

THE EFFECT OF BOKO-HARAM INSURGENCIES ON THE NIGERIAN
BAPTIST CONVENTION CHURCHES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES,
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OGBOMOSO.

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.

OLUWOLE OLAWUYI AFOLABI

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian Baptist Convention missionary effort in the northern part of the country has made a landmark which cannot be forgotten. It is unfortunate that, the emergence of Boko Haram sect in the north affects the church greatly in the northern Nigeria. Book Haram is the congregation of the people of tradition for proselytism and Jihad. It is an Islamic group and *takfiri* militant and terrorist organization based in the northeast of Nigeria, north Cameroon and Niger. The sect was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002. The organization seeks to establish pure Islamic stated ruled by Sharia law, putting a stop to what seems westernization. Religious and political sentiments of certain people in the nation is behind the existence of this sect. Boko Haram trains and recruits fighters into the sect. Northern part of the country is the centre of their activities. The sect vehemently disagree with western education, civilization and Christianity. The sect has destroyed many churches and many innocent lives have died. This poses challenges to Christian faith. Therefore, this study titled: *The Effect of Boko Haram Insurgencies on Nigerian Baptist Convention churches in Northern part of Nigeria examined, religious crisis in Nigeria, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Boko Haram and Baptist Churches in Northern part of Nigeria.* The study revealed that Boko Haram violence makes some local Baptist churches to relocate from Muslim dominated area. Many missionaries and pastors have left the environment. Many Christians hide their religious identity for safety. The study is descriptive in nature, therefore the researcher employed descriptive method to analyze the effects of Boko Haram violence on Baptist Churches in the northern part of Nigeria. The study established that individual Christians in the north, Nigerian Baptist Convention, and government have roles to play to eradicate the activities of Boko Haram in the north. On the basis of this, it was recommended that, the church should have single voice against terrorism attack in Nigeria. The church should rise to the task of doing mission. Church response to Boko Haram insurgencies should be informed by Biblical standard. Every Christian in the northern part of the country should pray for God's protection and depend on God alone. Every Christian should make use of the opportunity of Boko Haram insurgencies to witness Jesus Christ. The Nigerian Baptist Convention leaders should speak against Boko Haram insurgencies. The Nigerian Baptist Convention should provide maximum support for her Baptist Churches in the North.

5.2 CONCLUSION

A church is the community of believers in Jesus Christ. It is an assembly of redeemed men and women united to Christ and one another in love. The coming together of local Baptist churches in Nigeria whose conviction are based primarily on the Biblical standard is Nigerian Baptist Convention. Nigerian Baptist Convention through the western missionaries and Yoruba traders who are majorly Ogbomoso indigenes planted many Baptist Churches in the Northern part of Nigeria. This has made indelible positive impact in Northern part of Nigeria.

The study established that activities of Boko Haram have destabilized so many things in Northern part of Nigeria. Many people have become homeless, orphans, widows and widowers. Not only that, the view of Boko Haram that western education is forbidden (Haram) has made them to bomb schools, market places, police stations and government properties that reflect western culture. The study revealed that poverty in the region where Boko Haram sect exists makes them to recruit many people into the sect. In Islam the killing of non- Muslims is a religious service which attract divine rewards and support from Arabian world make the sect to thrive. Boko Haram through its activities has caused serious damage to Baptist Churches in Northern Nigeria.

The government inability to wipe out the sect seems to be political, may be the The aim is to divide Nigeria because of political power tursle. The Baptist Churches in Northern part of Nigeria should hold their faith in God and know that God is on their side. The church in the apostolic age was persecuted, yet she fulfilled God's mandate. The more Christians were persecuted, the more the Christianity was rooted in the apostolic. It is believed that the activities of Boko Haram will never wipe out Christian faith from the northern Nigeria.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This work has examined the effect of Boko Haram insurgencies in the Nigerian Baptist Convention churches in the Northern Nigeria, in the light of this, the following recommendations are provided with the hope that if properly implemented, the activities of Boko Haram will be checked and their negative activities will be put to an end.

A. Church

- 1) The church should have single voice against terrorism attack in Nigeria.
- 2) The church should rise to the task of effective mission activities
- 3) Church response to Boko Haram insurgencies should be informed by Biblical standard.
- 4) The church should pray for God's protection over her members
- 5) The church should be strategic in looking for lands and areas to plant churches.

B. Individual Christians

- 1) Every Christian in the northern part of Nigeria should pray for God's protection and depend on Him alone.
- 2) Every Christian may make use of the opportunity of Boko Haram insurgencies to witness Jesus Christ
- 3) Every Christian should be sensitive to security challenges of his/her environment.

C. Nigerian Baptist Convention

- 1) The Nigerian Baptist Convention leaders should speak against Boko Haram insurgencies on the radio, new papers and internet facilities

- 2) The Nigerian Baptist Convention should provide maximum support for her Churches in Northern Nigeria.
- 3) The Nigerian Baptist Convention should pray against Boko Haram insurgencies.
- 4) The Nigerian Baptist Convention should call on governments to be aware of the areas that need security agents and actions

D. Government

- 1) The government should provide poverty alleviation programme for northern youths
- 2) The government should improve on the security facilities of the nation.
- 3) The government should take good care of citizens who are victims of Boko Haram insurgencies.
- 4) The government should encourage religious dialogue as much as practicable.