

HERDS-FARMERS IN NIGERIA: AN EVALUATION OF ISLAMIC PACIFISM THEORY

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Abstract

Religion is part and parcel of human life since the period of antiquity. Any attempt to divorce the role of religion from societal reformation has proved abortive since people at one point or another still recognize the importance of spiritualism in their lives. The incessant herder-farmer crisis in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular could be addressed by combining a spiritual approach with that of military and political approaches. The crisis between herders and farmers is nearly setting the country ablaze, especially during the last administration of president Muhammadu Buhari. Efforts have always been made by successive governments to address this menace, but the threat still remains constant. Against this backdrop, this paper is an attempt to see how the Islamic Theory of Pacifism (ITP) could be used to avert this danger in Nigeria. The paper makes use of secondary sources of data gathering and adopts content analysis as a method of data analysis. It relies on Islamic theory of pacifism and argues that if Nigeria can embrace the Islamic Theory of Pacifism (ITP), particularly the Sulaimanic Pacific Model (SPM), the protracted conflict between herders and farmers shall be reduced to the nearest minimum if not totally eradicated.

Keywords: Religion, Islam, Herdsmen, Farmers, Nigeria, Pacifism

Introduction

Religion, which was formerly thought to be the mechanism by which man connects spiritually with his Creator and a means of attaining peace and tranquility among the species, has now become a cause of commotion and chaos in human society. The situation is similar in the East, West, North, and South of the globe. Because of the socio-political and economic situations that are associated with religious crises in developing countries, they occur more frequently than in industrialized countries. Without equivocation, the only three Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) are the most popular and widely practiced of all the world's religions. Therefore, how could religion be conceptualized? Religion is described as 'the state of being grabbed by a supreme worry, a worry that classifies all other worries as preparatory, and a concern that supplies the solution to the issue of our existence's meaning' (Paul Tillich quoted by Kenyon, 2019).

According to Robert Cummings Neville quoted by Kenyon (2019) A religious tradition contains at least three key aspects, each of which is passed down and develops in a variety of ways. Kenyon (2019) then defines the world's underlying structures and boundaries, as well as the basic ways in which societies and people perceive how things are and what they signify. Ritual is the second most important aspect of religion. Rituals are a limited number of repeated and symbolic activities that encapsulate what a tradition considers to be essential to establishing the normative human role in the universe. The hunt, agricultural fertility, political power (worship of gods as lords), acts of dedication to other persons, and so on are all examples of early levels of ritual. The third crucial feature is that a tradition contains some conceptions and actual methods for fundamental change aimed at harmoniously connecting people to normative cosmological components, a spiritual path. This generally refers to salvation, or a healthy relationship with God, in religious systems. It refers to changing illumination regarding the reality of change and oneness in Buddhism. (Kenyon, 2019)

Hence, in Nigeria, there are many religious doctrines but some scholars often categorize these religions into three: Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion (Pew, 2015). The percentage of the adherents of these religions, in Nigeria, is controversial. However, Pew's survey (2010) found 52% Muslim, 46% Christian, and 1% other (Pew, 2015). It is quite observed that Islam and Christianity are popularly practiced while many continue to mingle these faiths with traditional beliefs (World Atlas, 2019). Apart from the traditional religion, the emergence of the other two religions in Nigeria could be conveniently traced. The emergence of Islam could be trace to period between 8th century AD to 15th century through the desert trader-Muslims, (Legit, 2019); Christianity on the other hand, could be traced to the work of missionaries and colonialist from Europe. Nigeria has been enjoying relatively peaceful co-existence among the adherent of these religions. However, there were occasional religious conflicts which are often the product of socio-economic and political factors. The ongoing farmers – herdsman conflict in Nigeria has called for critical investigation to know the role of religion and to see if religious solutions could be applied to solve this menace once and for all.

The paper composed of introduction, conceptual clarifications, an overview of religious activities in Nigeria and an overview of farmer- herders crisis in Nigeria as well. Next to the above is the discourse on the role of religion in farmer – herders' crisis in Nigeria. The paper also includes a discussion of the Islamic Theory of Pacifism (ITP) as a conflict resolution technique. The article ended with several suggestions.

Conceptual clarification

Religion: religion is a human activity that is constructed within the context of its own reality. Atheists argue that believers are regular humans, not insane. Science offers an alternative perspective on religion, understanding it as the function of the human brain. Scientists believe that understanding people's behavior is more related to religious conduct than myth, and that evolution has formed them for various reasons (Ron, 2024). Evolution is an important factor in understanding religion from a scientific perspective. Sociologists Stark and Fink (2000) argue that religious activity is reasonable economically due to the social and material benefits it provides. People often choose the religion that offers them the most benefits, making religious action logical despite its seemingly irrational nature. Religion is a pre-human behavior that uses language for communication, but it doesn't abandon pre-human behaviors of mammals, reptiles, and primates (Anna, 2022). Rituals and symbols are present in both religion and non-human animals, and psychological science can study religion to understand its meaning. Psychological explanations for religion offer psychological benefits, such as rejecting mortality, combating despair, explaining unpleasant situations, and providing a reassuring father figure (Stark and Fink, 2000). However, these theories cannot explain the origins or persistence of religion, nor the

evolution of the mind, as the mind is not the cause of evolution. In sum, religion is a cultural system that connects mankind to supernatural, transcendental, or spiritual forces through prescribed behaviors and rituals, values, worldviews, books, hallowed locations, prophecies, ethics, or organizations (Ron, 2024). In this paper religion is used to denote Islam and Christianity but with emphasis on Islamic religious tenet.

Islam: Islam is a monotheistic religion founded on revelations conveyed by Muhammad in the 7th century in Saudi Arabia. With about 1.6 billion members, it is now the world's largest or second-largest religion (Fazlur et al., 2019). Islam is seen both as a religion and a way of life. The proponents of the universality of Islam argue that Islam touches all aspects of human life (Heena, 2025). Islam is practiced in Nigeria by many Nigerians who are majorly found in Northern and Western states. Muslims are also found in the southeast and south-south of Nigeria (Nwankwo, 2019). In this paper, the world Islam refers to Islamic doctrines irrespective of sects within the religion.

Herdsmen: Herdsman originally signifies a manager, breeder, or tender of livestock. The fight between herders and farmers in Nigeria for lands and pasture is a severe and increasing conflict involving large deaths and raising tensions, notably in the country's Middle Belt (UNDP, 2022). Drought and desertification in the north have prompted pastoralist herders to seek grazing pastures further south, resulting in rivalry over resources and confrontations with established farmers. In addition, they cause a great loss of life and livelihood, jeopardize food security, allow small guns to proliferate, force a big number of people to relocate, and divert funds intended for development (Igbin, 2020). Particularly affected are vulnerable populations, including women, children and young people, internally displaced persons, and indigenous people (UNDP, 2022). Herder is used here to refer to the Fulani Bedouins who are animal herders.

Farmers: The term usually applies to people who do some combination of raising field crops, orchards, vineyards, poultry, or other livestock. In traditional agricultural society, the definition of a farmer was established as part of the social strata (Yue, 2024). The concept and meaning of farmers must be redefined in contemporary society due to the transition of agricultural aspects from traditional to modern (Jana, Marcela, and Lukas, 2022). Contemporary farmers are producers and operators who allocate resources according to market conditions, direct production according to market demands, provide new goods to the market, and view commercial operations as their stage (Yue, 2024). In contrast to conventional farmers, they exhibit traits like independence, self-determination, go-aheadism, sociality, and creativity. The term is used here to mean those produce crops only. It also consists of subsistence and mechanized farmers

Pacifism: It is an anti-war, anti-militarism, anti-conflict, anti-crisis, or anti-violence movement. At the eleventh Universal Peace Congress in Glasgow in 1901, the French peace activist Émile Arnaud (1864–1921) invented the term pacifism, which was quickly adopted by other peace activists (Agara, 2017). Pacifism is a commitment to peace and opposition to war. Our ordinary language allows a diverse set of beliefs and commitments to be held together under the general rubric of pacifism (Ryan, 2017, and Sanneh, 2016). It is adopted in this paper to mean peace engagement of farmers and herders and settling disputes among them by the party.

Herder- Farmers Crisis in Nigeria

Since the return of democracy in 1999, conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria has become alarming. Few communities in Nigeria are immune from this menace as it is found in northern, southern, eastern and western part of the country alike. In Northwestern Nigeria, attacks targeting mostly Hausa farmers have occurred. Fulani bandits and other militias have also assaulted and raided several Fulani settlements, most of which are farmers (Crisis Group, 2018). The disputes have been particularly noticeable in the North Central region of the Middle Belt. For instance, Herders and local farmers in Adamawa State's Numan local council attacked and

retaliated against one another in January 2018, killing around ten people (Crisis Group, 2018). Similar to this, in May 2018, more than 400 herders raided four villages in Adamawa State's Numan and Lamurde local councils: Lamurde, Bang, Bolk, Zumoso, and Gon (Crisis Group, 2018). As a result, 15 people were killed. Conflicts between livestock herders and farmers in Plateau State resulted in the burning of 50 homes and the deaths of over 200 persons (Alfred, 2021). In June 2018, there was a terrible attack in the hamlet of Dowaya, Adamawa state, from the evening of June 22 to the morning of June 23 that murdered 21 civilians. According to reports, only women and children were among the casualties. A conflict equally broke out between the herders and the farmers, Yandang population in the Lau Local Government Area of Taraba State in July of the same year (Bashir, 2024). Fifty villages were reportedly destroyed and about 73 people were murdered. In 2019, a similar incident between farmers and herders took place in Kajuru Local Government in Kaduna state, resulting in around 141 fatalities and over 65 unaccounted-for individuals (Nsikak, 2021). Allegedly, herders attacked the Odugbeho community on June 7, 2021, killing at least forty people (Sahara Reporters, 2021). According to a report, on April 12, 2022, herdsman attacked the local governments of Tarka and Mbadwem Guma, killing 23 people (Ayodele, 2022). Similar to the above is how herders launched attacks on Na'aman Danlami on September 7, 2023, after their failed effort to abduct a priest who was residing in the rectory (Agnes, 2023). In Kwahaslalek village, Mangu, suspected militants and herdsman torched and looted homes, schools, and places of worship on January 23, 2024, killing at least thirty people (James and Umar, 2024). One can see the frequency of this attacks in the entire north. Of importance to note is that some attacks on farmers were not actually carried out by traditional herders rather they were organized by the terrorists and bandits who are actually enemies to both herders and farmers.

The case is not different in the south-south and south-eastern states. Farmers and herders are always at logger head as well. It was reported that in 2016, there was a report of attacks in Nimbo, Enugu state. likewise in this state in April 2018, armed herders allegedly killed 19 people during an attack on the church, afterwards they burnt dozens of nearby homes. Conflicts between herders and farmers are also frequent in Edo state and Delta states (Sunday, Jacob and Osuinde, 2024). The case is relatively different in South East partly because it is a relatively new phenomenon perhaps, because, there are more than enough pastures for animal feeding which prevent incessant incursion farms or because there are few herders compared to norther part (Hyginus, 2022). Despite these facts there are still occasional clashes between herders and farmers (Ofuoku and Isife, 2019). For examples,

In the south-west, the cases of herder-farmers clashes are equally rampant. In places like Ijaye, Oyo, Iseyin, Oke Ogun and Ibarapa in Oyo states, farmers are always lamenting about how herders encroach in their farm lands. The case of Fulani herdsman and farmers in Igangan is a very good example in this context (Martins, Kehind and Oludare, 2023). Osun state has less report on herders-farmer crisis. This does not mean that there are no cases of herders encroaching in farm lands but state government put in place mechanisms to settle their grievances before resorting to violent conflict while trying to apply self-help. The scenario in Ondo state is somehow peculiar since farmers often consult oracles in addressing their grievances against the herders. It was reported that thunder killed 36 cows (Josiah, 2019). This approach though reduced physical combat between them but it is also suspected to be a cause for a gruesome attack on a church in Owo, Ondo state where the mysterious thing happened. thunder killed several cows (Benedict, 2022).

From the above discourse, it is quite clear that herder-farmers crisis is not a myth in Nigeria, rather it apparently real. Of importance to note is that government has not been ambivalent in tackling this menace because the immediate past president, Muhammadu Buhari intended to establish

ranching and grazing zones but lack of trust between Nigerians obstructed these laudable policies (Adebowale, 2019). However, the effects of these efforts are little felt since reports of news attacks pervading the media outlets. It is also important to note the dynamic of herdsman and farmers' conflict is pathetic. This is because both farmers and herders have been killed by armed attacks and the retaliation that followed, and assets valued at billions of Naira have been destroyed (Luqman, 2021). The disputes typically begin as conflicting claims to natural resources (such land and water) and eventually turn ethno-religious. The majority of farmers are Christians from different ethnic groups, whereas the majority of ranchers are Muslims from the Fulani tribe (Luqman, 2021). The fact that some herders raise cattle for influential local figures, including politicians and public workers, exacerbates the problem by creating a conflict of interest and preventing political action.

Overview of Farmer-Herders Crisis vis-à-vis Religion in Nigeria

The conflict between Farmers and herders dated back to existence of human history. The origin of farmer-herder's crisis could be traced to the scriptural era. Both Bible and Quran report the historic conflicts between these two primary producers of man's food on earth. For example, in the Bible, there was conflict between Cain and Abel because of farmer- herders contest. "According to the Bible story, the Hebrews were farmers (Cain), and nomadic herders (Abel). It was the conflict between these two groups of people that inspired the story of Cain and Abel" (Elizabeth, 2006). Also, In Qur'an, there was conflict between a farmer and a herder which made Prophet Daud and Sulaiman to adjudicate between them (Quran 21 vs 78 – 79). The two-scenario reported by the scriptures are not the same case and did not happen at the same period. In other words, conflict between the two groups (farmers and herders) has been from time immemorial. Nevertheless, this ugly situation is exacerbated by geography, economics and politics. The role of geography cannot be overemphasized. Climatic Change has grossly contributed to encroachment of desert in Nigeria. "Climate change plays a huge role in desertification. As the days get warmer and periods of drought become more frequent, desertification becomes more and more eminent. Unless climate change is slowed down, huge areas of land will become desert; some of those areas may even become uninhabitable as time goes on" (Conserve Energy Future, 2019). The effect of this desertification is being experienced in the area of non-availability of enough pastures for the cattle to graze in some parts of Nigeria. This, arguably, makes the cattle herders to move southward where they can conveniently feed their livestock. The crisis ensues between the farmers and the herders as they compete on the available fertile and green land. Other scholars have identified the probable causes of clash between the farmer and the herders to have included but not limited to "Desertification and soil degradation; breakdown in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms of land and water disputes; and proliferation of small arms and crime in rural areas have also increased the conflicts." (Lawal, 2019)

In recent time there is reportage of incessant clash between Fulani herders and farmers from other tribes. This clash is either between Fulani and Hausa herders and farmers from Hausa, Adara, Berom, Tiv, Tarok and Yoruba tribes in Nigeria. It is a truism that most of Bedouin Fulani are herders but not all of them. It should also be held that there are non- Fulani herders while not all Fulani herders are attackers and there are some attackers among the farmers as well. It is likewise germane to understand that most of attacks between the two are always driven by land occupation. In other words, the attacks are more over land rather than being caused by religion. "Herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria usually involve disputes over land and/or cattle between herders, in particular, the Fulani and Hausa and farmers, the Adara, Berom, Tiv and Tarok. The most impacted states are those of the Nigerian Middle Belt like Benue, Taraba and Plateau. 3,641 people have died in the clashes from 2015 to late 2018" (Pew, 2015). Arising from the above, economic factor which land represents is more significant cause of the crisis than religion.

Closely related to the above, is the government policy. Lack of adequate planning to foresee this kind of situation and to be pro-active as being done in developed countries is causality for this farmer-herder menace. It is noted that ranching is not new in Nigeria but successive government had abandoned the policy for years. An attempt to go back to the policy now has generated protests from some parts of the country. The argument is that there might not be fighting between the farmers and herders if government has been up and doing since all these years. Government has not also done well in pre-empting this kind of crisis by using necessary authority to provide land for both farmers and herders as custodian of land in the country. The Land Use Act of 1979 has bestowed the possession of land to State Governments. Land Use Act reads thus: An Act to Vest all Land in the territory of each State (except land vested in the Federal government or its agencies) solely in the Governor of the State, who would hold such Land in trust for the people and would henceforth be responsible for allocation of land in all urban areas to individuals resident in the State and to organisations for residential, agriculture, commercial and other purposes while similar powers with respect to non-urban areas are conferred on Local Governments. (27th March 1978) Commencement.

Therefore, politics equally does much than religion in this conflict. Another dimension is the role of politicians especially the opposition parties. Politicians fuel the ember of discord and also politicize the situation and give it unwarranted publicity to discredit government in power.

The media's reports and claims that religion is the bane of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria are not only misleading but also baseless since no research has ever discovered that. Religion has little or nothing to do with farmer – herder conflict in Nigeria. However, In the middle belt, the bulk of farmer-herder incidents have occurred between Muslim Fulani herders and Christian peasants, exacerbating ethno-religious tensions (Abiala, 2019). The dimension of the clash is better understood when we look at the clash between the farmers and the herders in the south western part of Nigeria. Most of farmers are also Muslims and there is still clash between the two groups. Therefore, there are something else, rather than religion that are motivating the clash and fueling the ember of discord between farmers and herders in Nigeria.

To further argue that religion has little or no role in farmer-herder clash, there is always misunderstanding between the Yoruba animal herder and Yoruba farmers. In most occasions, both of them are Muslims but they always and equally are at loggerhead on cattle grazing in their farms. The case is equally the same between the farmer and the herder in the Southeast and South-south who are from the same tribe and practice the same religion. Therefore, the clash is more on economic resource rather than religion. It is more of clash of interest than clash of belief and faith. In spite of the fact that religion does not engender farmer-herder conflicts, it has solutions for the menace.

Overview of Religious Activities in Nigeria

Indigenous religion is the starting point of discussion as far as discourse on religious activity in Nigeria is concerned. Hardly could we find a tribe in Nigeria without having contact with indigenous faith before the emergence of Islam and Christianity. According to its adherents, one of the beauties of this faith is that it holds morality and righteousness with high esteem. The adherents of traditional religion also see it, as a way of contacting the Superbeing. However, one of the flaws of the faith is in some of the old practices which in some cases still subsist is the practice of using human beings as sacrifices and objects of rituals. The adherents of this faith are reducing day by day while Islam and Christianity are taking their place. A known fact is that many still mingle the traditional faith with their Islam or Christianity.

The evolution of the foreign religions in Nigeria could be traced to 9th and 19th century for Islam and Christianity respectively. While Islam entered the nation from the north, Christianity entered

through the south (Njoku, 1995). For being foreign religions, the two religions have a link with other adherents of the same faith in other parts of the world. They both also have the centers of their religion in the Middle East. So, any events in international arena always influence the relationship between the two major religions in Nigeria. It could be observed that there is mutual suspicion from the sides of the two religions. This suspicion is always on domination of one by the other especially on political benefits. Consequently, there exist contest on most happenings in the country. For instance, General, Gbadamosi Babangida wanted the country to join Organization of Islamic Country (OIC) for the benefit of Nigerian state, Christian Association of Nigeria stood against it with claim that it is an attempt to Islamize the country (Dauda, 2016). Similarly, Muslims condemned the move of President Jonathan by nominating Namadi Zambo as Deputy President after the demise of Late President, Alhaji Musa Yar'adua. They claimed to a plot to allow Christian domination in Kaduna state since Yakowa who was the deputy Governor then became the Governor of Kaduna State. They, Muslims, argued further that why President did not decide to pick his deputy from Sokoto or Kano where muslims were both Governors and Deputy Governors. The point here is that every action and inaction of the governmental and non-governmental entities in Nigeria is quickly suspected as conspiracy of one religion on another.

Politicizing religion is another dimension in Nigeria. Politicians use religion as the means to their end. They make political games through religion. In some states in Nigeria, if governor is a Muslim, the deputy governor must be Christian or vice versa; numbers of commissioners must be equal; other political appointees must also be shared among the two religions and if otherwise, there would be outcry (John, 2023). All these are done in some cases against the merits of such appointments. Still on politics and religion, it is observed that Nigerian Constitution does not recognize or adopt a particular religion but the government in power often recognize some religions based on their discretion. In most cases the two foreign religions of Islam and Christianity are recognized while some recognize the three, as the case of Mr. Rauf Aregbesola, governor of Osun State, south-west, Nigeria (2010-2018). Others recognize only Islam or Christianity or both in the area like annual prayers or prayers in the official functions, celebration of official or personal events in church or mosque.

Religious radicalism is another cogent dimension on religions activism in Nigeria. Some adherents of Islam and Christianity have proved to be fanatical in their dealings with adherents of other religions. This kind of situation has generated a lot of acrimonies in the country. Disrespect to the place of worship, scripture or way of dressing in public life has engendered religious conflicts and violence. The trend of religious radicalism or fanaticism is becoming alarming as some religious groups like Boko Haram has turned to insurgency and has been challenging the corporate existence of the country as a sovereign entity. If religious issues are not seriously tackled in Nigeria, it might lead to the fragmentation of the country.

ITP and Conflict Management

The theory of pacifism generally connotes non-violence. It is the resistance to the use of war, militarism, or violence to resolve conflicts. In fact, it is the belief that any violence, including war, is unjustifiable under any circumstances, and that all disputes should be settled by peaceful means. At the eleventh Universal Peace Congress in Glasgow in 1901, the name pacifism was coined by French peace activist Émile Arnaud (1864–1921) and embraced by other peace activists (Obrad, 2000).

The argument of James (2010) that “there is no normative tradition of pacifism in Islam” is not only erroneous but also untrue. This is because there are various evidences from Quran, Hadith and historical facts that speak in contrary to his assertion. For instance, Prophet was reported to have commanded his followers that “do not anticipate to meet foes but always request for peace from your Lord, (Allah)”. Though, above statement does not mean that Islam abhors war

outrightly however, it considers war as last resort. Therefore, there is pacifism in Islam. Historically, prior to the migration (Hijra) of prophet and the Muslims to Medina, Islam had established the principle of pacifism to struggle against their opposition in Mecca. In Medina, however, Quran allowed muslims to use war as a strategy of self-defense. The Qur'an, says, 'should the enemy's hostile behavior cease, then the reason for engaging the enemy also lapses' (Khan and al-Hilali, 2020).

From the above discourse, it could be deduced that Islam adopts pacifism (though conditional pacifism not absolute pacifism). This is because absolute pacifists do not only condemn war at any level with any reason but also abhor war in self- defense. They believe that the value of human life is so high that nothing can justify killing a person deliberately. In their view, it is an unethical to use violence to rescue an innocent person who is being attacked and may be killed. For the absolute pacifists, this is not a comfortable moral position. Regardless of the consequences of war or violence, absolute pacifists typically accept this position as a fundamental moral or spiritual value; however, they may rationally argue that violence always produces worse outcomes than nonviolence (BBC, 2014). But for conditional pacifists which Islam sanctions, they also oppose war and violence in principle. They embrace reality, though, and realize that there may be times when conflict is preferable to the alternative. Conditional pacifists commonly base their moral code on utilitarian ideas, which state that it is immoral to resort to war or violence because of the negative effects. (BBC, 2014). Islam is in consonance with this conditional pacifism as evidenced.

First, as mentioned above, through out of prophet of Islam staying in Mecca for thirteen years he did not raise an arm against the offenders Meccan pagans despite their persecutions and mal treatment, rather, he encouraged his followers to migrate for safety. Secondly, When Meccans chase them to Medina, which led to Quranic permission to fight in defense; there was even instruction to embrace peace immediately the opponent signifies or request for that. Quran 9 v 61 says "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah; surely, He is the Hearing, the Knowing." Meaning that the fight initially is a necessity just to balance terror and make peace. Thirdly, the prophetic saying was reported to have said that do not intend to meet enemy rather seek for Allah's peace and tranquility. Abu Huraira was reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2861 that Prophet said "O people, do not desire to meet the enemy, but rather ask Allah for safety. If you meet your enemy in battle, be patient and know that Paradise is under the shade of swords." (Abu Amina, 2019) The area of emphasis here is that ask for God's peace. That is, be pacifist. Similarly, the first successor of the prophet was also reported to have said that "Surely peace with thanks is better than calamity with patient". Meaning that, peace is sacrosanct in Islam.

Salim Suwarin, an Islamic philosopher, developed the Suwaria tradition or philosophy in previous centuries, particularly in the 13th century. Also, this is an attempt to bring about radical shift from conditional pacifism to absolute pacifism. Zaghoul Pasha is acknowledged in contributing to the development of this theory. During the Egyptian Revolution of 1919, he advocated for Egyptians to engage in widespread nonviolent civil disobedience against British occupation. Senegalese Sufi Sheykh Amadou Bamba (1850–1927) was another intellectual who led a nonviolent resistance movement against French colonization in West Africa. Amadou Bamba, who preached hard effort, piety, and education as the greatest ways to combat oppression and exploitation of his people, consistently rejected demands for jihad against Europeans. Mahatma Gandhi, according to Margaret Chatterjee, was influenced by Sufi Islam (Chatterjee, 2005; Hardiman, 2003). Several Muslim groups, notably Khn Abdul Ghaffr Khn and his supporters, as well as the All-India Muslim League led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, played a vital part in peaceful struggle against British imperialism throughout the Indian independence movement. The Palestinian activist Nafez Assaily's contribution to this theory is quite significant and he is praised as a "creative Muslim exponent of non-violent activism" (Jerry, 2005). The nonviolent civil

disobedience movement known as the First Intifada, led by Ahmad Yasin, began in 1987. Public attacks, sanctions of Israeli Civil Administration institutions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, an economic embargo comprising of unwillingness to work on Israeli goods in Israeli settlements, rejection to pay taxes, rejection to drive Palestinian vehicles with Israeli licenses, defacement, and blockading were all part of it (Walid Salem, 2008).

Having discussed the basis of the theory, it is likewise germane to remark that Justice is a foundation of Islamic pacifism. It is a pre-requisite for positive peace. As Islam campaigns for non-violence against one another, it also has zero tolerance for injustice. To balance between the two is quite a herculean task. As most of the people involved in farmers-herders crisis in Nigeria are Muslims, one would have expected pacifism from the sides of the two parties. That is, for them to imbibe pacific culture. One can then argue that justice might be the missing factor which is making pacifism difficult. Meanwhile, the role of justice could be found in Quran 21 vs 78 – 79 where similar incident had reported to have happened during the reign of Prophet Daud (David). It was reported that there was a cattle's attack on a farmer land. Prophet Daud had judged that the farmer should seize all the cattle to recompense him, the farmer. The farmer was happy but herder was not. Both met Daud's son, Sulaimon (Solomon) outside, who studied the non-verbal language of the two, requested from his father to re-judge the matter. Having granted him permission, he, Sulaiman ruled that farmer should go away with cattle of the herder for the period that would take the culprit herder to fix the farm for the farmer, the victim. This judgement seems more accurate than the previous ruling of the father and more just as well. This could be referred to as Sulaimanic Pacific Model (SPM). This paper strongly recommends the application of this SPM to Nigeria herder-farmer crisis. It is non-violent and depicts or reflects justice.

IPT and herders-farmers Crisis in Nigeria

From the above discourse, it could be deduced that IPT could be adopted to address the incessant clash among the two stakeholders in crisis. When Kenly looks at the herder-farmer clashes in Nigeria, it could be seen that both farmers and herders do not feel the pains of one another. For example, herders do not feel the pains of farmers who might have labored to clear bush, plowed and made ridges, and planted maize or cassava, possibly with loans collected from banks. All of a sudden, a herder has vandalized the farm with his cattle. What could have been his feelings if he were the one? Likewise, a farmer is expected to put herders in his shoe. Assuming he is the one who had labored to rear cattle from two or three cattle to become dozens or scores. Suddenly there are no natural pastures for these cattle to feed on, to the extent that they are falling sick and starting to lose one or two. Such a herder could be tempted to encroach on farmers farms. No matter what amount could be leveled on herders to pay for the farmers that could solve this crisis. However, ITP is applicable to teach both of them lessons, especially Nigerian herders.

It should be noted that this theory is only applicable to real herders in Nigeria rather than the criminals or terrorists who are quite infinitesimal. Most of the clashes between herders and farmers are the handiwork of the terrorists and bandits. This category of conflict could be confronted with military actions. Nevertheless, ITP is opted for by this paper to serve as a solution to the farmer–herder conflict in Nigeria.

conclusion

Religions that were supposed to be the means by which man connects spiritually to his Creator and the route to achieve peace and serenity among the animals have now turned out to be the cause of fracas and mayhem in Nigeria and other parts of the world. This odious scenario is more prevalent in the developing countries than the developed nations (Adebayo, 2010). Nigeria has been enjoying relatively peaceful co-existence among the adherent of major religions in the country. However, there were occasional religious catastrophes which are often the product of socio-economic and political factors.

It has been observed that there is mutual suspicion from the sides of the two major religions, Islam and Christianity. This suspicion is always on domination of one by the other especially for political benefits. This scenario leads to politicizing religion while politicians manipulate the religious leaders for political gains. The paper also identified religious radicalism as another cogent dimension on religions activism in Nigeria in which some adherents of Islam and Christianity, in most cases, prove to be fanatical in their dealings with adherents of other religions. Despite all of the aforementioned facts, and after critically examining the role of religion in the genesis or prevention of the herder–farmer conflict in Nigeria, it is still argued that religion has nothing to do with the violence between herders and farmers in Nigeria; rather, economic and environmental factors have always engendered the conflict.

Recommendations

Based on the above discourse, the paper suggests that the Nigerian government embrace the ITP as one of its conflict resolution tactics. This could be done by establishing a commission or empower the existing commission like Public Complaints Commission to serve as forum where farmers and herders report their grievances. The Commission should consist of delegates from judiciary, police and others just like the mobile court. This paper also recommends that government should establish or encourage inter-faith forum where any issue that has to do with religious acrimony would be ironed out. Government should also be just irrespective of the contending religious bigotry and discriminations. Religious tolerance is also important to get rid of unnecessary rancor in the country. Farmers are equally enjoined to have perimeter fences for their farms to reduce the incursion of herds into their farms. Likewise, herders are enjoined to have personal and private ranches where they can feed their cattle, especially during the dry season when conflict is mostly rampant.

Conclusively, it is quite unequivocal that peace is not negotiable. Thus, there is need for government to try different solutions to bring in peace in the country including considering different theories. This article has tried to fill this gap by arguing for adoption of ITP especially SPM.

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