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## **ETHICAL EVALUATION OF INSECURITY CHALLENGES AND SECULARISM IN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper attempts to develop a framework for the interface between secularism and insecurity. It seeks to define the role of a “secular” state in the promotion of security. The paper identifies four interpretations of the meaning of “secular” and identifies ethical issues that tend to hamper the actualization of secularism in the Nigerian state. The paper identifies some high profile conflicts between religion and the secular state. Taken into account the activities carried out by the various religious groups are delicate for secularism, the paper calls for serious evaluation of the content and scope of religious autonomy and provides the rationale for the protection of religious rights and inclusion of religious adherents in Nigerian society.

**Keywords:** Ethical, Evaluation, Insecurity, Challenges, Secularism,

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### **Introduction**

Every society has a dominant culture, usually with religious roots. In Nigeria, there are three religious traditions: African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. African Traditional Religion which dominated the culture and ethos of Nigerian people until the coming of Christianity and Islam. Secularism advocates a move away from religion as a dominant source of social mores and religious adherence is rather viewed with suspicion making it difficult to justify accommodation of religious

adherents. We are aware that religion is a fundamental part of human dignity. For many people, religion is by far more than a mere lifestyle choice. It is the deepest part of who they are and to violate a person's religious freedom or require them to act against their religious beliefs or practices violates the very core of that person's being.

This finds expression in the reasons why Sociologists portrayed the positive benefits of religion affiliation for school performance to family life, well-being and contribution to community life. Religions also provide for rites of passage such as marking birth, marriage and death. And generally promote ethical, law-abiding behaviour in their adherents (Schludermann 87). Therefore, freedom of religion is a cornerstone of a free society. While, every society has a dominant culture, usually with religious roots, secularism connotes that which is not connected with religious or spiritual matters. One may be tempted to say that people in "secular" societies can engage fully in politics without ever encountering God. It suffices to say that in Nigeria, secularism drew its root from the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria; Chapter one and article 10 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that; "The Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as state religion". It would be observed that, before now, the secular credentials of the Nigeria have been put to test when sectarian violence broke out in the Western region soon after independence. Another relevant issue is the displaying of religious symbols in public places or those elements that define the identity of the country like the flag, the national anthem, the coat of arms, etc. The question remains that how these historical elements and symbols can be reconciled with a secular state? To what should the permissible limitation to the negative aspect of freedom of religion of citizens be, without which we risk our security? The task of this paper is to evaluate the various religious and ideological differences we have in Nigeria that can provide for a genuine secular state in Nigeria and eventually proffer recommendations.

### **Secularism Defined**

Schumacher described Secularism as the giving up of religious thought and feeling in the normal day to day interaction in the society. It means one's

strength of religious belief does and should not form the basis of social behaviour with others. Religion should remain subjective rather than objective (280). In the view of Smith, secularism by extension is the freedom to worship or hold any religious belief or philosophical and ethical reference to frame of thought, the right to be free from religious rules and teachings, and the right to freedom from governmental imposition of religion upon the people within a state (45). It refers to the view that, human activities and decisions, especially the political ones, should not be influenced by religion. A secular state is, therefore, a state where citizens are not discriminated in any form or manner on the basis of their religion or philosophical and ethical frame of thought. The secular state views the individuals as a citizen and not as a member of a particular religious group. While considering the subject matter of Secularism the following points are important to be considered:

- i. Secularism is not the absence of religions in the state. Rather, it is the absence of a state sponsored religion where people are free to follow which religious tenets they like without any fear of intimidation, victimization or favour.
- ii. It is simply the separation of church and state; specifically, it is a form of separation that makes religion private while power and reason are made public;
- iii. Secularism is an institutional formation that governs the conduct of individuals and communities (47).

### **Theoretical Foundation of Secularism**

Secularism draws its intellectual roots from the Greek and Roman philosophers such as Marcus Aurelius and Epicurus, Medieval Muslim polymaths such as Ibn Rushd, Enlightenment thinkers like Denis Diderot, Voltaire, Benedict Spinoza, John Locke, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, and modern freethinkers, agnostics and atheists such as Bertrand Russell and Robert Ingersolli (Nigosian 45). The term secularism was coined in 1851 by British writer George Holyoake. He invented the term secularism to describe his views of promoting a social order separate from religion, without actively dismissing or criticizing religious belief. Holyoake an agnostic believed that, secularism is not an

argument against Christianity nor did it question the pretensions of Christianity. The Secularists believes that there is light and guidance in secular truth. Secular knowledge is that kind of knowledge which is founded to the welfare and is capable of being tested by the experience of this life (49).

### **Basic doctrine of Secularism**

The doctrines of secularism projects protect and underpin many of the freedoms we enjoy are stem on the followings:

- i. Separation of religion from state:** Separation of religious institutions from state institutions and a public sphere where religion may participate, but not dominate. The separation of religion and state is the foundation of secularism. It ensures that religious groups don't interfere in affairs of state, and the state doesn't interfere in religious affairs. For example, in the United Kingdom there are officially two state recognized Christian denominations; the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The Queen is both head of the state and Supreme Governor of the Church of England. The 26 unelected bishops of the Church of England who sit in the House of Lords influence laws that affect the whole of the United Kingdom. Christianity is a major influence among many that shape our current ways of life. We are a nation of many denominations and religions. Large sectors of the population do not hold, or practice religious beliefs. If Britain were truly a secular democracy, political structures would reflect the reality of changing times by separating religion from the state. Secularism protects both believers and non-believers, it seeks to ensure and protect freedom of religious belief and practice for all citizens. Secularists want freedoms of thought and conscience to apply equally to all believers and non-believers alike. They do not wish to curtail religious freedoms.
- ii. Religious Freedom:** Secularism promotes the freedom to practice one's faith or belief without harming others, or to change it or not have one, according to one's own conscience. Secularism

seeks to defend the absolute freedom of religious and other belief, and protect the right to manifest religious belief insofar as it does not impinge on the rights and freedoms of others. Secularism ensures that the right of individuals to freedom of religion is always balanced by the right to be free *from* religion. A truly free society is one which can accommodate a wide variety of beliefs, diversity of tastes and pursuits, customs and codes of conduct. A free society is one which aims at equality with respect to the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. Freedom must surely be founded in respect for the inherent dignity and the inviolable rights of the human person. The essence of the concept of freedom of religion is the right to entertain such religious beliefs as a person chooses, the right to declare religious beliefs openly and without fear of hindrance or reprisal, and the right to manifest belief by worship and practice or by teaching and dissemination (*Big 295*). Concerning the idea of freedom of religion, Iain Benson developed a typology to identify the various ways that a secular state can interact with religion within its borders as follows: a. neutral secular: The state is expressly non-religious and must not support religion in any way; b. positive secular: The state does not affirm religious beliefs of any particular religion but may create conditions favourable to religions generally; c. negative secular: The state is not competent in matters involving religion but must not act so as to inhibit religious manifestations that do not threaten the common good; d. inclusive secular: The state must not be run or directed by a particular religion but must act so as to include the widest involvement of different faith groups, including non-religious. There is thus not one, single understanding of the meaning of “secular” when it comes to the responsibilities of the state towards religion (519).

- iii. **Equality Democracy and Fairness:** Secularism is about democracy and fairness so that our religious beliefs or lack of them doesn't put any of us at advantage or a disadvantage. In a secular democracy all citizens are equal before the law and

parliament. No religious or political affiliation gives advantages or disadvantages and religious believers are citizens with the same rights and obligations as anyone else. Secularism champions universal human rights above religious demands. It upholds equality laws that protect women and minorities from religious discrimination. These equality laws ensure that non-believers have the same rights as those who identify with a religious or philosophical belief. The fairness and equality of access to public services transcends beyond religion, philosophical ideology and human rights etc. We share same medical services in hospitals, schools, the services of the police and the services of the local authorities. It is essential that these public services are secular at the point of use, so no-one is disadvantaged or denied access on grounds of religious belief (or non-belief). All state-funded schools should be non-religious in character, with children being educated together regardless of their parents' religion. When a public body grants a contract for the provision of services to an organization affiliated to a particular religion or belief, such services must be delivered neutrally, with no attempt to promote the ideas of that faith group.

- iv. **Secularism is not atheism:** Atheism is a lack of belief in gods. Secularism simply provides a framework for a democratic society. Atheists have an obvious interest in supporting secularism, but secularism itself does not seek to challenge the tenets of any particular religion or belief, neither does it seek to impose atheism on anyone. Secularism is simply a framework for ensuring equality throughout society in politics, education, the law and elsewhere – for believers and non-believers alike.
- v. **Secularism protects free speech and expression:** Religious people have the right to express their beliefs publicly but so do those who oppose or question those beliefs. Religious beliefs, ideas and organizations must not enjoy privileged protection from the right to freedom of expression. In a democracy, all ideas

and beliefs must be open to discussion. Individuals have rights; ideas do not.

### **Ethical Evaluation of Security Challenges to Secularism in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, secularism drew its root and strength from chapter one and article 10 of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria which states that; “The Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as state religion” (24). It has been observed that, right from the beginning, the secular credentials of the nation have been put to test. Soon after the independence of the country in 1st October 1960, sectarian violence broke out in the Western region. It was here for the first time in the history of Nigeria that cross carpeting was born in the floor of the Regional House of Assembly. Members from different parties were crossing over from one party to another. It was followed by arson criminalizing of politics. And at the national level, the cultural and traditional diversities equally manifested especially in the way issues were tackled in the Parliament. Secularism and national unity were threatened by these happenings. Despite the spirit and letter of the constitution and efforts of the government to maintain and sustaining the unity of the country by initiating and putting certain policies that would facilitate the integration of national unity such as:

- i. The establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC),
- ii. Encouraging inter-tribal or religious marriages,
- iii. To ensure that Federal Cabinet is drawn from all segments of the Federation etc.

However, the harmony these policies were meant to be put in place had and is still been threatened from time to time, thereby, affecting the fabric of the Nigerian polity. This is in accordance with Article 15 (4) of chapter two of the 1999 Nigerian constitution which states that; “The state shall foster a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various peoples of the Federation to the end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties”. Equally, Article 17 (3a) of chapter two of the constitution buttresses this stand when it says; “All citizens without

discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment". In the same vein, Article 17(3c) says that, "there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex, or any other ground whatsoever".

Since the return to democracy in 1999, the security situation in Nigeria has been quite disturbing, threatening the spirit of secularism in the country along religious, regional tribal and ideological content. We see in the past couple of years, things have worsened on a daily basis. Though, conventional crimes have always been part of the experience in almost every country, especially from after the civil war, but the more recent experience in violent extremism, insurgency and other forms of militancy has made the situation more complex. The most serious security threats to secularism in Nigeria are those in the category of dissatisfaction, separatist or pro-independence agenda, specifically the violent extremism of Boko Haram and the Niger Delta militancy (Danbazau 3). Boko Haram uses religion as its platform by employing such tactics as suicide kidnapping and demanding for ransome, bombing, organized attacks on police and military installations and terrorizing rural communities.

Niger Delta militancy takes a resource-based dimension; they assume the control of the oil found in their domain as the platform, conscious of the fact that about 90 percent of Nigeria's revenue comes from that natural resource (4). The tactics of the Niger Delta militants include destruction of oil platforms using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), kidnapping of foreign oil workers, sabotage of oil facilities, and vandalization of oil pipelines with serious consequences on environmental pollution. However, when the amnesty programme of the late President Umaru Yar'Adua was declared and enforced for the militants in exchange for laying down their deadly arms, the violent militancy in the Niger Delta subsided. This was accompanied by heavy financial compensation including the provision of monthly allowances to all registered ex-militants, and the provision of skills acquisition training for the ex-militants, patronage of the militants' leaders with juicy contracts, the creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta, and the increase in the budgetary allocations to the Niger Delta Development Company (NDDC). This was in



addition to the 13 percent of the total oil revenue that is usually shared among the communities in the region. With all these, the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), whose leader, vowed to continue with its violent activities until their leader who was convicted by a South African court for terrorism when the group planted twin car bombs which left 12 people dead and 17 injured during the 50th anniversary independence celebration in 2010 in the Federal Capital, Abuja, would be released from prison (Adeola 19). There were also quite a number of incidents involving cultists' violence across the nation including a series of kidnappings of foreign oil workers and people with high positions or members of their families for ransom and large scale oil theft. What is even more worrisome is that, though, using the amnesty program a large amount of arms that were surrendered by the militants earlier were destroyed, but still quite a number of arms continue to circulate in large quantity, most of which were believed to have been battered with stolen oil on the high seas.

Consequently, the Niger Delta was rated a major arena for piracy within the Gulf of Guinea, only second to the coast of Somalia in the Horn of Africa. There is uncertainty as to whether or not the amnesty program has achieved any desired result in terms of peace and security in the region. This is because despite the huge amount of money released to the various state governments in the region, the new Ministry (specific to the region), and the NDDC, not much has been achieved in developing critical infrastructures, creating employment opportunities, and rehabilitating the ex-militants, most of whom have not only been addicted to hard drugs, but also lack the necessary skills for gainful employed (Edeko 55).

According to Ali, The most existential threat to Nigeria's national security secularism is the violent extremism being unleashed by the Boko Haram group which has its main base in the northeast. Although the Niger Delta militant groups were the first to use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) for their operations, the idea of suicide bombing was introduced into Nigeria by the Boko Haram violent extremists. The emergence of this group came at a time when the international community was still grappling with the strategy to contain the spread of the activities of Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), spanning across the Sahel (especially Algeria, Morocco

and Mali), and also the expanding threats from the militant wing of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts, commonly referred to as Al Shabaab, especially in the Horn of Africa (7). While taking advantage of the political instability in northern Mali, in 2012 AQIM consolidated its control within the region by aligning with the Tuareg rebel group, the National Liberation Movement of Azawad (MNLA), at the same time that another Islamic militant group, Ansar al-Din, moved to carve out an Islamic state out of northern Mali. Meanwhile a faction of AQIM formed the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Of course that meant that all 15 ECOWAS countries became the target of MUJAO, and this would have given a boost to the homegrown Nigerian terror group, Boko Haram (Danbazau 6).

The Boko Haram sect exhibits religious extremism of the type Nigeria hitherto never experienced, and although the group did not start its activities using violence, their preaching contradicted Islamic teachings. The sect regrouped with new leadership, and started to unleash terror on anybody they considered an enemy, including senior Muslim clerics that criticized their actions. By implication therefore, Nigeria's police contributed not only in driving the group underground, but also assisted it in attracting sympathy which made recruitment of new members much easier, and increased possible support and funding from other terror groups on the ground that Muslims in Nigeria were being persecuted. It was from that time on that Nigerians began to experience suicide bombings, coordinated attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), kidnapping of foreigners, and the targeting of the police and other government establishments, which have been the signatures of known terror organizations, like AQIM and Al Shabaab (Adagba 77). One may be tempted to argue that, the use of IEDs and kidnappings had been part of the tactics employed by the militants in Niger Delta even before the birth of Boko Haram, but the intensity of that employed by the Boko Haram is of a different kind and for different reasons.

Corroborating on this, Ezeoba pointedly submits that, there is no doubt that Boko Haram presents a pressing problem for the continent of Africa. But to understand it, we must first place it in its historical context and then consider the environmental and the socio-economic influence in the

region. It is not a coincidence that Boko Haram popped up in the northeastern part of Nigeria, and retained that area as its main operational base. The northeast has the reputation, not only as the first part of present-day Nigeria to come in contact with Islam in the 11th century, but is also known to have been part of the Kanem-Bornu Empire, which existed around the 7th century and which spanned across northeast Nigeria, Chad, southern Libya, eastern Niger, and northern Cameroon. Bornu was the center of Islamic excellence up until the last century, and it is a known fact that children were sent to their schools by their parents from different parts of northern Nigeria to that region specifically to acquire Islamic knowledge. The region of Kanem-Bornu also flourished in trade and commerce with its very strong linkage to the trans-Saharan trade routes, but it is an irony that today the vast area that made up Kanem-Bornu between the 6th and 20th centuries has now fallen among the lowest in the world human development record (Ewetan 76). With such understanding of the historical antecedent of both the southern and the northern militancy and bokoharam activities, they do not only pose threat to security but also make secularism in Nigeria a mirage and mere pretext.

Indeed, the sudden and apparent emergence of the Boko Haram, a religious sect in the history of the country has destabilized the equilibrium of this country setting up division among Nigerians along religious lines. Boko Haram has been attributed to the political rivalry between the north and the south towards controlling the political power in the country through this manipulation. But how could that be explained when we realize that for most of the independence years, the northerners have been at the helm of affairs of this country if this is to be accepted. We equally have to understand that, the Boko Haram sect unleashed terror on citizens in the north with a clear and definite demand. It has always insisted on the demand for sovereignty of the 12 states in the north where the Islamic Sharia legal instrument will be fully implemented and the Christian churches will no more be found in those 12 states (Tentacle 20).

This sinister role of Boko Haram outfit, presents like a religious body thinking of Islamizing the country by introducing the Sharia Law. But on other occasions the emergence of Boko Haram would be presented as a communal organization, killing the Christians in the north east places like

Chibok in Borno state and spreading to Adamawa state, Taraba state. It extended as far as to the north central states of Plateau State, Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna, and other parts of the in the same country. Yet in other occasions, it has emerged as a political organization; immediately after the presidential election results were announced killing began to take place of innocent people in Kaduna State including Corpers on national duties, including maiming of pregnant women and the children especially those from the south East and the entire southern Nigeria (Takaya 56).

It must be mentioned here that, Boko Haram (which means Western education is forbidden) was founded in 2002 by an Islamic cleric called Mohammed Yusuf and supported by some politicians. It has links with Al-Qaeda in North West Africa. They have been involved in sectarian violence in the country claiming more than 30 thousand lives (BBC News). Boko Haram therefore, stifles the reality of secularism in this country. The 1999 constitution states in article 15(2) of chapter two that: "National Integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited". Contrary to the secular credentials of the country, the southerners working in the North are treated as outsiders and are given employment as contract staff in state ministries and parastatals. This is contrary to what is happening in the south especially in Rivers, Benue and Taraba States for example, any one given job is treated in the same way whether north or south.

Contrary to the principles of secularism is the introduction and enforcement of sharia laws in some parts of northern states and the sudden upsurge of book haram (Ihua 22). Before now, we saw how states in the North like Zamfara formalized Islamic Law which is the mixture of the full traditional Islamic law with secular laws and values. A couple of years past, the Governor of Central Bank had proposed Islamic Banking system for the country. Who knows his hidden agenda? And why must it be called Islamic Banking system? From the on-going, we have seen that Nigerian secularism has been under stress from within right from the beginning. In the late 1970s, the El-Zaky Zaky and the Maitatsine Islamic groups infiltrated into the country causing some havocs. One may be tempted to conclude that

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect that seeks to abolish the secular system of government and establish Sharia Law in the country (23).

### **Ethical Evaluation of Security Challenges in Nigeria**

Edeko summarizes some of the causes that bedevil security in **Nigeria** as follows:

- i. **Unemployment:** The overwhelming unemployment rate in Nigeria is capable of causing panic! It's especially obvious when it comes to Nigerian youths. According to the statistics, every tenth young citizen of Nigeria is officially unemployed. Another statistic provided by the NBS shows that unemployment rate in Nigeria has risen to 14%. It means that Nigeria does not get about 19% of its GDP! It's the responsibility of the government to create new jobs. Even when job opportunities are available, merit is kept by the side as considerations are given along religious or tribal lines (55).
- ii. **Corruption:** The Transparency International places Nigeria on the top of the list for most corrupt countries in the world! Corrupt Nigerian politicians have become a turn off for international investors. Corruption has already become a part of life in Nigeria.
- iii. **Developmental Imbalance:** Different parts of Nigeria have different speeds of development. Due to this, the oil-rich regions of the country feel disturbed when the Federal Government use their oil and do not develop their society. People of these regions feel cheated because of that. They want to take justice into their hands. That's why they vandalize oil pipelines! It's one of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The Federal Government should deal with this problem. The only way is to balance the development of all regions of the country.
- iv. **Weak Judicial System:** The Weak Judicial System causes insecurity in Nigeria. People feel insecure when criminals and terrorists can go free. A lot of evil-minded people feel that money can buy freedom in Nigeria. The corrupt system proves this line of thought. Rich people can buy their freedom in Nigeria. Poor people do not feel secure because of that! The Judicial System in

Nigeria should be changed. There may be only one answer to that – transparency! The Federal Government should to make sure a judge's decision and power is transparent.

- v. **Porous borders of Nigeria:** Nigeria has borders that are poorly guarded. Insurgents from other countries can infiltrate Nigeria with no problem. This situation is especially dangerous in the North East. The Federal Government of Nigeria can't provide enough troops to secure the borders. Porous coastal borders are the main cause of terrorism in Nigeria. The Federal Government should increase the number of troops that guard borders. It's also possible to train people to protect their regions from insurgents.
- vi. **High Influx of Arms:** Smugglers use porous coastal borders of Nigeria to sell arms! The Corruption system and weak judicial system only helps smugglers to sell even more guns. They provide pistols, shotguns, rifles, assault rifles, grenades, and explosives! These guns are used against the people and military forces.
- vii. **Terrorist Threat:** Terrorism in Nigeria is not a new problem. Boko Haram and Niger Delta Avengers are two main terrorist organizations that cause the most damage to Nigeria. They do not wish to surrender to the government but just want to cause terror! The Federal Government of Nigeria keeps fighting with terrorists. Nigerian soldiers die every day for their country. Now, it's the matter of time before the terrorists will be eliminated (56).

### **Threats to the Growth of Secularism in Nigeria**

Ihuah identified some of the obvious threats that hamper the growth of secularism in Nigeria as follows:

- i. **Religion:** Religion has remained a largely divisive part of the politics of regions and ethnicity in Nigeria. Raw appeal to the religious persuasion of candidates for public office is common. The Bible and the Koran have become part of the staple of playing the divide and conquer strategy in the politics of the country of

over 180 million people. Why did the dreaded Islamic sect, Boko Haram issued an ultimatum to southerners and Christians living in the north to evacuate or be massacred?

- ii. **Ethnicity:** Ethnicity is characterized by a common relation to the other relevant ethnic groups. The division of the country in 1900 into three unequal parts ushered in an era of ethnic politics into the Nigerian society. Ethnicity has come to be recognized as something to conserve or recapture a political identity based upon race, etc. that is why ethnicity has become an important issues confronting the country. According to Nnoli, ethnicity is a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by the communal factors which may be language, culture, or both||. It is this social formations that affect the performance and functioning of the leaders as they may be influenced in their actions and decisions due to their ethnic inclinations and parochial mentality. The interethnic struggle for social and economic dominance also inevitably leads to nepotism and its attendant consequences, mostly hostility in the form of interethnic violence (5).
- iii. **Tribalism** Tribalism is the twin brother of ethnicity and has been the major cause of the domestic political instability in the country immediately after independence and until the early 1990s. This is noticeable in the utterances of the leaders from the three major tribes (Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo), made from time to time especially when they are not in power such as The marginalization of the North and their interests, the Igbo people and their interests', without any damper and whimper for the feelings of the minorities from where the bulk of the Federal revenue comes from. The surprising aspects of these statements and words are that, sometimes, it comes out from former heads of state, federal ministers or other high government functionaries. This is a cause for alarm. Tribalism has been a thorn in the flesh of the country Tribalism has led to ethnic mistrust and under-development.

**iv. Politics and Competition for Power:** The dreaded Boko Harm terrorists have only presented religious sentiments as their major grouse, the major reason for their sustained on slaughter against innocent citizens which they have failed to make public and for which notable northern elite have remained in sympathy with them, was Jonathan's Presidency (Iyanya 26).. Dependable sources in the north reveal recently that the terror attacks would be sustained in higher intensity until Jonathan's government faced devastation it cannot wriggle out from. It is for the reason of competition for power that, since Jonathan took office in May 29, 2011 as an elected president, his government was engulfed by chaos. Beginning from the past election violence that surrounded parts of the north in May 2011 till date, terrorist attacks in the north have remained on increase (Tentacle 22). This was what happened in the first republic that resulted in coups and counter-coups that finally threw us into the civil war from 1967-70. This same thing repeated itself in the 2nd republic. It played itself again in the annulled June 12 1993 presidential election that declared late Abiola the winner of that election. This has been a re-occurring decimal in the Nigerian politics (Pioneer 23).. The reasoned words of the Hindu philosopher should appeal to our hearts here, that:

Believers with different opinions and convictions are necessary to each other ... we cannot afford to waver in our determination that a whole humanity shall remain a united people, where Muslims and Christians, Buddhists and Hindus shall stand together, bound by a common devotion, not to something behind but to a great dream of a world society with a universal religion of which the historical faiths are but branches (Ihuah 209).

From the above, we find in the working of the secular principles in Nigeria that, secularism is one of the basic elements in the process of modernization and it is the spirit which informs the constitution of Nigeria.

### **Conclusions**



In Nigeria today, we as a people cannot pretend about our many differences concerning religious belief, such differences are only grounds advocating (or indeed commanding) understanding and accommodation. We must cultivate tolerance and understanding so as to facilitate the realization of common objective of building a peaceful, human and materially and spiritually prosperous society.

The principles of Living in a secular society will help reshape the nation's culture of social euthanasia and cultural nihilism. Adherence to these commandments will reorganize the world, our Nigeria and change it from an arena of marginal security and economic, political and religious conflict, to a global society and of undiminished diversity:

- i. Everyone should be committed to the truth perceived as sustaining. But do not be bewitched by possessing it. Listen to others and grow in that truth.
- ii. Behave in a unique way and accept yourself as gateway to the humanity of other people, recognizing and tolerating one another's right to err.
- iii. Work towards enhancing unity, freedom and charity in all things.
- iv. Ensure responsibility for others as the measure of humanity, judging our own well being by the needs of others.
- v. Serve as steward to others dispensing generously as the lord provides bountifully to you.
- vi. Government at all levels should not attempt to adopt any religion as state religion nor sponsor religious activities of any kind. As enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. But rather, tolerance should be promoted.
- vii. Since right, duties and obligations are intimately related, each individual should note their priority. Therefore, one's right to worship implies my duty to respect that right; both of us are obliged to facilitate the good of the God or Allah we worship.

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