Christian population, increased violence which makes youths to carry weapons instead of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, increased illiteracy as schools are closed down, increased poverty since many can no longer settle down to earn a living, increased diseases- there are many displaced persons who have developed health challenges like kidney failure, depression and high blood pressure all linked to the hardship they went through.

Other implications are that there would be increased dependency and also increased armed robbery cases because many people now have access to weapons. There is the likelihood of increased famine since farmers in those areas affected cannot go to their farms any longer and so food production may drop. Also because of the sufferings people have gone through, there could be increased hatred. There would definitely be increase in the number of orphans and vulnerable children that the church would have to cater for. In addition to all these, many whose faith in the Lord Jesus was not strong may go back to idolatry in search of immediate power that can conquer their enemies. People have passed through a lot and some have gone insane as a result there could be increase in the number of insane people. The church already has family break down as many families have been separated without information about the whereabouts of some members of the family. Beyond all these, is the multiplier implication that Christianity is already experiencing set back in those areas affected by Islamic insurgency in particular and the whole of Christendom in Nigeria in general.

5.3 Recommendations

It is imperative at this juncture to make certain recommendations on the way forward concerning the impacts and implications that Islamic Fundamentalism has for Christianity in Nigeria.

First and foremost, is that Christians really need God's leading in this matter because like Jesus said "The children of this world are wiser than the children of light..."(Luke 16:8) In essence, Christians need to seek God's face concerning the matter on a serious note and not because of any reason of propaganda. We need Davids of our time who will come in the strength of the Lord and not weapons and like Daniels and his friends who will say our God is able to save us (Daniel 3:17). We need to understand the power base of the enemy and mobilize the power of God to uproot every impact of the enemy. Churches need to enlighten its members more on religious developments in this country. Our churches need to disciple members, enough of churchgoers. Those that know their God shall be strong and do exploit! Daniel 11:32.

Secondly, Christians need to learn from the experience of nations like Turkey. Learning from the collapse of Christianity in the present day Turkey which is situated partly in Europe and minor Asia where Apostle Paul laboured to establish churches, the name "Christians" was first mentioned in Turkey (Antioch), the largest church auditorium Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in Europe was in Turkey. From history, Mary the mother of Jesus was taken to Turkey by Apostle John, till date her room has become a tourist centre. Present day Turkey now has 96% Muslims and 0.02% Christians and the rest other religion. How did Turkey get to this point? It was largely due to political indifference of the Christians there. Nigerian Christians should

