

RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND ITS ACCENTUATION OF POVERTY AND VIOLENCE IN THE POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Religion generally refers to the humans' ultimate veneration of a superior or supernatural force on which their intellect, self-worth and perception of all the different ecological elements of the universe revolve. The art of blind admiration, adoration or infinite attachment to a supreme authority as religious qualities where passion, fear overrides reason symbolises religious fanaticism or extremism is the issue handled by this paper. Either within the bosom of African traditional forms of worship, Christianity or Islam Africans' attachments to religious mores and values even with the collusion brought on them by forces of change, their attachment to spirituality or forms of faith has remained outstanding. In any guise Africans have remained deeply entrenched in profound religious practices which have significantly defeated the moral essence of religion in time and space. In fact, fantasies of mystic filaments built on the realm of religions have helped to sustain poverty and provoke violence and divisions which prevail almost everywhere, manifesting itself in the form of severe hunger; high illiteracy ratio, naïve policies, low investments and the possibilities of violent extremism. From the analysis of data churned from primary and secondary sources, this study exposes how Christianity and African traditional Religions have been using skewed theology to morph brains as well as mystify and normalize inequality among African folk. It carefully brings out how this has been a serious impediment to sustainable development through its propensity to generate violence and hatred among an otherwise peaceful folk. It submits that these religions do differ in approach and content but that Christianity, Islam and African Religion in some of its teaching have helped to sustain hopes and build illusions which discourage any worthy initiative towards poverty alleviation. It is therefore a contribution to social change dynamics in post-colonial dialectics.

Keywords: *Religious Extremism, Poverty, Accentuation, Africa and Violence*

Introduction

The post-colonial History of Africa is littered not only with the contradictions that were both born and shaped by colonization with all its accessories but also with the new responsibilities of fighting poverty and other ills that were part of that season. The new states and people that animated all the contours of African modern economy and traditional life no matter the level of their educational

attainment from 1960 were in the overall deeply religious.¹ African religious extremism was therefore built on the complexities of issues most of them intricately connected with the depth of worth and/or value plus degree of mysticism which an overwhelming majority of them attached to African Traditional Religion. To this should be added the alien forms of worship and practices that came along with Christianity and Islam. Religiosity in Africa is not in any way new or alien.² Islam and Christianity plus other religions have alien connections but the idea of worship of a supreme God is as old as the continent itself. The paper specifically identifies the firm belief in witchcraft and endemic spirits to be permanent elements of time, energy/resources wastage and connects how these have been pampering inequality as well as short-circuiting sustainability and development in most parts of Africa. From the available evidence, it opines that sustainability and development in most parts of the African continent remains a farfetched concept not only because of poor concepts of sustainable development sustained by weak institutions and poor governance but also on account of the rising inability of the indigenous folk to break away from obsolete religious fantasies and extremism that have propagated violence and division among African folks. It offers an argument which is valid not only to Africans and their communities. This submission drives across the idea that most societies under the grip of religious fantasies that; the religious components plus anthropological mores and values have to be taken into account in building sustainable developmental policies else, any narrative and action towards this; else any effort in this direction will continue to yield undesirable fruits. The paper exposes the special context and issues around African religious extremism, the authors of African religious faith, the different component of religions and how they fomented poverty and violence in post independent Africa.

1. The Context and Values of African Religious Folks

Religion has always possess the responsibility of building good morals, permeating love, assuring continuity and harmony of all human beings who are at the core of all theologies and theories of creation.³ The perception of good and bad-desirable and undesirable, life and death not only in Africa but even in advanced societies are principles best appreciated within the realm of religion.

¹African Religiosity has been alternatively analysed in social sciences scholarship. See Anthony and Akinwalein "African Theology and Dogmatic Responsibility for the Christian God in God, Bible and African Traditional Religion. *Acts of SIST International Missiological Symposium 2009*, edited by Bede UcheUkwuije, Enugu: SNAAP Press, 2010 and in "On the Leadership Role of Theologians in the Church," in *Church Leadership and the Christian Message*, Proceedings of the 17th and 18th Conferences of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria. Edited by Francis A. Adedara, Edo State, Nigeria: CA THAN, 2004 along with Tagheu Jean-Paul in Religions, Business and Violence in Africa: From Material Poverty to Spiritual Poverty" in *Hekima Review*, no. 52 May 2015 all insist on the fact that African religiosity is deeply rooted in their cosmological world views and has deep roots in their perception of life. Though with some slight difference they agree in details that the idea of the influence of a supreme being who is at center of all human activity and who could be pleased through different intermediaries is essentially an African affair.

²The history of Pre-colonial Africa has dealt with a myriad of alternative forms of worship. At the centre of each action was the notion of God to whom all of them owed their survival and/or wellbeing. Prayers and incantation which was lavishly sustained by sacrifices shrouded for the most part in emotional obscurantism.

³ See details on Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and African Culture*, Cambridge: Fakenham Limited, Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp.99-100.

Going by the degree of African attachment to religious values, one will expect the continent to have been turned into a paradise of righteous men/women but this has unfortunately been the exact contrast. With such a tragic misrepresentation among the African folk, questions have emerged to put the whole essence of African religiosity and/or the blind emotionalism in their religious fate into serious doubts. Such worries and inquiries summed up to justify the beliefs anchored by religious nihilist buttressing the contention that religion is the opium of the down trodden.

Apart from the mere desire to shape morals and approaches to basic needs, most Africans have exaggerated their love for God(s) and anything connected to supernatural spirits.⁴ Such flimsy postures by a folk haunted in their daily encounters by several evils have continued to bedevil the continents' growth. This has been worrisome in societies where the leading cartel has allowed itself to be cocked up by blind submission to mysticism under the guise of freedom or democracy.⁵ As noted above, most African religious folk have gone into a sort of trance world akin to the mediaeval period where religious dogmatism and emotionalism overshadowed reason.⁶ The strength of our evidence permits us to opine that this extremism has made Africa a parody of development with most of its inhabitants leaving in abject poverty along with violence on the rise. Such an understanding can better be grasped from a detailed study of the special context and makers of the religiosity of African folks.

1.1. The Literary Justification

The issues raised and sustained by this paper did not arise in a void. They are premised in the growing scholarship elaborately developed by Ali Masuri, Chiekh Anta Diop, Kizerbo Joseph, Davidson Basile, Walter Rodney, Ayettey George and Ngwane George. These scholars each in its own angle provides startling evidences⁷ which stand to suggest that Africa was made and marred in abundance but that her veritable problem came from lack of self-actualization. Africa is privileged to be held as the original home of man (*Homo Sapiens Sapiens*), the birth place of human civilization and host to abundant human and natural resources but at the same time unfortunately haunted by her past rather than blessed by it.⁸ An important aspect of this past that needs constant research is the flexibilities of her cultures and traditions to cope with the extraneous forces of change that have encumbered the growth of her communities.

⁴ Ibid., p.26.

⁵ At best, it is worrying for Africans to have accepted the democracy as a form of government and to have thought that Freedom and Rights could be respected or given as in pure western states with track records of growth. Excessive freedom and the attempt to some sort cut and paste the practice of democracy as applied elsewhere in Europe or America is responsible for the disorder we have in most of our states today.

⁶ Cimadamore, Mittlemark, Lie and Ottomoller (eds), *Development and Sustainability, The challenge of Social change* (London: Foundry Zed Books Ltd, 2016), p.1.

⁷ These evidence ranges from, the great kingdoms of Zimbabwe (Muanamotapa), Pyramids of Egypt, The Borno Caliphates as well as the Fascinating pleasantries of the empires of Western Sudan. For other raw details see F.K. Buah in *Ancient Civilization and the chronicles of Ibn Batuta*, Al Bkri, Ibn Kaldoun, Al Yakubi.

⁸ Davidson Basil in *The Black Mans' Burden*, George Ngwane in *Wayforward for Africa*, Fanon Franz in *The Wretched of the Earth* and George B.N Ayittey in *Africa in Chaos* all present interesting account on the African trends. Though with different logical conclusions they are at least united by the fact that some pretentious religious piety has been built amongst African folk to distort proper planning thereby handicapping most development endeavors.

Pointedly, this trend is located in the African religious Worldview which is deeply rooted in all the intricacies of African traditional Religion (ATR).

1. 2. The Values and Prime Movers of African Traditional Religion

African traditional religion in its entire tenets do bestowed enormous emphasis on the concept of good and evil. This religion stressed on two sets of gods that determine the outcome, knowhow and the destination of each individual. These are variably, the first prime movers of African Religiosity. In all or in part, prime movers of African religiosity include (a) the god of goodness where love, care and protection was assured through the constant intervention of intermediaries like the spirits, the ancestors and other signs or symptoms.⁹ Here every one plus members of his homestead have the duty to win the admiration of the gods through good deeds. These deeds included, honesty, charity, chastity, respect of others, self and societal established norms or more. The respect of these mores in an African society came or went with so many responsibilities most of them having to do with the protection or even veneration of the established leadership as well as the religious orders.¹⁰ These orders differed from one society to the other but in whole, exacted each African adult with the elastic task of pleasing the gods and ancestors through a chain of prayers, libation, sacrifices plus other forms of incantations. The love of God that had to be manifested through a dignified treatment of every human being provided the strings where peace was assured and where societies far and near were bonded together in the mutual contract of coexistence.

The other set of gods in this realm were shrouded in all the facets of evil and any other thing that the devil and wickedness were believed to entail. According to this mentality, these gods were responsible for evil acts and arts. Evil practices like occultism, witchcraft, jealousy, killing, plus anything that had connections with ill luck and poor conduct were held to be major attributes of these set of gods. The love, respect or reverence for the good gods automatically secured hatred from the evil god thereby, placing the concerned individual or society temporary out of the trouble orbit. This continued to sustain the belief on life after death and so ancestral worship remained greatly upheld and protected amongst the African folk.

1. 3. Poverty and Violence in the African Religious Psyche

With regards to poverty and violence, African communal life styles and its religious tenets provided enormous allowance for the protection of the needy in the society. In a way, there was a notion widely upheld that each individual at birth was created in god's image implying that respect and reverence for humans without recourse to race, sex or religious orientation was an indispensable duty. The fon and other men and women who had religious titles and roles did not at any time attempt to build fantasies around themselves out of the religious intent. With this, they protected the needy through an erection

⁹ B.Y., Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa; Gnosis Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (London: James Carrey and Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2000), p.15.

¹⁰ The veneration of royalty and all its forms is premised in this realm of thinking. See Victor, Bong Amaze, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History* (Yaoundé: University Press, 2002), p.5. Also see the veneration of chiefs in societal building in Aborisade, Oladimeji (ed) *Local Government and the Traditional Rulers in Nigeria* (Ife: University of Ife Press, 1985).

of a judicial system where bias was almost unthinkable. Though in some areas like among the Kingdoms of Dahomey, Chitua, Akan and other centralized polities there was social class distinction, both the reverence plus fear of divine punishment rendered the discharge of justice impartial and revered by many. In this realm people were treated with due respect thereby, destroying any form of violence as protest for societal injustice. This way religiosity was done as a matter of true confession and so obedience was always almost automatic.¹¹ Men of god or of religion did take upon themselves the duty to perform tasks that ran counter to the teachings of their faith. At worse, they were ready just to do the necessary. Among the Bantu and semi Bantu of central Africa, men of god rarely attempted to take the honour due god to their account neither were they ready to blaspheme by distorting religious practices for selfish motives. In areas like among the Mandeke of Ghana, Tuaregs of Western Sahara, the Efigs of the bight of Biafra, shrines and temples were erected to offer sacrifices to the gods where peace was always perceived to be secured. Such values and practices were enough to discard any ligaments of violence.

With religious values controlling behavioural patterns to all without exception, each societies established its own *modus operandi* in securing basic needs and so poverty was largely discarded or at worse, enveloped.¹² There was an overall perception of a supreme God who had boundless love for Mankind. This God in all aspects was held to be omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. However, this was sharply contrasted by the fact that; they held that some of the minor gods could punish their very creation with curses.¹³ In any case, pristine African societies and their religion helped in their own way to lighten the grip of poverty on most African folk which contributed its own share in eliminating various forms of violence. This changed diametrically with the arrival of a new interface during the post-colonial era when all the realms of religion were overshadowed by fundamentalists or extremist apostles.

2. Alien Religions in Africa and the Fomenting of Poverty and Violence

It is somewhat absurd to refer to Christianity and Islam as alien religions to the continent of Africa because her history was shaped by the growth/expansion of these two major forms of faith. However, their contributions and longevity of practice even by a large African folk have not helped to trim down the African religious mind and its religions. Rather, Africans have profited from such percolation of forms of worship to redesign their daily survival notably; attempting to answer the basic questions that underline the principles of demand and supply. It is this attempt that has erected perceptions which some of the time puts the moral essence of religion into a sordid test.

The nexus for the falsification/adulteration of Christian and Islamic teachings to nurse and pamper poverty and violence was established by neo-colonial

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ Karl Grebe, Wilfred Fon "Confusion about Cultural Values Versus Biblical Good" *In African Traditional Religion and Christian Counselling*, (Bamenda : Graphic Design Missions Publishing House, 1997), p.24. Similar ideas are graphically represented in N.T Anderson in *The Bondage Breaker*, (Oregon: USA, Harvest House Publisher, 1990), p.15.

manipulations that offered so many opportunities to men of religion. As indicated earlier, the Church/mosque as moralising and transforming agencies were required to play their modest roles in the nation building projects. This could not be done without a corresponding abandonment of some of the fine virtues that religiosity entailed. Of course religion was a key vector through and within which most colonial agencies were erected in Africa and did not just end with the theoretical demise of colonization. Missionaries, pastors, priest, sheik and other men of God or of the gods were needed in number to educate/orient the largely uneducated African laities of the need to join the colonial cum-modern forces to establish a society where tradition and modernism peacefully cohabited.¹⁴

2.1. Christianity/Islam and its accentuation of Poverty and Violence

The African Post-colonial economy incidentally provided an environment which the different political actors and churchmen exploited wholesale to their personal or political advantage. Apart from this, churches were seen by the emerging political elites to be capable of serving like vote banks /campaign channels in the new system of power ownership and transfer where the game of numbers through election was the most determining factor. In this guise, unscrupulous men of God began venturing into politics and allowed some of the ills of the society to creep into church. Some of these societal ills were dishonesty and absence of care and above everything else; the inability to love unconditionally.¹⁵ With these developments overburdening men of religion with increasing responsibilities, most of them traded the sanctity and love of all and sundry worshipped by all religions for personal pleasures and riches. Indeed, the abundant variance of Christian denominations worked in favour of these vacillating positions by men of god. There was also the emergence of a wave of Pentecostal churches of the Christian faith with an estranged leadership who were ready to toy with almost all aspects of human welfare for their personal gains. As if pricked by demonic forces, some pastors, priests and missionaries of the mainland churches systematically became overwhelmed with new doctrines and lifestyles where attention had tactfully been removed from the cardinal objective of the church to self-aggrandisement. With this, the church, mosque or any religious unit where such ulterior motives were the moving force, unfortunately turned out to be like business centres where the manipulation of the willing but ignorant converts was mounted and made concrete. It is in line with this reflection that Jean Paul Tagheu notes that:

The Church or Mosque is like a 'Money shop' for business and traffic, similar to what Jesus saw and corrected in Jewish Temple in John 2: 13-22. God is simply used for this business and economic purpose, that is, for power and prosperity. Salvation is no more the end of one's membership in religion, but wealth, prosperity, materialism under religious pretext and motives. In this context, the Church or the Mosque is no longer made for praise and worship; for the love of God and of neighbour. She becomes the assembly of/for money. God is seen as a Superman, a Super God not different from a Supermarket, which can freely provide us everything we need. Therefore, God's

¹⁴ Grebe and Fon, "African Traditional Religion" p.37.

¹⁵ *ibid*

commandment of worship is transgressed on behalf of their businesses.¹⁶

It was therefore intriguing for churches and mosques that were overwhelmingly held to be agencies of moral transformation to transpose the name and the entire paraphernalia of God into a marketable commodity to be sold to the most confused clients. This was indeed an unfortunate practice in the growth of alien religious agencies in Africa because such practices; shifted attention away from Christ/Mohamed or any other intermediary of faith to the men themselves. The worship that was often accorded to God with the boundless love to his creation gradually gravitated away from the position of central command and was made to lodge mostly on individuals who pretended for the most part to own magic solutions for the array of problems that animated lifestyle in the continent at that time. In the 1980s and 90s, this religious ostentation was fertilized by the existence of so many anxious but poorly trained and schooled youths who were gradually losing hope about anything that the world of opportunity was offering.

This development was substantiated and even marketed by the emergence of a sort of religious heresy buttressed by fundamentalist among the Pentecostal forms of faith called prosperity religion. Though promising in name, the content and interpretation of this kind of teaching rather engineered poverty. In the first place the teachings emphasised on the fact that God has the duty to keep any of His children at the top and never at the bottom but failed always to outline the duties of Gods children to merit this top placement by God their father. By failing to mention the duties of each individual like hard work and cautious lifestyles, these men kept most of its Christians especially youths whose frustrations had pushed them to these churches lazy and lacking in any worthy project that could help to better their lot like further education and investment. With slanted and out of context biblical citations like the need of each individual to set his/her mind on things above, the youths or the believers of these forms of faith (religious groups) simply became addicted to a new world inhabited by a chain of blames on either the ancestors, demonic forces or the governing authorities. There was little or no attempt by these classes of people to do an introspection to know whether their stagnation or lack of the life basics was emerging from personal failures.¹⁷ This indeed is a tragic display of lack or self-mastery which is cardinal point of poverty with violence likely to be the outcome.

Though the men of God in this new dispensation were generally men of little training and orientation, their tact in luring the unemployed, societal and emotional frustrated people especially youths was overwhelming. Their songs, charismatic theology readily seemed to address the litany of problems their followers had at the time. Most of these problems were linked either to money, wealth or riches and with this, need arose to select biblical verses that moved in the direction of making poverty either very normal or of no prime consideration.

¹⁶ Jean -Paul, Tagheu OP, "Religious Business and Violence in Africa". p.64

¹⁷ C.H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, (Michigan Ann Arbor: USA Vine Books Servants Publication, 1989), p.33.

This tilted logic was employed wholesale thereby overwhelmingly duping their followers to cast their minds and hearts away from earthly things since any concentration on them was definitely going to clash with most of them who were having stinking passion for such patterns of wealth. In this guise these preachers decided to pamper poverty within churches by using the poverty accommodating verses like the paradox of the rich and the poor when it is said: “the poor shall pass through the eye of the needle to heaven while the rich shall remain outside with their camels”; and “Blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the kingdom of God”. Together with clauses like the duty of each Christian is to cast his/her heart on things above and not on earthly arenas where maggots were always ready to destroy alerted the already poor Christian unto the spirit of spending their lot in enriching the church economy leaving little for investment on sustainable projects.

The effect of this was that the spiral of poverty continued scaling high among the church converts, As if this was not enough some of these self-made church men elevated themselves beyond the realms of ordinary reproach and overburdened their followers with some “seeds to sow” within the church economy that needed money. The problem with these impoverishing schemes was not only that the seeds sewed failed to yield desired fruits even in the long run but more that ;the seeds sown went most of the time to swell the accounts of these dubious men in cassocks.

2.2. The Reality and Implications of Poverty in the African Post-colonial Religious Realm

A greater part of the decolonization was done through wars and other forms of civil strife which substantial materialized in some form of freedom but this as indicated, did come with the much cherished opportunities. The fracas on fabric of state unity were so many so much that most post-colonial administrations resorted to some forms of dictatorship that sufficiently frightened the people into submissions. Hopelessness and desperation emerging from civil, tribal wars with its visible outcome like hunger, strife, poverty and disease incidentally took away the bastions of self-esteem that the Africans had for themselves. This was accentuated by the fact that patterns of medication and the much cherished protection by the traditional hierarchy and ancestral agents seemed not to work again properly as widely upheld prior to this period.

In any case, the sores of war, the threat of hunger, poverty and disease provided an atmosphere where a sort of religious counterfeit preachers exploited wholesale to further impoverish the already embattled African folk. Poverty does far more than keeping one away from the realm of comfort. It diverts attention from proper planning and makes the mind crime ridden. It takes away the ability to do good and sterilized the cords of societal unity.¹⁸ Poverty makes the fearful and therefore less willing to engage in any venture that can improve upon their lot. It reduces the affected individual or group investment incentives and durable choices as well as places such cases on a lane of infatuation/obsession to any idea that seems likely to provide a solution. Within

¹⁸ R.G Gehman ,African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective,(Kijabe Kenya:Kesho Publication,1989).p.44.

the late 1960s and the 70s, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Cameroon and Ivory Coast had most of its population in great desperation.¹⁹

As indicated in the earlier, it was not plain Christian teachings consonant to the Elizabethan or post reformation teachings that sustained poverty and violence in Africa during the post-colonial era. It was spirit and tone of religious piety which prized materialism far more than reverence for God or the Gods. These were overwhelmingly Pentecostal churches and other communicants of the African traditional faith who were so obsessed with the gospel of prosperity which they presented as a quick solution to the many problems the Africans faced at the time. These men joined the defunct colonial enterprise and the callous indigenous leadership to accentuate the tone of fear on the poor African folk. They were fast enough to define poverty from their own skewed angle and to link their general lack not on the absence of sustainable methods of productions and investment but more on the punishment/curses from God as punishment for their non-compliance with the basic teachings of religion. In accordance with this mind-set, Africans were materially poor but could after submersion and obedience to their new church hierarchy be blessed with glamour of riches best understood only with the bane of the supernatural realm. By dividing poverty into material and in material types which were non complimentary, this people succeeded to morph the brains of the people to accept that it was a blessing to be materially poor and spiritually rich. To them these two facets of poverty were clearly separable from each other in real life. Consonant with the demands of the time and the expectations from the poor but curious and confused folk, these liberal churches,²⁰ adopted a tone, diction (preaching philosophy) that appealed to millions of people at the time. By using symbols and signs to concoct wonders, these people at first sight seemed to provide the magic solutions to the myriad of problems that most Africans had in this season. The fact that some if not most of them made wider use of psychology and probability to forecast certain outcomes attracted a wider following from the masses.

3. African Post-Colonial Problems and the New Spiritual Interface

Mutations in Africa from the end of World War II by 1945 gave birth to an interesting arena of history key among the events being the process of decolonization with its astonishing outcomes in the 1960s. The emergence of new countries (nation states) however failed to restore the monarchical system that reigned prior to colonization as well as to reintroduce the absolutist system of government that owed its tenets and/or operational tools to the philosophy of African traditional Religion. Worse again, the states formed conformed very minimally to ethnic affiliations or historical links and as if this was not enough, colonial and religious mores that ran counter to African traditional philosophy produced a thick foam of problems that bedevilled states and nations crafting pursued by the African post-colonial emerging elite.²¹ Again, this new departure

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.67.

²⁰ Grebe and Fon, "African Traditional Religion", p.26.

²¹ Almost all the states and nation that emerged in Africa from the 1960s and any time after were crafted in the inspiration or complete demarcation lines rooted in the Berlin conference of 1884-5. The trouble with this is that such arrangements were by far and large very artificial and therefore difficult to govern or

represented a marked shift from the hopes nursed during the struggle for independence as well as the teachings of George Patmore, Kwame Nkrumah and WEB Dubois in the realm of the pan African movement. This invariably precipitated the demise of the pan African movement by 1963.²² At best, decolonization did not in any way signal a complete return to that kind of an African society that blossomed prior to European imperialism and their colonization process but rather, a confirmation of the arrangements that were made at Berlin. Interestingly these arrangements cared little about African convenience. To this should be added the fact that, Islam and Christianity were part and parcel of this colonial package. As established religions they had concordant perceptions on the existence of one God who went by different nomenclatures. There was however a world of difference among adherents of these two religions on how this God and his associates could be approached or pleased.²³ This difference only helped to compound the African post-colonial problems.

The problem with this change was not only rooted in the erection of new institutions of governance but equally on the style of leadership and the people who incarnated the grotesque state apparatus that emerged. For the most part these startling developments contradicted the norms or values of traditional conservative societies where reasoning and action was by far and large rooted in African religions. Even with qualms Africans were incidentally forced to accommodate new realities within which both religions were to cohabit. There was in the main a form of structured society which agreed to a different logic that was not entirely based on traditional or westernized notions of power configuration. Olatunde amongst his contemporaries describe this best when he stressed that:

If the African Societies were ready and willing to be oriented to new norms and values, the structures of the societies do not make for total permeation of these values to the society from top to bottom. There are few structural links (such as political institutions) between the more traditional segments and the more westernized groups, between the elites and the masses, between the urban proletariats and the rural peasant masses between the metropolis or centre (such as Lagos, Accra, Addis

bonded into one by the administration that the departing colonizers put in place. A lot of problems that bedevilled most African countries were a product of these arrangements. See Odetola, Olatunda, *Military Regimes and Development: A Comparative Analysis of African Societies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 2002), pp. 27-28.

²² There was a deal of difference in approaches to how the whole concept of pan African could be achieved but there was enormous unity on the fact that when once the colonial powers were sent packing with their obnoxious policies, Africa could at once be reunited under a single or uniform authority. According to authors/proponents of this movement, African problems could only be solved when European boundaries were erased and new forms of governance that appealed to the African religious world view established. By 1963, colonial intrigues, internal division and international conspiracy worked in synergy and gravitated the whole idea into a dream bargain with little substantial support as the Morocco and the Casablanca groups that were formed were dissolved to form the nominal OUA.

²³ Anthony Akinwale, "Towards a Hermeneutics of Critical and Prayerful Vigilance," in *Church Leadership and the Christian Message*, Proceedings of the 17th and 18th Conferences, pp. 139-155, Jean-Marc Ela *Le Crie de L'Homme Africain. Questions aux Églises d'Afrique*, Paris: Harmattan, Coll. (Chrétien en Liberté), 1980. These two authors among others have documented the graphic details of agreement and disagreements existing between Christianity and Islam not only as world religions but also carving out their impacts in pampering poverty and violence within the African traditional milieu.

Ababa) and the periphery or the interior. Social links through which such values can spread are mere ethnic organizations whose orientations are particularistic.²⁴

This deal born out of grave necessity than of genuine love and negotiation laid the framework for the erection of a kind of pluralistic environment shrouded with so many contradictions of a kind for rural, peri-urban and urban African societies. This notwithstanding, the idea of change and its entire paraphernalia was well on course tacitly extending the frontiers of need and redefinition of poverty. This task was to be effected by the kind of people who controlled both religious business and political leadership thereafter.

3.1. Authors of African Post-Colonial Spirituality

The post-colonial History of the African folk within/South of the Sahara Desert was shaped by people who for purposes of clarity; can be grouped into three broad categories. The first category were those uncouth traditionalists who had succeeded to sail through all or part of the colonial era (C. 1884-1960) with mind-sets and /or worldviews that were overwhelmingly soaked in African traditional religion. This group was fundamentally constituted by a sort of tight conservatives who were imbued with pre-enlightenment spirits wherein; royal absolutism and the veneration of African gods prevailed. The growth of all African societies and the way they embraced religion was really firm among these classes of individuals. Apart from appreciating everything from the premise of African traditional religion where the veneration of the gods and ancestors was cardinal, this group of individuals were sufficiently reticent to change or any idea that did not square in well with their conservative mentalities.²⁵ Priest, diviners and most of the people who still remained deeply accustomed only to African sometimes rudimentary approach to issues formed the nucleus of this group. This group had its own following among African folk but at the end overwhelmingly failed to encompass the changing dynamics of an evolving world. By so doing, they incidentally laid a porous foundation for the understanding of poverty and how it could be combated. This failure admittedly planted the seeds of violence which was hitherto not seen or upheld even among Africans' nihilists as a practice.

The second forerunners of African post-colonial interface were those who through conversion and enormous exposure had tested the elixirs of other religions like Christianity and Islam that was propounded by the colonial enterprise and the trade merchants. Unlike African traditional religion that had its theocracy and world views based on an assembly of imagined thought pattern and mores, Christianity and Islam based their teachings on the Bible and the Koran and depended mostly on a single intermediary to their perceived God. Though in practice Islam still upheld the sanctity of the monarchy, both religions had on the comparative terms more comprehensive and less cumbersome approach to issues of poverty and development than African traditional religion. Within the bosom of Christianity and Islam,

²⁴. Odetola O, *Military Regimes*, p.27

²⁵. Palmer Monte, *Dilemmas of Political Development, An introduction to the politics of the developing Areas* (Florida: Florida University Press, Peacock Publishers, 1985), pp.36-8.

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African converts took up appellations like Christians, Moslems or Mohamedans which apart from making them look like a rare breed of individuals and groups of faith, negotiated a drastic departure from blind allegiance to traditional authorities who were mainly vectors of African traditional religion. As adherents to the new found faith, their responsibilities did not longer entirely served the African traditional conservative folk as obtained in the pre-colonial era but was divided between or squarely dedicated to the service of the church/mosque hierarchy and the new system of statist governance that was at en vogue then and anytime forward. It was therefore obvious that pure or conservative traditionalists and this new group could not perceive either the issues of development and poverty or violence from the same angle.

To a very large extent most of those who formed the nucleus of the Christianized/Islamised men and were schooled men, women, plantation workers and Ex-service Men. Either at home or abroad in the colonial enterprise, this breed of Africans secured enormous exposure both to these forms of foreign beliefs and education plus other pleasantries of survival notably prestige gained through acquisition of wealth and fame which ran counter to the African notion of power control and politics at the time. With time, this directly extended their scope of responsibilities, rights within the traditional economy along with consumption pattern. With the exception of British controlled areas where the policy of Indirect Rule²⁶ had been insipidly elevated to the heights of a religious dogma and within which conservative African folk (chiefs of notables) of good will were recruited to perform auxiliary roles in governance, the task of governance was essentially bestowed on these Christianized/Islamized African folks.

Belonging to a new class of elites where power plus control of people and resources out of the traditional fiefdom resided, entailed as announced earlier, responsibilities and benefits. The responsibilities had not only to do with the noble task of propounding the word of God as prescribed by the Bible and Koran but also persuading others to join the faith. Aside from religious roles this class of individuals had the arduous tasks of acting like modernizing forces not only in governance but also in trade and industrial expansion. Such responsibilities placed them at the hub of opportunities notably; wealth accumulation and prestige which helped a great deal to improve upon their lot and world view.

They were indeed so many of roles created by the departure of the colonial agencies which these semi westernized/defiled forces readily occupied. The problem with this is that the roles created, produced alien cracks on the African blocs of unity by virtually dividing families, friends and kinsmen along lanes

²⁶. For home born and historical reasons, Britain ruled a greater part of their African territories and other dominions in the Asian continent through a policy called the indirect Rule. This was a system wherein traditional rulers and institutions were technically remodelled to serve both in governance and as governing apparatus. Though several reasons accounted to the British decision to use this policy seen by a wide range of scholarship as humane, the overriding reason was that it was by far and large the cheapest and less risky way of governing the African natives given that (Britain) was less likely to engage in huge financial expenditures that could trouble their home tax payers. In 1922, Lord Lugard carefully crafted out this policy in to a Book which he titled the Dual mandate which from that time forward became the basic text of the Policy. However, the Indirect Rule in substance and practice lacked universal applicability as it was fraught with contradictions of a kind apart but the British authorities insipidly elevated it to rungs of a religious dogma and most of the time intimidated Africans to worship it as such.

of religious allegiance. These new roles and responsibilities within the statist project gained by this emerging class at the detriment of the conservative traditional folk negotiated fresh contours of property ownership thereby installing a brand of societal inequality. Islam or Christianity was not practiced the same throughout the continent nor was there a single brand of Christianity.

In spite of the fact that all Muslims in theory recognized the Koran as the ultimate source of authority, inspiration and direction, there were visible differences. With this, hate and even confusion thrived in the practice of the Islamic faith.²⁷ The case was not different amongst believers in the Christian faith. Christianity had more severe contradictions not only among tribal or ethnic lines but far more, according to leaders, church structure and even countries. The Catholic Church somehow tried to sort out itself by setting up just a few groups of cults within their yard of administration, the rest of the Christian church groups remained sufficiently divided. Akinwale presents this division and its impact graphically when he states that;

The division found in Africa is also in its numerous tribes or ethnic groups, which fight against one another. Apparently, it is as if each of our numerous ethnic groups in Africa corresponded to a particular religion. Given the westernisation of the African continent, we have imported the divided and convicting Christendom of the old Europe. Mixed with Islam and the African local religions, these religions are not coexisting in peace. In other words, they are contributing to the tearing apart of our dear continent. What we have in Africa today is a complex situation of religious disorders instrumentalized and used by politicians for selfish interests. Speaking from the context of Nigeria, which is equally relevant to other African countries and to those of the world which have the same concern.²⁸

3.2. The Real Owners/Makers of African Post-Colonial Religious Extremism

Straddling the two groups discussed above were a group of determined individuals who were numerically very few but enormous in their societal influence. This study calls this intersecting group as the men of religion or fundamentalists. Men of religion were those who controlled and defined the conduit of all forms of religions not only in the African milieu but equally in the system of modern governance dictated by the Post-colonial realities. Within the bosom of African traditional religion, men of god or religious leaders included the traditional high priests, native doctors, seers, the Chief and other titled men along with other diviners. At the heart of African religious responsibility towered the boundless duty of appeasing the ancestors and anything that the spirit world entailed by each living being regardless of the social status. This unfortunately was not matched with the corresponding rights

²⁷ While the division in fighting and confusion can be seen amongst the brands of Islamic practices among the Shiites and Sunnites in Iraq, Transjordan, Syria and Turkey in the Western world and Asia, local examples do abound in Africa to justify our case. There is division not only in approach but also in the established Islamic other in Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Benin along ethnic or tribal lines. This only helped to reinforce cleavages even among people of the same religion. There are yet very clear divisions among the Hausas, Fulbe and Akos of Nigeria and Cameroon while in Cameroon the Northern Muslims and those of the South especially from Fouta Djallon are virtually divided.

²⁸ Jean-Paul T.O "Religious Business in Africa" *Hekima Review* ,p.62.

apart from that of protection from evil spirits by the ancestors and the uncountable gods. Religious men within this sphere were solely bestowed with the task of supervising the nature, time and dispensational realities of the people. They kept the religious calendar and ensured the effective application of all religious laws. As chief communicants between the spirits world essentially formed by ancestors and a myriad of gods, their societies accorded to them an esteemed of repute far above that of the ordinary citizens. The presumed traditional importance of their profession virtually exempted from other collegial chores that collective and individual responsibilities encumbered others with.

The mosaic nature of African traditional religion and the infinite responsibility of each African folk to the gods and ancestors provoked the emergence and urgency to please the gods who were overwhelmingly believed to be always ready to offer little mercy for offenders of the mystic order. With all of this working together religiosity incidentally grew to post like a hyper link to wealth accumulation, fame or wellbeing to leaders of such forms of faith. These architects of African traditional religion were few but even in societies where they were in the majority, their influence appealed to quite a few people as many eyes were now pegged on the opportunities that the new order had inaugurated. A greater societal influence plus attack on poverty and violence was left in the hands of the authors of faith of the new foreign religions notably Islam and Christianity

Religious men within the ranks of Christianity and Islam included priest, pastors, prophets, Evangelist, Missionaries, Imam, sheik and others. By training or by vocation, each of these individuals played religious roles which obeyed their established order. In the new dispensation of abounding opportunities especially for learned men, the religious clerics other roles in political developments.²⁹ This attempt by religious men to play doubled roles in their communities kept them within the yards of tempting opportunities and this amounted colossally to what can be termed theoretical falsification or church to mosque corruption- all of them engineering poverty, crime or violence. It was in this context that the trilogy of the three Ms³⁰ became fully manifested within the African locale. This could be called the commoditisation of God(s) or the instrumentalization of religion to serve motives far different from those venerated and preached by the early religious men. That the church/mosque or African shrines were incidentally transformed into areas of fund raising was an innovation not worth its purpose in time but this seemed to be a naked reality that came with its own influence in the norm of things. It was true not only for the main churches but more for the flamboyant religions that veiled themselves behind the magic wand of providing solutions to the myriad of problems that African from all nocks and crannies faced at the time. This was sadly very true in all the areas where religion determined the several outcomes. Jean-Paul Tagheu describes this unfortunate sojourn of religious progress best when he emphasized the case of the Christian agencies by stressing that;

²⁹ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992)

³⁰ These three Ms are Missionaries, Military and Merchants. A wide scholarship believed that these M were purely involved in the same matter.

In this context, the Church or the Mosque is no longer made for praise and worship; for the love of God and of neighbour. She becomes the assembly of/for money. God is seen as a Superman, a Super God not deferent from a Supermarket, which can freely provide us everything we need. Therefore, God's commandment of worship is transgressed on behalf of their businesses. Preaching in every aspect is like fundraising covered with the name of God, of Jesus. Religious business persons have transformed and converted salvation in Jesus-Christ into utilitarianism, because for them, it is as if to be saved means to be rich, and to get all the material means and needs. Many centuries ago, Saint Paul the Apostle pictured them in this precise note of his Letter to the Philippians stating that, "their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things." (Philippians 3:19). They are money's preachers and religious traders. They "are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we have brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin."³¹

It is intriguing to note here that church men in this new dispensation became more vulnerable to issues of cash and Wealth accumulation than their converts. Salvation and leading good lifestyle which was the central duty gravitated to the hind in most religious matters creating space for the emergence of falsified or skewed religion where the morphing of mind stood supreme. The first victims of this religious scam were the converts who provided the ready market to the business of church shopping or the commoditisation of the name of God. Through this, the religious men virtually became rouged elements of social change and development through their schemes of dissuading their converts from engaging in gainful investments. In a dispensation where church converts were looking forward to building comfortable houses, engaging in industrial and business ventures so as to match up with the taste and /or consumption pattern of the changing economy, the church men were rather bent in encouraging Christians to take their hearts and eyes away from riches and flamboyance.

Paradoxically, most of these men/women veiled themselves behind the cassock to extort money and many forms of wealth from their brainwashed followers who unfortunately, had become their clients. Why they were very bent to discourage their gullible followers from aspiring into rich yards and readily obsessed with anything connected to riches and wealth accumulation remains a mystery which can be better understood under the schemes which permitted them to pamper poverty among their confused converts.

3.3. Religious Men and the Fomenting of Poverty and Violence

Time, local realities with change anthropogenic factors combined to define the religious outfit of the African folk during the entire length of the Post-

³¹For a full development of these ideas see Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

colonialEra. The fundamental issues that represented a marked shift from the religious piety that defined the code of conduct in almost all circles of administration prior to the post-colonialperiod was the fact that religiosity strangelybegan the process of engineering poverty and violence.How and why African religiosity has been producing strange fruits like poverty, hatred and violence can only be understood within the realm of the logical sequence of events that animated the African traditional niches from there hence

As earlier noted, religiosity has to do with individual or groups' perception of the Universe especially with regards to supreme spiritual and moral forces that forms his inner person. Issues of survival -of want or need -of existence -and of fulfilment of the self and societal responsibilities are all rooted in the realm of religions. Religion therefore provides a frame work where individual and groups situate their material and spiritual world being. It is this realm that the concepts of human survival like Poverty, wealth, injusticeand violence are better appreciated. Poverty is generic name but its aggregately summarised to exist when individuals or societies are incapable of meeting their basic needs either as a result of low income, lowinvestment as well as poor production capacity or planning. Societal poverty can be gauged on its inability to secure its basic needs like food, water, health, recreation affordable structures or any paraphernalia linked to comfortable life.³²There are indeeddiametrical differences between the perceptions of poverty each of this depend on the values of the society and dimension of scholarship as well as the people's world view and attainment in the spiral of growth anddevelopment. A responsible narrative on poverty will encompass thenon-tangibleaspects like level ofeducation, perceptions to change and innovations, production circuits, patterns of leisure as well as investment and planning policies.

In all its forms,decolonization landed the African folk on a lane of a more practical ways of defining andperceiving poverty and its corollaries. Unfortunately this did not comewiththe correspondingtechniques/policies on how it could be fought.³³ The new systems of governance and administrations ushered in by the departure of the colons were either changed or remodelled to suit different functional equivalences. This affected the pattern of property ownership like land and its related resources. It helped too in redefining production circuits and innovation especially in the domain of agriculture as well as the aspiration to healthy lifestyles like medication and power tenure.In all, this twist and patterns led to the adulteration/reformation of the hierarchy of norms among African traditional authorities. To this should be added the rapid growth of towns/urban centres with their own challenges as well as the new emphasis led on education and training. Though thisnew developments generally created opportunities for many African folks, it nevertheless, helped to reinforce the social class dichotomy that was part and parcel of the traditional society prior to this period.³⁴Societies became divided between (a)a mass peasant communities against the working class(b) an educated few againsta mass conservative illiterates (c) the ruralconservatists against an urban or peri-

³².Julian ,May, Einar,Braten, Uricksen S . Uricksen and Germma Wright (Eds) *Poverty and Inequality in Middle Income Countries,Policy Achievements and Political Obstacles*(London: Foundry Books ltd,2016),p.3.

³³ Ibid,p.4.

³⁴.Thomas ,W.Pagge, *World Poverty and Human Rights, Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*(Maldon ,USA: Maldon Polity Press,2005),p.6.

urban communities and (d), an African religious class against those of other alien forms of faith and worship.

The failure of most governments to provide jobs and solutions to the much expectant crowds that were in lack of food, shelter and medication engineered volumes of frustrations among the masses. In Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon and other Central African states, the central governments overwhelmingly failed to provide lasting solutions to the emerging problems that came from the frailties of those artificial formations. The direct result of this was the dramatic resurgence of hopelessness, tensions and division amongst people of same nationalities.³⁵ This directly initiated the growth of so many groups and forms of cults that harped on blind submission to mystic apprehension of the changing societal order by engaging full swing into drugs, drunkenness, alcoholism and many other activities that temporally kept their real or fictive frustrations in abeyance.³⁶ Such frivolous situations and environments only groomed hoods of poor environments where religiosity of any form exploited wholesale. These were the indices that gave room for a broad spectrum of scholarship to assert that religion thrives better in Africa as result of abounding poverty. As if this is not enough this scholarship has been able to glean evidences of situations in Africa and those of the Marxist school of thought to justify the fact that a religious person is and will always remain, a violent person.³⁷

This precarious situation only created a functional void in the norm of things which the emerging church men used to their advantage. In order to attract a massive following among the critical mass of African folk, the authors of the new brand of Christianity where wealth accumulation was the central compass fought hard and succeeded to convince most adherents to know that each individual is by birth and descent encumbered by generation and situational curses which could only be discarded through sanctification in form of deliverance if any success in the world of opportunities was to be achieved. In this prism, God represented not just a merciful and graceful super being but rather a superior being whose worshipers must be delivered from their immediate and distanced contraptions.³⁸ The crux of this kind of Christianity became banal and skewed to riches. Indeed, J.P. Taghuae captures this best when he maintains that:

God for them is just a mask or an elixir to seduce and attract their victims. They 'devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers' (Luke 20:47; Mark 12:40). Silver and gold were "the

³⁵ Collin Legum I, William Zartman, Steven Langdon and Lynn K. Mytelka, *Africa in the 1980s, A continent in Crises*, see particularly the article of Stevens Langdon and Lynn K. Mytelka title "The Changing World Economy: Post-Colonial Africa" p.151.

³⁶ It is difficult to say for sure whether the frustration of the youths in these above mentioned countries were real or trumped up because modernization and urbanization often placed the youths within the ambit of a changed taste and expectations most of the time without a corresponding change in the production limits or capacities. Such incongruence only helped to create confusion and a general air of ingratitude or non-recognition to the little booties that the states were offering by then.

³⁷ In Karl Marxists' 1848 Communist Manifesto, all life relations and causes of War could be solved only by getting rid of class contours where materialism was poorly redistributed or shared. In this realm religion was essentially like a balm (opium of the oppressed) that provided very temporal and most of the time hanging solutions to the real question of the day which was the fight against poverty, hunger and disease.

³⁸ Max L. Stackhouse, Dennis P. McCann, and Shirley J. Roels, eds., *On Moral Business: Classical and Contemporary Resources for Ethics in Economic Life* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), pp.13-15.

stumbling block of their iniquity. Their beautiful ornament they use for vainglory, and they make their abominable images and their detestable things of, whether we like it or not, in churches or mosques, each manipulated 'God' goes in war against the "Gods" of other ones. As a result, compatriots of the same country, sons and daughters of the same families become, to one another, dangerous enemies to be destroyed and evacuated, in the name of these "Gods" of mighty and prosperity, who are alive only when the so-called enemies are destroyed.³⁹

This created urgency for prayer and deliverance services where the men almost became deities. Adherents to this new form of skewed theology found themselves encompassed with responsibilities first to their church hierarchies and to their societies. All this responsibilities like deliverances, fasting and prayer sessions required a lot of time and resource consumption. Instead of cueing in with the changes that came along with the modernizing forces, notably education, trainings or job creation that could place the African folk on the hub of opportunities, the authors of this abstract thinking derailed the youths from any thinking worthy of yielding any sustainable investment.⁴⁰ By carefully twisting things to appear as if any success is fully dependent on God and that personal actions, planning and investment has a distant connection to achievement, this group of fake church leaders (men of God) virtually removed adherents from the circles of living to the mere yards of existing. To sustain their stay in this manipulative scheme replete with projects of impoverishment in the name of Christianity, these church men fought hard and succeeded to erect a kind of trance world inhabited by illusions and governed by a huge deal of blames on; ancestors, parents, relatives, neighbours, society, government, Europeans and curses.⁴¹

Acting under the branded command/intention of God to place his children at the top and not at the bottom adherents attributed all their failures in life to any other place and area carefully exonerating themselves. This made deliverance services, crusades under such captions imperative.⁴² With the wind of liberalisation of all the segment of the African economy in the 1990s these brand of Christianity found a very fertile avenue to blossom and poverty continued to thrive.⁴³

State nonchalance plus complacency like in Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya and South Africa to name but just this few helped to make the fragile situation sordid. It is possible to attach the inactivity of these states to the growth of decadent church groups on the general crises of the 1990s but it

³⁹ J.P. Taghew, "Religions, Business and Violence in Africa: From Material Poverty to Spiritual Poverty" in *Hekema Review No 52*, May, 2015, p.5.

⁴⁰ Jean-Marc Ela, *Le Cri de L'Homme Africain. Questions aux Églises d'Afrique* (Paris: Harmattan, 1980), p.160.

⁴¹ Robert L. Strivers, Christine E. Gudorf, Alice Frazer Evans and Robert A. Evans, eds., *Christian Ethics: A Case Method Approach*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), pp.74-77.

⁴² It is common placed to read and hear advertisement of programmes on all fora of the media on deliverance and miracle. Some common ones are Jesus must answer me today, I must possess my possession, the devil must bow, Fire on the Mountain, Spiritual warfare, operation take back your husband, rendering santan handicapped etc. The same held with churches.

⁴³ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and he Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1995), p.10.

suffice to note that their silence rather accentuated than curb poverty and moral decadence. Real disorder and disobedience to the state and society strangely emerged from the church. Classed within the ranks of social agencies responsible for social change and moral transformation, church organizations and their associated enterprises were not taxed. They paid just a token for the different lucrative businesses they sort to do in the name of help. Such tax exoneration unfortunately acted like a boomerang in that it gave the ungrateful and dishonest church leaders the feelings that their powers and moral essence in their respective societies sometimes exceeded that of the state. By allowing these churches who were really in for the business of real exploitation, the state incidentally authorised and even sponsored the impoverishment of its citizens as all accruing benefits from the church business ventures only went to enrich these few church leaders. With the church growing in status as a lucrative business, men and women of dubious morality readily joined the enterprise with all sorts of cosmetic nomenclatures.⁴⁴

4. African Traditional Religion and Its propagation of Poverty and Violence

The main tenets of the religions under study stress on honesty, accountability, love for oneself, his neighbour and his society. Although African traditional religion often encumbered the African folk with boundless responsibilities to the gods and ancestors, a genuine communicant of the African religious faith was one who displayed all of the above named qualities in his/her private and public and private life.⁴⁵ Though the love for God was paramount and commanded automatic obedience to his command, there was no way religiosity could be better expressed than demonstrating love for the human person. This love was expressed differently but could be summed up in the societal or individual propensity to care and protect the underprivileged notably the needy, old, young, handicapped, deaf, dumb, blind or malformed. The knowledge of good and evil, life and death as well as judgement after death straddled the teachings of all these religions. Seen this way, religiosity represented not only the spiritual but largely a controlling moral force of the African locale and his psyche. It was therefore a sort of religious falsification (heresy/blasphemy, corruption or adulteration of the basic social and ethical teachings of the church, mosque or any form of faith) that propounded poverty and violence since none of the religions under study provided space for such.

While this is true for the two alien religions (Islam and Christianity), the case is a little different for African traditional Religion but the overall concord is that the men of the gods or God discussed above played vital roles in pampering poverty and fomenting violence.

Just like Christianity, ATR and its leaders fought hard to convince those buried in its belief system that poverty was the normal way of life and world accumulation plus seeking to peg yourself within the heights of comforts and riches. Wealth and riches in the African psyche was demonstrated through the

⁴⁴Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 13.

⁴⁵Guy Gilbert, *Ma religion, C'est l'Amour* (Paris: Stock, 2001), p.17

size of your harem along with the people under your control as well as your connections to the epicentre of power. When the patterns of both production and prestige shifted from consumerism to attractive investment and positioning in the post-colonial economic order, the African mentality about riches almost remained static. With this, most of those who profited from the new order to accumulate capital through wise production circuits virtually became suspected of having inscribed into a new mystic order.⁴⁶ Apart from the fact that such perceptions killed the spirit of hard work and made the poor aggressive or violent towards this emerging bourgeoisie's class is also the fact that, these people became a subject of societal suspicion and abscond. With the an absurd medical progress and an epileptic judiciary structures, most of the people from the traditional setting who became wealthy turned out to be wholesomely held to the authors of every mishap in their families or immediate environments. In Cameroon and Nigeria the Bamelikes and the Igbo who emerged as financial gurus through trading and other forms of investments became victims of virulent attack on account of mystic wealth.⁴⁷

Unlike Christianity that had summarised their belief in one God through a single intermediary called Jesus Christ, ATR burdened its adherents with almost boundless responsibilities to the God. An individual had not just a morass of gods to please in his life time but also ancestors and ancestral spirits to entertain. To this should be added number of witches, demons and bad spirits which each individuals was expected to protect himself both daily and seasonally against. With this, it becomes clear that the scam that set the Christian church asunder during the post-colonial era did not spare adherents of African traditional religion.⁴⁸ With injunctions, laws and demands hooded in the tenets of ATR pointing like the swords of Damocles over each ardent believer, it became virtually very expensive for all of them to be vindicated. Time and resources was needed en masse to please all the different segments of these beliefs and so this continues to extend the frontiers of poverty and violence. Unlike Christianity that pushed through the idea that failures to please God could result to stagnation in all the faculties of life, ATR religion promised all sorts of trouble even including the death of the defaulters or close relatives. Such frightful outcomes emerging from failure to perform sacrifices kept the people under the spell of no investment and violence.

Conclusion

After the Crusades of the Medieval Ages and the 30 Years War that ended in 1648 with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, Religious issues have hardly been expected to beget violence. It is therefore very paradoxical to link religiosity of any form to poverty or violence. However, the men of God or of religion whose profiles have been analyzed above are seen by this paper to have

⁴⁶Anthony Akinwale. "African Theology and Dogmatic Responsibility for the Christian God,"in*God, Bible and African Traditional Religion. Acts of SIST International MissiologicalSymposium 2009*, edited by Bede UcheUkwuije, (Enugu: SNAAP Press, 2010)pp.9-10.

⁴⁷Falola, Toyin, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 1998),p. 30.

⁴⁸ToyinFalola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 1998), 47.This is cited bySunday BobaiAgangNigerian in"Pentacostal/Charismatic Theology of Public Engagement"p.10.

diverted either from the original teachings of their faith and tenets of African traditional religion to engage in ventures which have rather been engineering poverty and violence enormously. Through skewed theology and charlatanism, religious bigotry has unfortunately helped to brainwashed or duped adherents which has directly been pampering poverty, initiating violence and stagnating development throughout the African post-colonial period. This study is premised providing daunting challenges for all forms of religions thriving in Africa to handle. At any level, African religious practices in Africa have remained as agencies of social change, moral transformation/mind building but within our study time lapse, religious extremism came under the impasse of change and its tempting opportunities which swayed the minds of most authors of faith into a mad drive towards materialism and other forms of canal pleasures and riches. This digression from the cardinal objective of the church landed them on the paths of poverty and generation of violence almost everywhere. The submissions of this paper puts the whole essence of religion in Africa and other areas of the developing world into doubt but it should be stressed that the problem here is not religion but the falsification/misuse of religious teachings for ulterior motives. Our poverty and violence was pampered, development endeavours short-circuited by extremist under personal guise religious practices. The submission here appeals vividly to the scholarship of African political, social and economic stagnation especially the symbiotic effervescence that has overwhelmed their religious interface.

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