



Research Paper

# National Security and Good Governance in Nigeria: The Hermeneutical Imperative

Dr. Cyril Osilama ADAMU

Department of Religions  
University of Benin

## Abstract

Nigeria is plagued with developmental problems and security challenges ranging from the activities of herdsmen, Boko Haram insurgencies, armed robbery attacks, kidnappings and destruction of oil facilities. Nigeria has also witnessed unprecedented incidences of burning of churches, mosques, police stations, schools, hospitals, clinics, shops and even army barracks. Religion no doubt contributes a significant percentage to insecurity, despite its positives; and portends a grave danger which is highly inflammable. This is why any meaningful discourse on national security and good governance in Nigeria, must consider the religious perspective as pivotal. The objective of this paper therefore is to examine how religious hermeneutics can contribute to national development, good governance and security. This paper adopts the antithesis of the philosophy of orthodoxy that does not present interpretations that fits in with the changed conditions of the world. The methodology of dynamic hermeneutics philosophy submits the findings that individuals or groups in peculiar historical circumstances can interact with their sacred texts and beliefs in a way that facilitates insecurity, violence and oppression. The recommendation is that contemporary religious hermeneutics must at all times engender peace, security and good governance. The task of summarizing the state of modern scholarship on key debates concerning the role of religious hermeneutics in engendering good governance and security must be prioritized.

**Keywords:** National Security, Good Governance, Insurgencies, Violence and Religious Hermeneutics

Received 08 Feb., 2023; Revised 18 Feb., 2023; Accepted 20 Feb., 2023 © The author(s) 2023.

Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)

## I. Introduction

Nigeria is a country that is fraught with legion of security challenges, from Boko Haram to the activities of armed herdsmen who are in contention with farmers over scarce resources of land and water; to the problem of banditry and unknown gunmen who have turned the Nigerian landscape into an unsafe haven. Kidnappers are on the loose in every part of the country and highways have been turned into kidnapping zones. In the midst of this deplorable situation, the statistics of unemployed youths and graduates in the nation are on the increase in an alarming rate of inverse proportion, while the basic development infrastructures and industrialization are in comatose. It is therefore ironic why the seventh most populous nation in the world is in courtship with invincible social sponsors of insecurity: poverty and unemployment; which contributes to frustration and anger that results to armed robbery, kidnapping, jihadism, destruction of oil facilities, child abduction/trafficking and separatist insurgency calling for the dissolution of the national project.

These challenges have made security a crucial issue which has made government to divert resources meant for developmental purposes to security. That the economic, political, social and religious affairs of the nation are fast dwindling at present is a real symptom of insecurity. The implication is that Nigeria now symbolizes unsafe place of abode and has also been included among one of the terrorist countries of the world.<sup>1</sup>

Twentieth century sociology scholarship associated social problems such as crime and banditry with deviant individuals. As a result it sought to solve social problems by focusing on changing individual behaviour. Although this approach is still alive today, sociologists had by and large arrived at a different understanding, and had made a major paradigm shift. Sociologists have now turned away from an emphasis on individuals to a consideration of the social structures of nation's organizations and institutions such as corporations, governments and the media for an understanding of the possible factors influencing social imbalances. Sociologists have come to the realization that social problems have social structural causes, and require social-

structural solutions. This approach remains fundamental to the sociological perspective. It was a step forward from the individualistic approach. Because by finally demonstrating that social problems have structural causes, sociologists helped to steer the people away from unproductive scape-goating of individuals to an awareness of the need for social change. Therefore for problems affecting large number of people, scholars must now look beyond individuals to social structures: the larger economic, political, religious and social patterns of a society, as the problems of a society that is structurally flawed cannot be easily solved by changing individuals one at a time.<sup>2</sup> In conformity with the above paradigm shift, this paper makes the submission that one of the key factors in engendering national security and good governance is the pervading ideological ethos within a given society, which is premised most often on hermeneutical disposition.<sup>3</sup>

Extant literature attests to the existence of religious conflicts and negative sentiments in Nigeria, which have greatly hampered peace and security in Nigeria. These conflicts are caused by suspicion and distrust among the major religious groups in the Nigeria. These religious conflicts are characterized by mutual incredulity, lack of cordiality, fear and violent confrontation between members of one religious group and another, especially among Muslims and Christians. Nigeria has not fair any better in the achievement of good governance through religious harmony, even under the consideration of the multiethnic and multi-religious structure of Nigeria coupled with the adoption of secularism. The frequent and persistent religious clashes between Muslims and Christians, is a major security challenge that confronts Nigeria. Since independence, Nigeria has been bedeviled with religious conflicts. There have been reported cases of religious conflicts in all parts of Nigeria, effectuated by religious identities within the Nigeria polity. Almost in all parts of Nigeria, religious conflicts have assumed alarming dimensions which are usually disintegrative and destructive to peace, stability and good governance. Despite the plethora of security measures taken to address the daunting challenges of insecurity in Nigeria, government efforts have not produced the desired positive result. The avalanche of persistent religious crises in Nigeria goes to show that any meaningful discussion on national security and good governance in Nigeria, must embrace a disquisition of the religious perspective.<sup>4</sup>

In proffering solution to this misadventure and against the backdrop of three decades of the ascendance of religious politics resulting in religious conflicts; urgent calls for the reinstatement of secularism have reached a crescendo that cannot be ignored. Recent scholarship offers some interesting arguments that secularization is a necessary step in ensuring national security and good governance by establishing boundary between religion and the state, and the right to practice one's religion freely without coercion and state intervention.<sup>5</sup> They argued for the doctrinal separation of religion which upholds secularism on the assumption that this particular sociopolitical arrangement is the best way to ward off the dangers of religious strife.

However well-intentioned these prescriptions are, this paper suggests that they are premised on an understanding of secularism that concedes at once too much and too little to its normative claims. They concede too much in accepting at face value the claim that secularism is about the banishment of religiosity from the public domain, and they concede too little by failing to interrogate secularism's contention that it is the most effective political solution to warding off religious strife. This paper argues that the solution lays not so much in the doctrine of secularism that separates state and religion, or in the granting of religious freedoms, but in the kind of religious hermeneutics within various religious traditions in a given epoch.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the purpose of this discourse is the examination of a particular aspect of religion: namely religious hermeneutics and its role in ensuring national security and good governance. The study investigates the thesis that the instigation and perpetuation of insecurity can be encouraged by particular readings of sacred texts. Comprehending that most act of insecurity have an internal rationale, this paper seeks to examine the contexts from which conflicts have been perpetuated in the name of God. To do so the paper focuses on the inspiration for conflicts from theological traditions and examines the way in which religious scriptures are interpreted. Furthermore is the examination of how adherents take these interpretations seriously and the beliefs formation processes whereby the actors come to believe that their conflict is sanctioned by God. The paper argues for a hermeneutics that promote peace and reconciliation and suggests ways in which sacred texts denoting violence can be re-interpreted within the dynamic hermeneutical paradigm. The main focus of attention is in comprehending the rationale by presenting pertinent issues on the current hermeneutical scholarship surrounding religion and insecurity, so that practitioners may be involved in the contextual framework promoted by those involved in contemporary hermeneutics.

## **Conceptual Clarity**

### ***National Security***

National security is generally regarded as the protection of citizens, economy and institutions, which is usually regarded as a duty of government. Apart from protection against external military aggression, national security is now widely understood to include non-military dimensions and security from terrorism, crime, economic, energy, environmental, food and cyber security. Also national security includes actions of violent

non-state actors and individuals that threaten the safety of the state. Governments rely on a range of measures, including political, economic, and military power, as well as diplomacy to enforce national security.

Charles Maier defined national security as “the capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community believes necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity and wellbeing.”<sup>7</sup> The National Defense College of India described national security as “an appropriate and aggressive blend of political resilience and maturity, human resources, economic structure and capacity, technological competence, industrial base and availability of natural resources and finally the military might.”<sup>8</sup> National security is also defined as “measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance... and is extendable to global security by variables external to it.”<sup>9</sup> The Ammerdown Group affirmed that national security may be understood “as a shared freedom from fear and want, and the freedom to live in dignity. It implies social and ecological health rather than the absence of risk... and is a common right.”<sup>10</sup>

In this paper national security is regarded as the freedom from fear and want, to live in dignity within a nation under the protection of all citizens against all forms of aggression, including security from terrorism, violence and crime.

### **Good Governance**

There is no single and exhaustive definition of “good governance,” nor is there a delimitation of its scope, that commands universal acceptance. The term is used with great flexibility; this is an advantage, but also a source of some difficulty at the operational level. Good governance is a term that is of common usage with a large range of developmental institutions and other actors within the international arena. What it means exactly, however, has not been so well established. In a well-cited quote, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that “good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.”<sup>11</sup> Despite this consensus, “good governance” is an extremely elusive objective.

Undeterred by the problem of definitional clarity, Good Governance could be seen as an approach to government that is committed to creating a system founded in justice and peace that protects individual’s human rights and civil liberties. According to the United Nations, Good Governance is measured by the eight factors: Participation, Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus Oriented, Equity and Inclusiveness, Effectiveness and Efficiency, and Accountability.<sup>12</sup> Good governance is a term that describes how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in the preferred way. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

In this paper good governance simply means: full respect for human rights, the rule of law, effective participation, multi-actor partnerships, political pluralism, transparent and accountable processes and institutions, an efficient and effective public sector, legitimacy, access to knowledge, information and education, political empowerment of people, equity, sustainability, and attitudes and values that foster responsibility, solidarity and tolerance.

### **Religious Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word ἑρμηνεύω (hermēneuō) which means to “translate” or “interpret”<sup>13</sup> However Beekes suggested a pre-Greek etymology.<sup>14</sup> Technically speaking the term ἑρμηνεία (*hermeneia*) simply means “interpretation” or “explanation” which was introduced into philosophy mainly through the title of Aristotle’s work *Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας* (“*Peri Hermeneias*”), commonly referred to by its Latin title *De Interpretatione* and translated in English as “On Interpretation.” It is one of the earliest (c. 360 BCE) extant philosophical works in the Western tradition to deal with the relationship between language and logic in a comprehensive and explicit sense.

David Couzen Hoy in his book *The Critical Circle*, places the folk etymology of hermeneutics with Hermes: the mythological Greek deity who was the ‘messenger of the gods’ and a mediator between the gods and between the gods and men; who lead souls to the underworld upon death.<sup>15</sup> Hermes was also considered to be the inventor of language and speech, an interpreter, a liar, a thief and a trickster. These multiple roles made Hermes an ideal representative figure for hermeneutics. As Socrates noted, words have the power to reveal or conceal and can deliver messages in an ambiguous way.<sup>16</sup> The Greek view of language as consisting of signs that could lead to truth or to falsehood was the essence of Hermes, who was said to relish the uneasiness of those who received the messages he delivered.

Therefore the earliest usage of hermeneutics places it within the boundaries of the divine or sacred. A divine message received with implicit uncertainty regarding its truth. This sacred message is usually an ambiguity of irrationality that is inflicted upon the receiver of the message. Only one who possesses a rational

method of interpretation (i.e., a hermeneutic) could determine the truth or falsity of the message.<sup>17</sup> Hermeneutics has become a term used to describe how humans interact with their sacred text. This typically involves some form of methodology or theory. This interpretive tradition is often rich with a long history, as people form beliefs about the correct interpretation (orthodoxy) and the correct application of texts (orthopraxy).

Modern hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of interpretation, especially the interpretation of sacred texts, wisdom literature, and philosophical texts. Modern hermeneutics includes both verbal and non-verbal communication as well as semiotics, presuppositions, and pre-understandings. Hermeneutics has been broadly applied in the humanities, especially theology, which is today known as theological hermeneutics or religious hermeneutics. Hermeneutics was initially applied to the interpretation, or exegesis, of scripture, and has been later broadened to questions of general interpretation.<sup>18</sup> Therefore in this paper, the term hermeneutics simply means theological interpretations.

### **National Security: The Role of Religion**

Prominent reactionaries, like the New Atheists have pushed for the removal of religion from the public sphere and sought to marginalize all beliefs they perceived to be superstitious and harmful, due, in part, to the common knowledge that religion is dangerous and a contributory factor to insecurity. According to them, for the sake of peace, religion must be disarmed. Avalos had argued that the reduction of violence should necessitate the eradication or fundamental alteration of religious scriptures.<sup>19</sup> Further, he asserted that “involving religion in decision making and governance is never a good idea if the goal is to eliminate or at least minimize violence”.<sup>20</sup> In a survey of ‘religious hostility’ in 2012 alone, Rodney Stark and Katie E Corcoran ‘assembled 810 incidents of religiously motivated homicides, in which 5,026 people died: 3,774 Muslims, 1,045 Christians, 110 Buddhists, 23 Jews, 21 Hindus, and 53 secular individuals’.<sup>21</sup> The thinking is that religion is inherently violent and should be placed in the hierarchies of violence.<sup>22</sup> Solutions must therefore be imposed on the religious majority by the outside secularist minority.

These arguments from the New Atheists have gained widespread attention. However others have considered their solution to violence in the name of God to be naive or counterproductive.<sup>23</sup> Armstrong asserted that modern society has made a scapegoat of faith, which is not primarily to blame, that blaming religion allowed the non-religious to ignore their role in creating and sustaining conflict and insecurity.<sup>24</sup> Therefore scapegoating religion is problematic because violence is not the only, or even the dominant, result of religious practice.

In addition to questioning the cause of violence in the name of God, the very existence of ‘religious violence’ is contested. This is further complicated when some consider almost everything to be religious violence and others consider almost nothing to be religious violence. Therefore depending on the scholar, religious violence is either ubiquitous or non-existent.

### **The Role of Hermeneutics in National Security**

In Nigeria, Islam and Christianity are the two dominant religions largely responsible for religious conflicts and acts of terrorism. There is no doubt that ideologies and practices of all kinds, including the practice of Islam and Christianity, can and do promote conflicts, terrorism and violence under certain conditions. What seems to be incoherent is that there is something called religion of which: Christianity and Islam are species, which is necessarily more inclined towards violence than other ideologies and institutions that are identified as secular or non-religious.

Humans are meaning makers and meaning seekers and religious sacred texts help in the process of interpreting reality. Conflict and violence are part of human reality which individuals seek to interpret by the application of sacred texts and beliefs in astonishing ways, either to the benefit or detriment of humanity, either to security or insecurity. It is human actors who, on their own or through the influence of others, interact with their texts, history and beliefs and come to the conclusion that, in their circumstance, killing or maiming is justified.

Both in the religions of Islam and Christianity, there are both continuity and discontinuity in the way religious practitioners across time and space interpret conflict. There have been some level of sameness in the language and interpretation from the time of Constantine, the Crusades, the Jihads and the modern war on terror, based on sacred text, symbols and tradition. However there are also significant discontinuities in the way modern hermeneutic across time have interpreted and articulated God’s relationship to conflict and theological traditions.

The argument of this paper is that the difficulty in explaining violence in the name of God stems from the complex relationship between the sacred text and belief; and the conflicts, violence and killings supported through that text. The question is: why is it that some are motivated to commit violence through the interpretation of a sacred text and others are not through the reading of that same sacred text? Phillip Jenkins comments:

If Scripture passage X supposedly inspired terrorist group Y, then we need to explain why militants chose to draw on that Scripture and not some radically contradictory text. No less important, we must understand why that same Scripture has had no effect whatever in pushing millions of others toward comparably extreme acts. Some of what we call 'religious violence' may well be authentically religious in character, but we must find its origins in places other than the basic texts of the faith.<sup>25</sup>

The argument here is that through religious hermeneutics, sacred text can either be used for conflict and destruction or peace and salvation, depending on the prevailing hermeneutical paradigm. Religious hermeneutics in Nigerian has largely been used for conflicts, mutual suspicion and retaliations. The major reason for this pervading hermeneutics is that there is no straight line between beliefs, sacred texts and violence. Most texts, regardless of content, can be used to support killing. For example: During the crusades the hermeneutics of Romans 12:1 was that the medieval Crusader should be 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.'<sup>26</sup> Romans 12:1 was the biblical text used to encourage the crusaders to go all out for war and if they die during holy warfare, their lives will be a living sacrifice to God. The radical Reformation battle flag of Thomas Müntzer in the German Peasants' War had on it the Noahic covenant of Gen 9:16–17. The English Civil War flag had both I Corinthians 1:27 "God delights by weak things to confound the might" and Romans 8:31 "If God is with us, who can be against us?"<sup>27</sup>

According to Jenkins the word *herem*, which means "devoted to destruction" or "total annihilation", first found expression in the Book of 1 Samuel, when God instructs King Saul to attack the Amalekites: "And utterly destroy all that they have, and not spare them," God says through the prophet Samuel. "But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." When Saul failed to do that, God took away his kingdom.<sup>28</sup> "In other words," Jenkins says, "Saul has committed a dreadful sin by failing to complete genocide". This passage has echoed through Christian history. This hermeneutics have often not only been used to kill, but that one is violating God's law if he refuses to kill in the name of God.<sup>29</sup> Jenkins notes that the history of Christianity is strewn with *herem*. During the Crusades in the middle ages, the Catholic popes declared the Muslims Amalekites. In the great religious wars in the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries, Protestants and Catholics each believed the other side were the Amalekites and should be utterly destroyed.<sup>30</sup>

However through the process of "holy amnesia" Christians and Westerners argue that the Muslim scriptures themselves inspire terrorism, and violent jihad. Evangelist Franklin Graham has described his horror on finding so many Qur'anic passages that command the killing of infidels: the Qur'an, he thinks, "preaches violence." Prominent conservatives Paul Weyrich and William Lind argued that "Islam is, quite simply, a religion of war," and urged that Muslims be encouraged to leave US soil. Dutch politician Geert Wilders faces trial for his film "Fitna," in which he demands that the Qur'an be suppressed as the modern-day equivalent to Hitler's "Mein Kampf." Even Westerners who have never opened the Qur'an assume that the Qur'an is filled with calls for militarism and murder, and that violent texts shape Islam.

Many Christians today consider Islam to be a kind of dark shadow of their own faith, with the words of the Qur'an standing in absolute contrast to the scriptures they themselves cherish. In the minds of ordinary Christians the Qur'an teaches savagery and warfare, while the Bible offers a message of love, forgiveness, and charity. This to say the very least, is not the truth. Just as there are violent passages in the Qur'an, even so, if not even more in the Bible. Jenkins in his book "*Jesus Wars, and Dark Passages*" asserted that in terms of ordering violence and bloodshed, any simplistic claim about the superiority of the Bible to the Qur'an would be wildly wrong. In fact, the Bible overflows with "texts of terror," to borrow a phrase coined by the American theologian Phyllis Trible. The Bible contains far more verses praising or urging bloodshed than does the Qur'an, and biblical violence is often far more extreme, and marked by more indiscriminate savagery. The contestation here is not to engage in a disquisition of contest between the Bible and the Qur'an, as to which is more violent, but simply to say that one is as guilty as the other.

However this is not to claim that the Qur'an is free of violent texts. One does not have to search too far to find passages that horrifies, especially when wrenched out of context. It is widely believed that the Al Qaeda handlers of the September 11 hijackers had instructed them to meditate on two lengthy surahs from the Qur'an al-Tawba and Anfal, specifically on 8:12 and 9:5. When your Lord inspired to the angels, "I am with you, so strengthen those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, so strike [them] upon the necks and strike from them every fingertip" 8:12<sup>31</sup> and "when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give *zakah*, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" 9:5<sup>32</sup> Also the Qur'an warns, "Those who make war against God and his apostle . . . shall be put to death or crucified" (Qur'an 5.33). Other passages are equally threatening, though they usually have to be wrenched out of context to achieve this effect. One text from Surah 47 begins "O true believers, when you encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads."

To say that terrorists can find religious texts to justify their acts does not mean that their violence actually grows from those scriptural roots or text, but from the particular hermeneutics of such text. Indeed, such an assumption itself is based on the crude fundamentalist formulation that everything in a given religion must somehow be authorized in scripture. Interestingly modern day Islamic interpreters are urging that it is important to understand and know the historic context of these revelations and that these verses must so interpreted.<sup>33</sup>

### **Hermeneutics: A Way to National Security and Good Governance.**

Some contemporary Westerner observers are of the opinion that Christianity has witness more peaceful disposition than Islam. This again is debatable. The argument of this paper is that what is responsible for this observed difference in peaceful disposition is not because of the “violent texts” embedded in their sacred scriptures, but the interpretation of such texts. Christianity seems to have benefited from her long history of hermeneutical development, being that Christianity is older than Islam. Interpretation is key and at the summit of all religious interactions with the society. Interpretation is all, and it is what changes over time. The text of scripture remains the same, what could change is the hermeneutical deposition. Religions have their core values, their non-negotiable truths, but they also surround themselves with many stories not essential to the message. Any religion that exists over long period of time absorbs many of the ideas and beliefs of the community in which it finds itself, and reflects those in its writings. Over time, thinkers and theologians reject or underplay those doctrines and interpretations that contradict the underlying principles of the faith as it develops.<sup>34</sup>

However strong the textual traditions justifying war and conflict is, believers should instead stress love and justice. Of course some Muslim societies throughout history have engaged in jihad, in holy war, and have found textual warrant to do so. But over time, other potent strains and modern reformers and hermeneutists in Islam are moving away from literal warfare to the inner battle to control one's sinful human instincts, which mattered vastly more than any pathetic clash of swords and spears. The Greater Jihad being the one fought in the soul. This is the trend of the philosophy of dynamic hermeneutics.

Dynamic hermeneutics amongst modern theologians, thinkers and reformers must be so successful that the troublesome words or texts fade utterly from popular consciousness, even among believers who think of themselves as true fundamentalists or conservationists. This is a task that will require believers to engage in reading their own texts extraordinarily and selectively. It will be hermeneutically irrelevant and intellectually repugnant today, to find any meaningful sustenance in Joshua's massacres and the total annihilation of the Amalekites.

Dynamic contemporary hermeneutics is in line with human development, which does not imply rejecting scriptures, but rather reading them in the total context of the religion as it progresses through history. All faiths contain within them some elements that are considered disturbing or unacceptable to modern eyes; all must confront the problem of absorbing and reconciling those troubling texts or doctrines. In some cases, religions evolve to the point where the ugly texts so fade into obscurity that ordinary believers scarcely acknowledge their existence, or at least deny them the slightest authority in the modern world. In other cases, the troubling words remain dormant, but can return to life in conditions of extreme stress and conflict. The hermeneutics of texts, like people, can live or die. This whole process of forgetting and remembering, of growing beyond the harsh words found in a text, is one of the critical questions that modern hermeneutics must learn to address.

The relationship between religious hermeneutics and good governance continues to be an important theme in socio-political philosophy, despite the emergent consensus on the need for some sort of separation between church and state, and between religion and politics. Whatever the consensus the fact remains that religious hermeneutics makes strong claims on people's allegiance. For example, religion has traditionally held that all people owe obedience to God's will. Thus, within some hermeneutical perspective, it is probably inevitable that religious commitments will sometimes come into conflict with the demands of politics and could be use as a source of social instability and repression. This is why some religious leaders have used hypocritical hermeneutics and teachings to disrupt peace and political stability in a country like Nigeria. This in Nigeria is what many refers to as politicization of religion. Therefore the negative effects of religion have continued to endanger peaceful human co-existence and the promotion of sectarian tendency.

But religious beliefs and practices also potentially support good governance in many ways. Both historically and in contemporary societies, religious hermeneutics has played a central role in political life. The incontrovertible connection between religious hermeneutics and good governance can bring about sustainable political development through the inculcation of high sense of morality, duty, selfless service, public accountability, respect for human lives, love of one's neighbor and humanity, abhorrence of violence, love for peace, contentment and avoidance of corruption in the citizens as well as the leaders.<sup>35</sup>

Any hermeneutical paradigm that fails to inculcate a sense of morality in the people is a bankrupt model that should be discarded for a more progressive one that will bring about good governance and sustainable political development. A well-articulated religious hermeneutics should greatly enrich political

activity, because embedded in each religion are the beliefs, practices and ethics that serve as check for human excesses. Thus, religious hermeneutics is a viable mechanism for good governance, political stability and development. Adeleye asserted that a dynamic religious hermeneutics breeds an ideal heart in man to be able to be conscious of the need to have a clean heart. By this, he will grow to have a philanthropic or patriotic thought before venturing to lead or represent his people in governance.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore the ultimate objective of dynamic religious hermeneutics is the promotion of national integration, political mobilization, reformation of ethnic identity, nationalism, peaceful co-existence, social economic and political development. The effect of dynamic hermeneutics on good governance should be value-driven that naturally robs off on good governance through the participation of ardent religious believers.<sup>37</sup>

Thus in order to ensure peace, security and good governance, there must be a solid and authentic religious hermeneutical foundation which is not only dynamic, but must also have the core objectives of good governance, conflict resolution, national security and the abeyance of terrorism, irrespective of the textuality of violent scriptures.

## II. Recommendations

The recommendations of this paper are:

- i. that those who are involved in the task of hermeneutics must be well schooled in the art of dynamic hermeneutics, needless to emphasize that religious hermeneutics is special discipline;
- ii. that there should be a form of certification or licensing of those who are involved in hermeneutics, especially in Nigeria where the task of interpretation of sacred texts has become an all-comers affairs;
- iii. that contemporary religious hermeneutics must at all times engender peace, security and good governance, irrespective of the textuality of violent scripture;
- iv. that modern scholarship should be aware that hermeneutics starts with the idea that humans are essentially interpretative beings that seek to understand meaning intertwined with identity.

## III. Conclusion

This paper gave a careful attention to relationship between sacred texts and their violent interpretation, especially the Qur'an and the bible. It raised the question of the textuality of violent hermeneutics in relationship to socio-political circumstances and the use of texts to justify violent action. It questioned how far any text proposes violence itself and the ways in which a neutral or even pacific text has been used to facilitate conflicts, terrorism and violence, asserting that there are particular ways of interacting with a sacred text that facilitates conflicts and what might be done to safeguard against that harmful application.

The avalanche of persistent religious crises in Nigeria was traced to reader's particular hermeneutical viewpoint. Therefore attention must be given to the way in which an individual or group inhabits a sacred text. Though the relationship between sacred texts and insecurity is complicated, few subjects so demand the attention of modern hermeneutical scholarship.

This paper called to question many of the orthodox and traditional methods of interpretation with the proposal of the philosophy of dynamic hermeneutic in modern hermeneutic. The recommendation is that contemporary religious hermeneutics must at all times engender peace, security and good governance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Purity Ndubuisi-Okolo and Theresa Anigbuogu, "Insecurity in Nigeria: the Implications for Industrialization and Sustainable Development," *International Journal of Research in Business Studies and Management* 6, Issue 5 (2019): 7-16.

<sup>2</sup> BomaPepple "The issue of insecurity in Nigeria." *The Guardian*, July 08, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Cyril Adamu and John Onimhawo, "Engendering National Security and Good Governance Through Religious Hermeneutics." (A Paper presented at the 2nd Biennial Faculty of Arts International Conference, AdekunleAjasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria, 14th-16th July 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Adamu and Onimhawo

<sup>5</sup> ParthaChatterjee, "Secularism and Tolerance" In (ed.) Rajeev Bhargava *Secularism and its Critics*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 345.

<sup>6</sup> Adamu and Onimhawo

<sup>7</sup> Charles Maier, *Peace and security for the 1990s*, Unpublished Paper for the MacArthur Fellowship Program, Social Science Research Council.

<sup>8</sup> National Defense College, *A Maritime Strategy for India* (New Delhi: India Press, 2002), 265.

<sup>9</sup> PaleriPrabhakaran, *National Security: Imperatives and Challenges* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, 2008), 521.

<sup>10</sup> Ammerdown Group, "Rethinking Security: A Discussion Paper," [www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk](http://www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk) (accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

<sup>11</sup> United Nations General Assembly. "Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 60/1: World Summit Outcome," <https://www.ifrc.org/docs/idrl/1520EN.pdf> (accessed 17th December 2017).

- <sup>12</sup>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. "What is Good Governance?" <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf> (accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019).
- <sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Klein, *A Complete Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Elsevier: Oxford, 2000), 344.
- <sup>14</sup> Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2010), 462.
- <sup>15</sup> David Couzens Hoy, *The Critical Circle* (University of California Press, 1981), 56.
- <sup>16</sup> David Couzens Hoy, *The Critical Circle*, 57.
- <sup>17</sup> Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Yale University Press, 1994), 21-22
- <sup>18</sup> Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*
- <sup>19</sup> Hector Avalos, "Explaining Religious Violence: Retrospects and Prospects" In: Murphy AR (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2011), 137-146
- <sup>20</sup> Hector Avalos, "Explaining Religious Violence," 343.
- <sup>21</sup> Rodney Stark and Katie Corcoran, *Religious Hostility: A Global Assessment of Hatred and Terror* (Waco, TX: ISR Books, 2014), 42.
- <sup>22</sup> Matthew Rowley and Emma Wild-Wood, E. (2017) "Religion, Hermeneutics and Violence: An Introduction." *An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, 34 no.2 (2017): 77-90
- <sup>23</sup> Steve Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 202. And John Teehan, *In the Name of God: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Ethics and Violence*. (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 198-201.
- <sup>24</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (Knopf Canada, 2014), 241.
- <sup>25</sup> Phillip Jenkins, *Laying Down the Sword: Why We Can't Ignore the Bible's Violent Verses* (New York: HarperOne, 2012), 252
- <sup>26</sup> S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (eds) *The Crusades: A Reader* (New York: University of Toronto Press. 2014) 37
- <sup>27</sup> Alan Young, *The English Emblem Tradition, III, Emblematic Flag Devices of the English Civil Wars 1642-1660* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 67.
- <sup>28</sup> Phillip Jenkins, "Dark passages: Does the Harsh Language in The Koran Explain Islamic Violence? Don't Answer Till You've Taken a Look inside the Bible," <http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe> (accessed 4th June 2019)
- <sup>29</sup> Phillip Jenkins, Dark passages
- <sup>30</sup> Phillip Jenkins, Dark passages
- <sup>31</sup> <http://Corpus.quran.com/wordbyword.jsp.chapter=8&verse=12.8:12:1> (accessed 17th December 2017).
- <sup>32</sup> [https://v.corequran.com/9/5/?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=ar&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=nui,sc](https://v.corequran.com/9/5/?_x_tr_sl=ar&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=nui,sc) (accessed 17th December 2017).
- <sup>33</sup> [http://www.islam101.com/terror/verse8\\_12.htm](http://www.islam101.com/terror/verse8_12.htm) (accessed 17th December 2017).
- <sup>34</sup> Phillip Jenkins, Dark passages
- <sup>35</sup> Joseph Omoregbe, "Religious Ideals and the Question of Governance in Africa," In: Oguejiofor, J. O. (ed.). *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 309.
- <sup>36</sup> M.O. Adeleye, "Religion, Politics and Society," In: S. A. Adewale (ed), *Religion and Society: The Nigerian Experience* (Ibadan: Orita Publications, 1988), 75.
- <sup>37</sup> Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi, "The Role of Religion In Nigerian Politics And Its Sustainability For Political Development." *Net Journal of Social Sciences*, 3 no.2 (2015). 42-49.