

The Church and Warfare in the Face of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: The Way Forward

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Abstract

The essay offers a critical assessment of the concept of warfare as it affects the Christian Church in Nigeria, in relation to the floods of insecurity and destruction of lives and properties by the Islamic fundamentalist; Boko Haram. It examines the New Testament view and the contemporary views on warfare. The ideology of the Boko Haram group is also considered. The essay argues for peace and safety for the Christian Church in the circumstance of attacks, killings and the struggle for dominance by the Islamic fundamentalist, Boko Haram. It provides helpful suggestions for the survival of the Church in a multi-religious society like Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Warfare has been a distinctive problem in human history. Today, it may even be thought to be a sinister peculiarity of the human species that hordes should pursue hordes with the objective of destroying and dominating. We may say that war in itself is the struggle for existence. Perhaps, it is the desire to gain control over an area belonging to another group, community, state, nation and even individual. It is also making such to subject to ones ideology. Warfare has had a horrible effect on human history. The tales retold are those of horror, sympathy and compassion for the victims while the victors calculate their gains in terms of booty, slaves (like the Chibok girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria), land been annexed among others.

The activities of the Boko Haram insurgents against the Nigeria nation today is best described as a declaration of war on Nigeria and most especially the Christian Church in Nigeria. Many Christians have been killed and Churches burnt by the insurgents. The question of the Christian attitude to war is one that finds us divided. This article provides another spectrum of scholastic response to war, especially, in a multi-religious society like Nigeria.

The Church

The English word "Church", the German "kirech", the Duch "kerk" come ultimately from the Greek, *evkklhsi,a|*, meaning "things" belonging to the lord and was applied originally to a Church building.¹ However, the Latin *ecclesia* and its derivatives, although used of the building, come from the Greek *evkklhsi,a|*. In secular Greek, *evkklhsi,a|*, means an assembly, primarily of citizen in a self-governing city, for example that of Ephesus in Acts 19:29. This latter use dominates the New Testament writings. *evkklhsi,a|*, appears about one hundred and twelve (112) times in the New Testament. It was used primarily to designate particular communal reality, not to describe its qualitative aspects.² It thus means an assembly of persons summoned for a particular purpose.

In the old testament, the Hebrew word *evkklhsi,a|*, is used to denote the assembly or congregation of the Israelites.³ The Hebrew *evkklhsi,a|*, was used especially for those within the covenant as opposed to the strangers in your midst' (Deut. 23:3, Neh. 13:1). The Septuagint in its use of *evkklhsi,a|*, equally follows this Hebrew meaning. The word may thus be meant for a group of people bound together by either signing a pact, an oath or a belief system. We may suggest that it could then be used for any gathering of which the people had a common interest, goal or deeds.

In the New Testament, the term comes ultimately to be used of:

The mystery of a people, though still sinners, who possess the pledge of salvation, since they are the extension of the body of Christ, the entrance to love. It is the mystery of a human-divine institution in which man can find light, pardon, and grace for the praise of god's glory.⁴

Luke in his presentation in the Acts of the Apostles also takes after the Hebrew meaning of *evkklhsi,a|*, (Acts 7:38). In the gospels the word occurs only twice on Jesus lips. The first was in Matthew 16:18, which was spoken to peter "upon this rock I will build my church...". The second was when a brother will not heed private remonstrance, the matter is to be told to the Church (Mt. 18:17).

Alan Richardson in his work mentioned that A. Schweitzer for example argues that Jesus himself had no intention at all of founding a Church. The reason given was that Jesus expected the *parousia* to follow immediately upon his death.⁵ We may say that this opinion is faulty, just as Richardson has also suggest. This is because the New Testament indicates clearly enough that Jesus conceived of his divinely appointed mission as that of creating the Church, the new people of God, and that from the beginning he intended that there should be a definite ministry within it, that is, an appointed order of Ministers who should serve it in the capacity of 'shepherd - rulers': the 'greater' were to be the servant of all. This impression is given in Matthew 23:10-11.

The word Church was first found in its Christian sense in Acts 5:11 and again where the whole Church was to be identified with the Church of Jerusalem in Acts 8:1. Nevertheless, it is clear from Paul's epiphany that among the Greek speaking Christians *evkkhlsi,a|*, was the regular word from an early date, both for a local Christian community like 'the Church of the Thessalonians' (I Thess. 1:1, 2 Thess. 1:1) and to the Church of God in Corinth (I cor. 1:1, 12:28).

Notwithstanding the numerous Churches as there were cities or even households, the New Testament recognized only one *evkkhlsi,a|*. The one was not an amalgamation or federation of the many. It was a 'heavenly' reality belonging not to the form of this world but to the realm of resurrection glory where Christ is exalted at the right hand of God.⁶ G.E. Ladd rightly summarize the *evkkhlsi,a|*, as:

Not to be viewed simply as a human fellowship, bound together by a common religious belief and experience. It is this, but it is more than this: it is the creation of God through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, there is and can be properly only one *evkkhlsi,a|*. The fact of the Oneness of the *evkkhlsi,a|*, is the theological meaning of the several extensions of Pentecost in Acts. The spirit came first to the Jewish believers, then to the Samaritan believers, then to Gentiles, and finally to a little groups of disciples of John the Baptist. These four comings of the spirit mark the four strategic steps in the extension of the *ekklesia* into which all converts whether Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, or followers of John are baptized by the same spirit.⁷

The following presupposed that the Church was established by Christ as the new Israel and endowed by him with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Church of God is that which he had purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2, 7:27; I Pet. 5:2). We may suggest that the establishment of the Church is an extension of the covenant relationship between Israel and God to other nations of the world. A member of this Church automatically becomes a member of God's household. Precisely, the gathering of believers signifies a Church in the Christian perspective.

It is in this light that the New Testament also points to the priestly character of the Church (I Pet. 2:9). Paul in his letter also conceived of the Church as Christ's body (col. 1:24) or as temple (I Cor. 3:16; 2cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22) and as his bride (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:32). Hence, it could be said that the Church consist mainly of the chosen people belonging to God.

The meaning of Warfare

There are several Hebrew words associated with the various facets of warfare in the Old Testament. The most common of them is *milhama* meaning "to war". It appears about three hundred and thirteen times in the old testament.⁸ Others are: *lokham*, meaning "to fight" and *Tsevo*, meaning, "to assemble in troupes for war." The Hebrew word *milhama* which is rendered as 'to war' in English is from the root מ לה meaning 'to set in order' draw attention to the ordered action of the battle array.

In the New Testament, the word rendered as 'war' is *po,lemoj* (*polemos*) and it occurs in about eighteen times in the texts.⁹ It is akin to *pelai plgo,ion* which seems to express the idea of "going at" or "going for". This is similar to the Arab *Lahama*; meaning 'fit close together denoting the army in battle array'.¹⁰ Hence, warfare is the condition of one moving close to another with the aim of inflicting havoc. It is the real fighting; the struggle between enemies.

War is an armed conflict between nations, tribes, or other groups or an instance of this as defined by The New Lexicon Webster's Encycpedic Dictionary of the English language.¹¹ Carl Von Clausewitz who was a Russian soldier and philosopher of war (1780-1831) defines war as "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will."¹² A more explanatory definition of war comes from Bruce, as an:

Organized and coherent violence conducted between established and internally cohesive rival groups. In contrast to numerous other modes of violence, it is neither individual spontaneous, random, nor irrational; however much like all varieties of violence- it involves destructive action, even on a massive scale.¹³

The above definition suggests that there are various forms of violence, riots and conflicts that are destructive yet could not be termed as war. The reason has been that they were not carried out on a massive scale. Bruce went further, saying that war in truth is:

That situation in which the killing of other people on a grand (or even total) scale is rendered not only licit but requisite, even glorious, by virtue of the fact that they belong to a rival group to whom ethical norms do not extend, the enemy having been effectively defined as subhuman or even nonhuman.¹⁴

It is in this perspective that the new Catholic encyclopedia describes war as armed conflict between sovereign states or communities having in this regard the right of states.¹⁵

From the above, a fact is established that war must be between rival groups. It is rival in the sense that each must see itself as distinct from other, either in thought, deeds, fashion, kingship ties, religious belief system, residence patterns, language barriers, institutions or any other forms of differences. It is also expedient that a group need see the other as an enemy to her and should be ready to take-up arms against such foe. A very good

example is the current war between Nigeria and the fundamentalist group known as Boko Haram. As being put forward by Osita Chidoka, the Boko Haram bombing and killing is ethno-religious crisis fuelled by poverty. This form part of the challenges facing security in Nigeria.¹⁶ Whatever might be the cause, our main objective here is that both were rivals ready to protect her own interest. Hence, it involves armed struggle massive killing and destruction of properties.

Nowadays, the use of the language of war is more common even in the homes. It is a common phenomenon to hear off 'war of words', and actions that does not necessarily involve homicide being described as war. It is used to describe industrial actions and the exchange of 'unholy' words between individuals; even husband and wife. Marshall was aware of this development when he suggests:

It may be more precise to think of war as a means of causing at least sufficient damage and pain to an opponent to force him to do what you want or simply to make him feel the weight of your anger.¹⁷

This definition, he posits, can include forms of non-military action and that it is important to recognize that many activities today where the language of war is used, such as in strikes, are forms of violent actions calculated to cause suffering to other people¹⁸ or institution. This modern usage does not, however, erode its usual usage, which involves the employment of armed personnel to fight other armed personnel. Perhaps, it is in this perspective that the Nigerian House of Senate advised President Goodluck Jonathan to declare war on Boko Haram insurgents.

Another state in which war is being used is the extreme position of non-violence and non-resistance taken by Gandhi and Tolstoy and which Barth leans towards.¹⁹ According to the available records, Gandhi, for a quarter of a century had directed an affective war for the independence of India through the use of what he calls "soul force."²⁰ The primary objective of this programme was to affect the submission of the opposition through compulsion.

Gandhi's conception of warfare has a parallel to the New Testament's view of spiritual warfare. This is a non-violence 'silent war', it is not fought with any physical weapon; yet powerful to demolish every strongholds and taking in captives the opposition (II Cor. 10:3-5). It is said to be spiritual, involving divine intervention through the use of prayer through Jesus Christ, faith, peace, truth, helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God (Eph. 6:13-18). Halley rightly observes that:

This passage certainly means that the Christians warfare is against more than the natural temptations of his flesh. There are powers in the unseen world against which we are powerless except through the aid of Christ.²¹

From the above submissions, we may define warfare generally as a way of compelling and enforcing the submission of an opponent either via violence or non-violence methods. It could be confrontational or metaphysical duress. The metaphysical aspect, however, has to do with the individuals religious beliefs. Indeed, war is an effort to exert control over that which resists controls.

The New Testament's Message on Warfare

The teachings of Jesus and the apostles includes precepts which on a first impression appear to rule out all traffic with war as inconsistent with the moral ideal.²² This is a fact almost established throughout the New Testament message on warfare. This could not but be so, in that, in God's comprehensive scheme for the salvation of His elect out of every nation, Jew and Gentile alike, was the "mystery", the divine 'wisdom', which" God conceived before creation but concealed until the apostolic age.²³ This is the mediatorial ministry of Jesus; the ministry of peace. Jesus knew that he had to fulfill this Old Testament Vision of Peace and this is noted in his teachings.

Our study unfolds that the New Testament not only contains a law of Love which condemns the passions that incite to aggression, but there is a law of meekness expressed in non-resistance, which suffers the aggressor to work his evil will. There are such statements as:

You have heard it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic let him have your cloak as well (Mt. 5:38-40).

This idea is equally buttressed in:

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. (Mt. 5:43-45).

In the beatitudes, Jesus taught his disciples saying: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (Mt. 5:9).

This teaching of non-resistance and a flare for peace was upheld by the disciples of Jesus. Apostle Paul expounded this theory in:

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the

Lord.

He went further by saying that:

If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him something to drink, in doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:18-21).

These teachings seem hard to embrace, but they were the legacy which Jesus left for his followers in every age as a step to future peace. To this philosophy of living, Jesus cultured his disciples.

It is important to note that God's rule is intended to bring in peace and that Jesus' methods of achieving this end were peaceful. This is in sharp contrast to those of his contemporary Jewish groups who were prepared to wage war against their enemies. Jesus taught a meekly principle of attaining trophy over an enemy without necessarily going to battle against the enemy. It is submission to glory. These precepts were enforced by the example of Jesus who 'leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps', of which:

When they hurled their insults at Him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered,

He made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who Judges justly (1Pet. 2:21-23).

This philosophy worked out in Jesus, perhaps, for Jesus and his days alone when civilization was still in the embryo. Could it be practiced in our contemporary days? Can his followers today with the changing world abide by this philosophy of loving one's enemy who is ready to go to war with you and yet have victory in such a battle? Will the enemy not take advantage of the opponent's meekness and peaceful nature to subject him to total slavery, if not total annihilation?

The New Testament continued and expanded the Old Testament theory of Judgement. This is, however, contrasted to the Old Testament view of divine Judgement realizable in the life-time in war as retribution and above all that evil-doing was swiftly dealt with. During the New Testament period, the ideas of the resurrection of the body immortality were well developed. God's definitive Judgement is viewed as the beginning of the New Messianic Age and will therefore take place at a specific time in the future, the day of Judgement.²⁴ Alana puts it concisely thus:

It is clear that the Biblical concept of God as Judge started among the Jews as a conception that viewed divine Judgment as a phenomenon occurring in the life-time of the individual in the form of retribution but was expanded in the New Testament times with the development of the ideas of the resurrection and immortality into an eschatological event, taking place at the end of this age, though the possibility of divine Judgment being experienced in this life by the wicked is not denied.²⁵

Therefore, the New Testament does not view war precisely as divine Judgement; the latter is seen as an eschatological event wherein God judges.

It is in the light of the above that the Christian must understand the concept of loving their enemies and not to take revenge, but rather leave the matter in the hands of God who judges righteously (Rom. 12:17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:4; James 1:19f; 1Pet. 2:19). It is in this context that we must consider the key passage in Romans 13:1-7. The evildoer must fear the magistrate because he does not bear the sword in vain.

The New Testament does not leave us in obscurity in respect to warfare in the present time. War is taken to be a fact of this present world (Lk. 14:31; I Cor. 14:8). The book of Hebrews chapter 11:32-34 points back to the heroes of the Old Testament wars. Jesus himself said that "You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come" (Mt. 24:6f). This suggests that there is bound to be war as signs of the end of the Age; even nation will rise against nation and Kingdom against Kingdom (Vs. 7a). With war as the characteristic of this present world, then suggest that the Christian who is in the world is not left out. But the plan of God for a future peace needs to be fulfilled. This was inaugurated by Jesus, of which the full realization is in the future. We may then say that Jesus and the Christians is the instrument of peace in God's hand for the present, preparing the ground for the future peace. Jesus saw in the whole of his ethical conduct as being determined by a principle of non-resistance. The Christian is thus expected to eschew war and pursue all avenues for peace in times of crisis.

Jesus' statements (Lk. 22:35-8; Mt. 10:34. and the likes), making reference to the use of the sword must not be taken literally. Marshal argues that the way in which Jesus replies ironically to the suggestion that the disciples already have Swords indicates that they have misunderstood him and that he is not to be taken literally.²⁶ The reference in Mathew 10:34 has the form of warning to the disciples and therefore it must surely refer to the use of the Sword against the disciples and not necessarily by them. Jesus' statement and action when Peter drew the Sword, cutting off the right ear of Malchus (one of the high priest's servants) just at the point Jesus was arrested, shows that he was against resistance and expected his followers to follow his principle (Jn. 18:10-11; Lk. 22:49-51).

In the Apocalyptic sections of the New Testament, war appears to conform to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the final eschatological struggle. In Mathew 24:6 and parallels we see physical wars being regarded as the beginning of afflictions. Physical wars are the events of the intervening period before the parousia –that is, the second coming. They merely draw our attention to the fact that the end is coming soon. The

reference in Revelation 9:7, 9 to war and chariots of war serves as images to describe the terrors of the fifth plague, which is expressed in images and motifs drawn from Joel 1-2 (the plague of locusts).²⁷ We may suggest here that for war to cease outrightly, there is the need to get to its source. This suggests why the Apocalypse talks of Spiritual warfare between Michael and the dragon – that ancient Serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray (Rev. 12:7-17, 13:7). The beast from the abyss (antichrist) will wage war against the lamb and the ‘Saints’ (Rev. 11:7; Dan. 7) according to Revelation 19:19-21, the beast will be overthrown and consigned to the lake of brimstone. The final victory of Jesus over the forces of Satan in the spiritual battle shall manifest in the physical realm, leading to an end of war. Revelation 20:8 takes up the motif of Ezekiel 38:2 that Satan will bring Gog and Magog to wage the final war. But this eschatological enemy will be subjected to total destruction by the forces of Jesus. Then war will be made to cease (Is. 2:4; Mic. 4:3; Hos. 2:18) and will give way to eternal peace of the final age in ‘the new heaven and the new earth’ (Rev. 21:1).²⁸

In some Christian quarters today, Jesus interaction and acceptance of the centurion; rewarding his faith as ‘I have not found such great faith even in Israel’ (Lk. 7:1-10) are being taken for the recognition of soldiers and the existence of war in the New Testament. More so, nowhere is it suggested that a soldier should seek to leave the service upon becoming a Christian. John the Baptist’s reply to the soldiers on what to be done to be free from the coming wrath, did not demand that they quit soldiering but “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely – be content with your pay.” (Lk. 3:14). This suggests the sanctioning of the profession in the New Testament. We may say that since war is inevitable in this present world, soldiering becomes a necessity, probably to sustain God’s instrument of peace (Acts 27:43). This submission does not mean as such that the institution of war was being legitimized or glorified. James (4:2) indicates that war is the result of human passion and not compatible with the Christian life. The New Testament seems to contain no notion of a holy war on behalf of the Messianic King (Mt. 26:51-54).

However, we may submit that the New Testament create avenue for a reproof, correction and rejection of anomalies against the kingdom. (Mt. 21:12-13; Lk 19:45-46). Jesus rejected the unholy activities carried out in the Temple, which signifies that he would reject any assault against the Temple. He drove out all who were buying and selling and overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves saying “It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers” (Mt. 21-13). It is possible that those he drove out do not know the use and value of the Temple. The account gives a picture of people who readily obeyed. We wonder what the scene would look like should they fail to consent, wanting even to destroy or turn the Temple to other uses, with Jesus at the opposite end. The result of which may be war.

The New Testament teaches on the role of the Holy Spirit as “the counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things...” (Jn.14:26). Jesus had warned that his follower (Christians shall be persecuted (which entails various conflicts and war, but it is the role of the Holy Spirit to teach you at that time what you should say (Lk. 12: 11-12; Jn. 16:12-15). Titus is of the opinion that “it teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness should an unbeliever decide to soil the faith. On such occasion, the Christian must listen to the command of the Holy Spirit on whether to go to war or not.

We equally deduce the application of wisdom in times of crisis in the New Testament. (Lk 4:28-30). Jesus in his bid tried teaching the truth of the kingdom and makes known his personality to them in Nazareth where he was rejected. The tumultuous crowd in the synagogue got up in order to kill him but he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. Jesus knew that he has not fulfilled his mission on earth and that it is wrong for him to surrender himself to be killed, since his time and hour has not come, he had to look for a way of escape. This is wise enough for a helpless man in the lion’s den who still has missions to accomplish on earth. It is imperative to note that Jesus enters into dialogue with his opponents to avoid conflicts. It was when the dialogue failed, and the Jews were furious wanting to stone him that he sought for ways of escape (Jn. 8:48-59, 10:22-39).

Finally, James, inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Thus, the Christian ought to submit to God, but resist any step by the devil through his agents in whom he lives, to war against the Christian. It is the devil who instituted revolution in the beginning that continues to war till today. It is for the Christian to resist him both spiritually and physically.

Contemporary Christian Views on Warfare

The question of the Christian attitude to war since Constantine to the contemporary time is one that finds Christians divided. It has given rise to schisms in the Church and has also aided in the reformation of the Church. It has become so sensitive and controversial that the Pastor or the Vicar and Preachers of the gospel either in the Church or street must take cognizance of this plurality of conviction and witness that is within its fellowship, lest the strength of the fellowship is at a risk. This suggests why we may have diverse Christian Theology on this issue of war. The message of both old and new testaments did not outrightly rule out war in this present world.

A general observation of the Church today, precisely in Africa, necessitates this conclusion. Any

Church that wants to be inclusive whether as a local Parish or as an ecumenical body, must now take into account the range of conviction on the morality of war that is a present fact of the contemporary situation. These diverse strands of conviction includes: the position of the activists, the pacifists and the selectivists.²⁹ These three strands are inseparable from the Church today. We shall now examine them briefly.

Activism

First, there is activism which holds that the Christians ought to go to all wars in obedience to his government because government is ordained of God.³⁰ This view upholds that it is always right to participate in war. This argument is being supported from two different perspectives: Biblical and Philosophical or Social.

On the Biblical aspect, the activists argue that the scriptures seem emphatic on the point that government is ordained of God. Any government is ordained of God. Any government at all, whether it be in the religious realm or the civil realm, is of God and God is the God of order and not of chaos (Rom 13:1-7; I Cor. 14:33). Their argument is rooted in the Old and the New Testaments.

According to this view, the Old Testament, data declares in the beginning that man was to “have dominion over... every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen. 1:28). It was thus man’s prerogative to rule over the earth. After the fall, the woman was told “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” (Gen. 3:16b). We need say here that the concept of having dominion over the earth does not in any form imply the killing of fellow being or man. Ruling over the woman only suggests the state of submissiveness the woman must be to the man in matters of decision or control; yet does not imply an audacity to terminate the woman’s life. The activists argue that Cain, killed his brother and was accused of not being his brother’s keeper” (Gen. 4:10). They take this to be government over his brother. We must say that after all, Abel had not offended him. Cain only had to learn a lesson and work harder. Cain lacked the spirit to persevere, not tolerant and a sadist. The activists fail to understand that the idea of dominion which God had planned for man has been infiltrated, injected with ‘poisons’ and adulterated by the devil’s maneuver over the first family on earth. Hence, the inherited character in Cain and the subsequent generations.

They argue further that after the whole predeluvian civilization had become corrupt and the whole earth was filled with violence God destroyed it, and instituted human government. Noah was then given the mantle of rulership; the government of the earth with the following instruction:

And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will... and from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man (Gen. 9:5-6).

The activists take this instruction after the flood to mean that God had given Noah the Sword and liberty to take life. But how reasonable is it for God to wipe out a generation of human being because of violence and later instituted another human government (for the first human government was that of Adam and Eve) legalized for violence by him. The instruction however suggests more of warning to prevent the taking of life rather than a command to take life. It is suffice to note that it was because of the corruption and violence that the predeluvian civilization was destroyed by God. More so, Noah himself and members of his family who survived the flood equally had their root in Adam and Eve. Therefore, the instinct of pugnacity is still inherent in Noah. It is an evil act which has not been destroyed. The warning was for Noah not to take the life of his fellow man made in the image of God and a bid to avert what led to the destruction of the earlier civilization.

After the destruction, the instruction was also meant to see whether man will obey God’s command. Earlier, man had chosen to obey the devil rather than God. Man chose evil instead of good. At this time, man as a friend to the devil equally chose to disobey God. Man or any man who chose to shed the blood of man; by man shall his own blood be shed. It then means that as Noah’s government chose to shed a man’s blood, by another man’s government shall his own blood be shed. God thus forbid the government to shed man’s blood from the beginning. It was not in the interest of God for governments to wage war against one another. But man and his government out of their own volition and freewill chose to do so and God not desiring to obstruct man’s freewill allows it. Thus, the Mosaic Theocracy which empowers the government and man explicitly declares: “You are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise” (Exo. 21:23b-25), a recognition of the path earlier trailed by man. This presupposes why God sanctioned war in the Old Testament, promising to bring war to cease in the future.

In the New Testament, the activists believed that the Old Testament view that God has ordained government was confirmed. Jesus is quoted as saying a man ought to render therefore to Ceasar the things that are Ceasar’s...(Mt. 22:21), and Jesus before Pilate when he says: “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above” (Jn.19:11). Equally, Paul admonishes Timothy to pray and give thanks “for kings and all who are in high positions...” (I Tim. 2:2). See also Peter’s charge on the Emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him...” (I Pet. 2:13-14). The most extensive passage of reference in the New Testament is found in Romans 13:1-7. Paul wrote: “Let all persons be subjected to the government authorities. For there is no authority except from God... (Rom. 13:1).

The philosophical argument put forward by the activists is that the Government is Man's guardian – One of the most forceful arguments ever written for this position came from the pen of Plato. He opines that a man should not disobey even a government which is unjustly putting him to death. This was the period Socrates awaited his death in prison having been accused of impiety and was to drink the cup of poison. Crito (Socrates young friend) then urged him to escape and evade the death penalty. In Socrates reply, he gave five reasons for obeying an unjust government, even to the point of death.

1. Government is Man's Parent. One ought not to disobey even an unjust government. "First, because in disobeying it he is disobeying his parents." By this Socrates meant that it was under the sponsorship of the government that the individual was brought into the world. He was not born in a lawless jungle but he came into this world under the parentage of Athens. It thus suggests that a man must see himself as a child of the government.

2. Government is Man's Educator- Socrates argues for the government as the author of his education. This included the knowledge of justice and injustice from birth to adulthood. And that the government made it possible for our father to train us in our various disciplines and hobbies.

3. The Governed has covenanted to obey his Government – Plato gave this as that man has made an agreement with the government that he will duly obey its commands. Therefore, any punishment is to be endured in silence. And if she leads us to wound or kill in battle, thither we follow as is right.

4. The Governed is not compelled to Remain under his Government- According to Plato, anyone who does not like government and the city may go wherever he likes.

5. Without government there would be social chaos – There is no state without a law. Plato argues that an unjust law is bad, but no law is even worse. Even a bad monarchy is preferred to a state of anarchy.

Not much has been added to this position of the activist other than that it is a greater evil not to resist an evil aggressor than to fight against him. This is reminiscent of the famous line: "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." If good men will not resist evil men, then evil men will prevail in the world.³¹

This position of the activists is not without problem. One, what form is the resistance going to take? Physical confrontation or diplomacy? Two, what extent is the resistance by the good, to scare off the evil or to engage in real battle? For in most wars, both sides claim to be in the right. Except for the imperialists who must know that they are the aggressors but still claim to be right and want to fight to the last drop of blood in their veins. More so, it is more preferable to disobey an unjust government and remain in it than to obey an unjust government which is evil step one, to commit greater evil in battle which is evil step two. This is to say that a just government will not even declare war that would necessitate disobedience. She would prefer dialogue and diplomacy.

Pacifism

Second, there is pacifism which contends that Christians should participate in no wars to the point of taking the lives of others, since God has commanded men never to take lives of others.³² John Yoder and J.A. Toews reflect this position when they advocate total dissociation from war of any kind, whether it be as aggressor or as defender.³³ At the opposite end of the spectrum is the activists. The pacifist position is espoused by such groups as the Anabaptist, the Mennonites and Society of Friends, and, its categorical stand is that Christians should avoid all wars. The position of the pacifist is very logical and based on the supreme law of love. Yet, for all its valid logic, this position is too simplistic to be a practical solution to the problem of the Christian and war. While the activist view is too simplistic to adequately guide believers with regard to their role in a given war, their total and unlimited submission to the state leads to a "my country right or wrong" attitude.

The pacifist equally employed the biblical and social perspectives to argue for their stand. There are several biblical points in support to the Christian pacifist's argument. Some have been highlighted under the message of the New Testament. One of such premises is stated in the Old Testament injunction "You shall not kill" (Ex. 20:13).

The pacifists believe that killing is always wrong whether it is done within one's own society or on men in another society. Different answers have been given to explain the wars in the Old Testament by the pacifists. These are:

1. Wars of the Old Testament which God is represented as commanding were not really commanded by God at all. Pacifism believes that they represent a more barbarous state of mankind in which wars were justified by attaching divine sanctions to them.

2. That the wars are unique in that Israel was acting as a theocratic instrument in the hands of God. These wars were not really Israel's wars but God's wars. This is evidenced by the special miracles God performed to win them. They were "holy wars."

3. Thirdly, it is argued that these wars were not God's "perfect" will but only His "permissive" will. That God commanded war in the same sense in which Moses commanded divorce: "because of the hardness of men's

hearts (Mt. 19:8). We may fall prey to these premises because God could have evolved other measures of conquering the Canaanite cities and punishing the sinful nations rather than war – the evil path chose by men.

Pacifism is also of the opinion that forcefully resisting evil is wrong. Rather, evil should be resisted with the spiritual force of love. This is in consonance with Christ's "if one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt. 5:39). Vengeance belongs to God (Deut. 32:35); Rom. 12:19-21). The story of Jesus driving out the money – changers from the temple is not incompatible with this position. Activists sometimes bank on this episode to legalize war. However, the physical force (that is the whip) was used only on animals, not on the people.

This is in consonance with the spirit in having dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:28). Further-still, the authority Jesus used was His. He did not employ the services of a troop or armed battalion of disciples (John 2:15-16). Pacifism however affirms the greater force of spiritual good in the face of the forces of physical evil. The reason is that Pacifists believed basically in the fact that "we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

The pacifists would prefer being killed by an evil murderer; leaving room for the murderer to change and him (the pacifist) going to heaven rather than killing the murderer and both of them liable for the same offence and thus go to hell fire.

Pacifism equally concludes that there is no difference between public and private ethics. It sees no distinction between one's role as a private individual and his role as a public or government official. Putting on Military or Civilian uniform does not revoke one's moral responsibility either to oneself or to the society. In other words, a Christian in military uniform does not cease to be but must uphold the Christian principle; yet in a military attire.

The social arguments propounded by the pacifists in support of their position are as follows:

1. War is based on the evil of greed-this is focused on mans desire for luxury as the basis of warfare. Plato has rightly said that all Wars are made for the sake of getting money.³⁴ James 4:2 states that:

You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You do not have because you do not ask God. (Js. 4:2).

Thus, one of the grievous evil known to man – war – is caused by man's covetous crave for wealth.

2. War breeds many evils. Among families of war are death, destruction, famine, pestilence, horror, sorrow and pain and several psychological defects.

3. War breeds more wars, enlarging its coast. Subdued enemies often rise to retaliate against their conquerors while the political friends or trade partners assist each other at warring against other nations. This was experienced in the story of the first and second world wars – wars across continents.

To this end, the pacifists clamour for peace and advocate a total unilateral disarmament and banning of nuclear tests. They see wars as unbiblical and antisocial and an abomination in the sight of God. They call on every right-thinking man to rise against man's inhumanity to man.

Selectivism

Finally, we have the third group known as selectivism or what William E. Nix, A.M. (1970) tagged Mediativism.³⁵ The selectivists argue that Christians should participate only in some wars viz., the just ones, since to do otherwise is to refuse to do the greater good God has commanded. According to Norman L. Geisler:

Not all men are content with the blind patriotism of activism which would kill upon their government's request while shouting, "my country, right or wrong." Neither are all men satisfied with a naively passive attitude which would permit a Hitler to attempt genocide without lifting a gun in resistance.³⁶

This is an intermediate position between the activists and the pacifists. The selectivist is finding it difficult to declare all wars as just and no war as unjustifiable. It is imperative to note that most contemporary Christians belong to this school of thought.

One may wonder what scriptural basis the selectivists may have. However, the basis of the activists and the pacifists is synthesized. In other words, selectivism sees pacifism as right in a sense and also sees activism as right in another. The point of equilibrium for both activism and pacifism is thus selectivism. Hence, while some wars are unjust, some are just.

This is the position of the selectivists. Let us see their Biblical stand.

1. The unjustifiable wars – This is in rejection of total activism. Selectivism takes solace in the scriptural passages that teach that it is not always right to obey one's government in everything it commands and most particularly when its commands contradict the higher spiritual laws of God. It then suggests that one must not be a robot in the hand of the government of the land. It takes such examples as the three Hebrew youths who disobeyed the king's command to worship idol (Daniel 3), and Daniel who broke a law that commands him not to pray to any God or man but to the king (Daniel 6). Also the clear case of the divinely approved disobedience of the civil law by the Hebrew midwives in Egypt, and, were giving families later because they feared God to disobey man's command (Exodus 1:17-21).

In the New Testament are such examples of the early apostles who disobeyed the order not to preach the gospel of Jesus (Acts 4:19; 5:29). The fact that one can protect his life from the hands of an unjust government was demonstrated in the flight of Jesus' parents with the infant child – Jesus – to Egypt for safety from king Herod who sought to kill him (Mt. 2:13-15).

2. The just wars – This is in contrast to the pacifists' position.³⁷ It confirms with scriptural backing that some wars are just and that not all wars are evil. More so, not all life-taking is murder since God commanded it both within and without the nation. Selectivism is thus not simplistic like the other two positions. It is too complex to provide an easy guide for believers who want to avoid personal responsibility for their own decisions.

Selectivism on just wars rest on such examples as the said power of capital punishment given to Noah after the flood (Gen. 9:6), which was restated by Moses in the law of Israel (Ex. 21:25), and which was reaffirmed by Paul as residing in the Emperor of Rome (Rom. 13:4), and was also implied by Jesus before Pilate (John 19:11). Here, it accepts the fact that the government was given divine authority to take life of its citizen guilty of a capital offence. In the unjust principle it says that the government has no right to take life even if it claim to be just in decision and that the individual has the right to protect himself from the wrath of the government. This makes the situation of selectivism too complex for easy consumption yet the Church today prefers this position since it gives room for options; or situation where the individual can act as it suits his or her purpose.

Arguing further for their stand, the selectivists quote Jesus charge to the disciples saying: "Let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one" (Lk. 22:36), to mean that Christ legalized the sword for their own protection. They, however, accept the fact that Jesus disallowed the use of sword in the propagation of the Gospel (Mt. 26:52) and also not to resist religious persecution with physical force (Matt. 5:39). Therefore, no religious wars or holy war in defense of Christ's ministry is authorized. One wonders what he would then have meant; that the disciples should sell their mantle for a sword as a guide and protective device. Knowing full well that; it is these same disciples that are going to preach the Gospel after Christ's departure. How could they have done this with the sword on their hands?

Further support for defensive military force is drawn from the example of Paul when he was threatened by unruly men and he appealed to his Roman citizenship and accepted the protection of the Roman army (Acts 22:25-29, 23:23).

Selectivism affirms that both Pacifism and Activism are moral "Copouts" – To hold to either complete pacifism or total activism is the morally easy way out of a difficult ethical position.³⁸ It suggests that the individual does not take moral decisions alone. In such a case, so long as the government says that wars are just or unjust it absolves the individual any struggle to think or decide on the matter. Thus whatever an officer in uniform or public service does is not his ethical responsibility but the state. Hence the government is responsible for everything either good or bad done by the individual since he or she is acting in obedience to the country. The activist must be a check for the pacifist and vice versa, for one can not divorce his private and public life. And this gave birth to selectivism.

Another moral argument put forward by the selectivists is that evil should be resisted. It sees as baseless and morally unjustifiable the pacifist position of non-resistance. It sees as evil the idea of not resisting a murderer when one could have prevented an act of murder or to allow a rape on an innocent virgin when one could have prevented it. All in the name of being pacifist; then you allow evil to thrive in you society. The selectivists do conclude that not resisting evil is in itself a sin of omission. It supports itself with James principle of whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin (Jam. 4:17). And this is certainly right.

The extreme position of pacifism spells more danger for the society. People with such thought do disengage from political and official responsibilities irrespective of whether such a person is good in that aspect for the larger society's good or not. Christian pacifist extremist may not even perform their civic responsibility like paying taxes; such is seen as supporting the government should he choose to war. We may say that the mistake is that Christians should not be loyal to the authority and that the government is not of God. It culminates in the fact that morality is incompatible with governmental office. This was the mistake of the early Church and the current obnoxious views in certain quarters advocating Christian's non-participation in politics in Nigeria.

The Selectivists recognize the fact that Government is ordained of God. It thus acknowledges the principle of higher and lowers ethical laws that are hierarchicalism. It upholds to the better; Christ's principle of given to Caesar what is Caesar and to God what is God's. It acknowledges that the government is to be obeyed only under God but not when government takes the place of God. He does not see the government as the highest power but God who ordained it. He does give obedience to God rather than man when there are conflicting laws from both sides. The government is thus not an end in itself but a means to an end and the end is supreme to it.

Conclusively, these are the three contemporary Christian positions on warfare, each defending its position to a considerable level. The Christians thus have to do theology again, and assess the biblical basis for warfare in our current insecurity situation. That is, theologizing for now. What should be the position of the

Nigerian Christians in the wake of current incessant attacks on Christians and their places of worship by the Islamic fundamentalist?

A brief note on the activities of Boko Haram Insurgency on the Church in Nigeria

Over the years and in recent times, Nigeria as a heterogeneous society and a pluralistic or multi-religious nation has experienced several religious and ethnic crises. It is a known fact that many lives have been lost and properties worth billions of Dollars have been destroyed. In recent times, the most challenging threat to religion, property, life and the corporate existence of Nigeria comes from the Islamic fundamentalists called Boko Haram. This group views Western education as anathema and seeks not only to impose radical Islamic teachings but also to Islamize the Nigerian nation. The sect denounces the cooperation of the Government of Nigeria with western countries, especially with the United States of America³⁹. It mainly seeks to eliminate all forms of Westernization and disagree with any scientific foray that is not embedded within the Islamic framework.

There are various opinions about, the Boko Haram sect and activities in Nigeria. There is the idea that Boko Haram has targeted everyone irrespective of religious inclination. Some Islamic scholars and leaders have dissociated Boko Haram from Islam. They condemned Boko Haram activities as against the intentions of Islam. The leader of the Islamic community in Nigeria, Sultan Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, has denounced Boko Haram's actions as un-Islamic. A professor of Islamic studies at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, Yasir Quadri, also says that members of the Boko Haram, who have been extremist about religious intolerance are doing what offends both the Quran and Nigerian constitution.⁴⁰ It is important to note that beyond the religious realm, Boko Haram has found virtually no support among northern elites, including traditional and tribal leaders⁴¹. However, other scholars view Boko Haram differently; as a terrorist organization. Scholars like Adesoji (2011) and Onuoha (2012) view Boko Haram as a militant Islamic sect with religious as well as political agenda⁴². Blanquart view Boko Haram as a militant Islamic sect with religious as well as political agenda. Blanquart sees Boko Haram solely from the perspective of a terrorist organization. Arguing from the perspective of the harmful actions that the group has carried out, he posits that Boko Haram fits into every definition of (religious) terrorism despite the fact that defining terrorism is a matter of perspective.⁴³ Ekanem define Boko Haram as a "group of Islamic fundamentalists that are committed to carrying out Holy War (Jihad) and Islamize northern states of Nigeria and probably the entire country through Jihad⁴⁴." Therefore, we may suggest that Boko Haram in Nigeria is a militant Islamic sect seeking religious and political reforms within Nigeria, most especially the adoption of sharia and other teachings and practices of orthodox Islam.

In achieving the above, Boko Haram members have gone into the extreme. Oyibo says that members of Boko Haram are adherents of exclusivism as it were. He defines exclusivism as the view that one's religion is the purest and only way to worship God truly and every other way is corrupted and does not provide a locus for salvation⁴⁵. Eck Diana describes exclusivists' posture as "our own community, our tradition, our understanding of reality, our encounter with God, is the one and only truth to all others⁴⁶." Accordingly, exclusivists hold that salvation can be achieved only in one's own religion. Abubakar Shekau (the leader of Boko Haram) and his followers believe in the salvific supremacy of Islam. They also assert that a verse in the Qur'an states that 'anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors' (Surah Al-maida 5:44). These by implication are the Christians.

It could be that based on the above beliefs among others that Boko Haram has been attacking Churches and killing Christians in Nigeria. For instance on July 9, 2011 a bomb targeted at a Church killed four and injured many others in Suleja Niger state. On December 25 about 50 people died on Christmas day bombing in Madalla, Niger State. In Gombe, on January 5, 2012 about six people died in a Church attack. In Yola Adamawa state, 17 people were killed in a Christ Apostolic Church and 20 other Igbo people were also killed in Mubi in the same state on January 6, 2012. Two Churches were destroyed in Bauchi state on January 22, 2012⁴⁷. Sunday June 29, 2014 was reported as another bloody day in Chibok, 56 killed, Churches burnt in fresh attack. The report says that the insurgents operated unchallenged for 3 hours. The Churches affected include: the EYN (Church of the Brethren Nigeria), COCIN and Deeper life among others. The report says "the insurgents locked Sunday worshipers inside a Church and opened fire on them"⁴⁸. These among many others are the Church experiences in the hands of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

The Way Forward For the Church Today

The Church today is in a fix. The reason for this is because the Church misconstrues the scripture and its application to the society. The scripture while yet pursuing the consummation of the future peace, provides avenue for the sustenance of the gospel in every society until the future peace is achieved. This suggests for the various theorizing and theologizing on matters of war.

As we have observed, our main concern in this study is to assess the possibilities and the way out for peace to reign in a multi-religious society like Nigeria. This is the reason why we may not want to associate with the theology of the western scholars, whose theology is only relevant to their own society where state and

religion are synonymous. But in a multi-religious society like we have in most countries in Africa, each religion is striving to survive while there is the threat for dominance of one over the other which often leads to conflicts, riots and wars as in the present situation in Nigeria. In such situations, what should be the position of the Church? Following the trend of our discussion so far, the Church needs a re-assessment of her theology on matters of war making sure that these Biblical principles are followed. It is this that shall help in reducing the incessant insecurity, floods of riots, violence and war in the society. We have established from the scripture that we shall hear of wars and rumours of wars (Mt. 24:6-8). Moreso, it is God; not man, who will usher in a state of universal peace (Is. 2:2-4), 11:1-9; Hos. 2:18; Zec. 9:9-10). Nevertheless, we have in Jesus teachings, actions, character and personality an epitome of peace for the present world. He is therefore an example for peace today prior to its future consummation. This could help to reduce the 'high current' of war in our societies. The instruments of peace in this present world are the Christians who are the followers of Jesus and adherents of his principles. For Jesus looked upon his disciples as the nucleus of Israel who accepted his proclamation of the kingdom of God and who therefore formed the true people of God, the spiritual Israel. It is this *ekklesia* which recognizes his messiahship that are at the same time the instruments of the kingdom in the world.

In a multi-religious society, the Christian should aspire to take active part in the government for good and not for evil. The government is ordained of God and non-participation is tantamount to disobedience to God. Laxity in civic responsibilities like not joining the army, paying taxes are examples of not giving to Caesar what is Caesar's. While the Christian is in this world, though not of the world (Jn. 15:19), he needs to respect the government and participate actively in governance. Such presence must influence the government in taking decisions on religious matters. It may result in the government promoting religious tolerance in the society or promulgating a decree or passing into law a punishment for any religion or sect that first initiate war.

With a Christian who already had a decided preference for non-violence in government, the government may also promote programmes relating to war and violence on movies and television to subdue violent emotions in the populace, irrespective of religious belief. Sports and gymnastics must be introduced to burn off excess energy, also bringing happiness to the people and inter-religious or interfaith co-operations should be encouraged (Mt. 9:11-12). Jesus even wine and dined with the unbeliever (Lk. 11:37). Inasmuch as the literacy level achieved by the state education has enabled states to turn farmers into diverse fields, house wives into welders and advocates of women liberation with surprising speed, they can equally inculcate these ideas which can equally turn a war – turn nation, state or society into a peaceful environment with surprising speed. This suggests why the Christian must be part of the government in this present world as Jesus shall be the head of government in the reign of peace.

The Christian should also learn from the example of Jesus the application of wisdom in a multi-religious society. The Christian must learn to enter into dialogue with her opponents in times of crisis, that is, before things get out of hand. Should the dialogue yield no positive fruit, the Christian can employ the services of the press and the mass media to inform and educate the masses on the steps taken to avert war and an up to date or progress report on the crisis. If this fails, the Christian can also appeal to the state for protection (Acts 22:25-29) just as Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship. This is also the time when the Christian soldier can function as a protection for his fellow Christians (Acts 23:23-30, 27:43-44). Should all these steps fail, and the Christian finds out that there is no safety from an imminent furious crowd of opponents, such can adopt the escapist method if so led by the Holy Spirit (Jhn 8:48-59; 10:22-39), even one can escape in evening time (Mk. 11:19). Jesus escaped because it was not yet time for him to be killed. When the time came, he willingly gave himself to be arrested and killed that the scriptures might be fulfilled. We may say that at those times that Jesus alone escaped from the crowd unhurt, there may be at his disposal more than twelve legions of angels that aided him (Mt. 26:53). All these steps we have itemized are only visible in a prolonged crisis or an imminent war of which the Christian community is aware of. But in times of emergency, an uninformed sudden assault, the Christian community may need more than twelve legions of spiritual angels to escape or survive but physical legions of weapons for self defense if her time has not been fulfilled.

Another theological note for the Christian in a secular society is to listen to the dictates of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit from the father that is with the Christian in our contemporary age to teach her all things (Jn. 14:26). Jesus equally says that "I have much more to say to you more than you can now bear. But when he, the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you, into all truth." (Jn. 16:12-13a). This implies that there are greater things which the Holy Spirit shall still reveal. The spirit is to unfold heavenly secrets, speaking only what comes from the father, who may not be contrary to peace but favourable and suitable to Christians in every continent, nations, states and communities. A Christian may be led by the spirit to escape or stay to say "No" to ungodliness, such as the wanton destruction of lives and property and profaning the name of God (Tit. 2:12).

Allied to the above was the case of Jesus who perhaps was led by the Holy spirit into the Temple. Entering the Temple, Jesus saw the unholy activities which the people (who we may tag as unbelievers in a multi-religious society or even believers who do not know the use of the house of God) had turned the Temple into, stood firm, and went into action to say "NO" to ungodliness (Mk. 11:15-17). Therefore, in a multi-religious

society like Nigeria, the Christian who knows what he believes in must stand firm to defend the various modes of profanous activities from the unbelievers. This, however, may be a last result (for religious fanaticism must be discouraged) after much perseverance, if a total subjugation or extinction of the faith is not to be experienced.

Perhaps, it is this Jesus stand that the Spirit, through James declared: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (Jas. 4:7b). We may say here that, there are two modes of resistance: Spiritual and physical. The spirit of the Devil inhabits in human beings, instigating them to foment troubles that leads to war. To combat this forces may sometimes needs a double approach. The spiritual forces of the devil must be dealt with spiritually through prayers and fasting (Mk. 9:29). Thereafter, the physical abode of the devil may need to be resisted or to be embraced. The need for resistance may be to help remove the shame of voluntary withdrawal or disarmament. Jesus might have dealt with the evil spirit that motivated the people to turn the Temple into a business center spiritually before descending on them physically to eject them from the temple. We may also submit that as an answer to Jesus earlier spiritual success via prayer was the non-resistance posture of the temple invaders. It is highly imperative to note that had Jesus not descend on them physically those acts may continue and also attract more devilish invaders. The result of which may be a total control of the Temple by the devil.

Conclusively, our submission does not in any form legalize war in a multi-religious society. It however, looked into the possibilities of how the Christian can live and practice his/her faith through Jesus, and live peaceably, unhindered in a multi-religious society like Nigeria. This suggests why the theologies propounded by most Western Scholars on absolute non-resistance for the Christians may likely be irrelevant to Nigeria and any multi-religious society in the world.

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