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**RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS/ VIOLENCE.**

Religion is a powerful force in the world, so it is not surprising it has resulted in tremendous conflict throughout history. This has been a problem occurring in our world today for over a century and it is paid little or no regard to. Religious conflict has a long history and it characterizes several groups today. Religious conflicts arise as followers of one religion take to the extreme and impose their religious beliefs on others with different religions. One of the most notable conflicts stemming from religious conflicts were the *Crusades* taking place between the Christian Europe and the Muslim-controlled Middle East region between the 11th and 5th centuries. Under the leadership of Pope Urban, II, Christians in Europe sought to regain control of the holy land, what is now Israel, which at that time was Muslim-controlled territory. The crusades were a series of wars, with some being more successful than others. They helped us to understand the long history of religion and violence. These eight major military expeditions originated in Western Europe between 1096 and 1270 (during the middle ages) with the purpose of recapturing Palestine from the Muslims because it was the area where Jews had lived. The violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians today is an example of religious conflict. Sometimes religious conflicts arise due to different political plots. Such as how the al-Qaida network portray themselves as fighting a holy war and use religious language to legitimize their terrorist attacks. Al-Qaida uses the Muslim communities and mosques in the west to recruit, seek aid, and conduct covet operations, even though most Muslims who live in the west reject terrorism.

In addition, religious conflicts is undergoing a revival. The past decade has witnessed a sharp increase in violent sectarian or religious tensions. These range from Islamic extremists waging global jihad and power struggles between Sunni and Shai Muslims in the middle East to the persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar and outbreaks of violence between Christians and Muslims across Africa. According to Pew, in 2018 more than a quarter of the world’s countries experienced a high incidence of hostilities motivated by religious hatred, mob violence related to religion, terrorism, and harassment of women for violating religious codes. The spike in religious violence is global and affects virtually every religious groups. A 2018 Minority Rights Group report indicates that mass killing, and other atrocities are increasing in countries both affected and not affected by war alike.

Furthermore, scholars like *William Cavanaugh* contend that even when extremists use theological texts to justify their actions, “religious” violence is not religious at all – but rather a perversion of core teachings. Others such as Richard Dawkins believe that because religions fuel certainties and sanctify martyrdom, they are often a root cause of conflict. Meanwhile, Timothy Sisk claims that both hierarchical religious traditions (such as Shi’ism) and non-hierarchical traditions (such as Buddhism) can both be vulnerable to interpretation of canon to justify or even provide warrants for violence action. For millennia, every religious tradition has ether fallen victim to or sanctioned violence. *According to the RELAC (Religion and Armed Conflict) data; Religious conflicts have been rising for years between 1975 and 2015 from 0-32.*

Also, violence inspired by religious intolerance is easier descried than defined. It spans intimidation, harassment and internment to terrorism and outright warfare. Usually it arises when the core beliefs that define a group’s identity are fundamentally challenged. It is ratcheted-up by “in-group” communities against other “out-group” communities, often with the help of fundamentalist religious leaders. Religious leaders are often criticized for not doing enough to stem religious violence. In the era of turbulence and uncertainty, interfaith action may offer an important antidote to religious violence. Religious communities can and do offer a reminder of the core principles of our common humanity. The persistent calls for patience, tolerance, understanding, face-to-face dialogue and reconciliation are more important than ever given today’s spiraling polarization and the dangerous anonymity provided by social media. High level mediators like Archbishop Desmond Tutu helped lay the groundwork for peace agreements, from mediating between rival South Africa factions in the 1990s to averting a bloodbath in Kenya in 2008. The World Council of Churches and All African Conference on Churches have also played a role in mediating peace agreements since the 1970s. Italy’s Sant-Egidio has supported interfaith dialogue and campaigns to prevent and resolve conflicts and promote reconciliations from Albania to Mozambique. And groups like Islamic Relief among others, have long supported mediation and reconciliation activities in war-torn communities.

Today, Africa is laced with some of the most obstinate conflicts, most of them constructed from differences in the religious and ethnic identities. Religious and ethnic nationalism has led to conflicts about control of state power, unequal allocation of resources, citizenship issues, state collapse, economic decline, and ethno-religious clashes. Religious violence in Nigeria refers to the Christian-Muslim strife in modern Nigeria, which can be traced back to 1953. Today religious violence in Nigeria is dominated by Boko Haram insurgency, which aims to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria. The conflict among some worshippers of Islam helps us to understand some of the religious violence of today. Islam is one of the world’s largest religions. It refers to the religious doctrine preached by the Prophet Muhammed during the A.D. 600s. those who believe in this doctrine are called Muslims. Conflicts among Muslims over the rightful succession of Muslim rulers led to disputes within Islam. Civil war resulted in two Muslim sects that remain today along with a history of conflicts. Religious conflict in Nigeria goes as far back as 1953, and in the case of the town of Tafawa Balewa 1948. The Igbo massacre of 1966 in the north that followed the countercoup of the same year had as a dual cause the Igbo officer’s coup and pre-existing (sectarian) tensions between the Igbos ad the local Muslims. In the same decade, the military ruler of Nigeria then in the name of Ibrahim Babangida enrolled Nigeria in the origination of the Islamic Conference. This was a move which aggravated religious tensions in the country, particularly among the Christian community. In response, some in the Muslim community pointed out that certain other African member states have smaller proportions of Muslims as well as Nigeria’s diplomatic relation with the Holy see. In the 1980s, serious outbreaks between Christians and Muslims occurred in Kafanchan in southern Kaduna state in absorber area between the two religions, propagated by extreme leaders who were able to rally a young, educated group of individuals who feared that the nation would not be able to protect their religious group. Although direct between Christians and Muslims were rare, tension did flare between the two groups as each group radicalized. Exploitation of the media used to propagate the ideas of the conflict, thereby radicalizing each force even more. Media was biased on each side so while places like the federal radio corporation discussed the idea of defending Islam during this moment of terror, it did not report the deaths and damage caused by Muslims. Similarly, the Christian papers did not report the damage and deaths caused by Christians but rather focused on the Islamic terror. Religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians has erupted several times since 2000 for various reasons, often causing riots with several thousands of victims on both sides.

Although not necessarily so, there are some aspects of religion that make it susceptible to being a latent source of conflict. All religions have their accepted dogma, or articles of belief, that followers must accept without question. This can lead to inflexibility and intolerance the face of other beliefs. Therefore, conflict can arise over whose interpretation is the correct one, a conflict that ultimately cannot be solved because there is no arbiter. Religious extremists can contribute to conflict escalation. They see radical measures as necessary to fulfilling God’s wishes. Without legitimate mechanisms for religious groups to express their views, they may be more likely to resort to violence. During violent religious conflicts, may people have been killed, maimed, and wounded. There have also been widespread disruption of economic activities with negative effects on productivity. Hundreds of churches and mosques, hotels, and other business as well as vehicles, private home etc., have been destroyed. All these and many more are effects of religious conflicts/ violence. Examples of religious conflicts are:

* Thirty Years War (1618-1648) between Catholic and Protestant Christians.
* The Mormon expulsion from Missouri and Illinois in the 1840s.
* Communal conflicts in Nigeria.
* Boko Haram insurgency.
* Nigerian civil war.

In conclusion, this is a topic I feel personally that it is not given the attention it deserves. Religious conflict is something that affecting the growth of our country. people always fighting others and themselves just because they believe they are better, and that way is always right thereby making people feel inferior. From my personal experience I can say that the Islamic religion is always repress and insulted, just because some Muslims are causing harm to others lying they are doing in the faith of Islam doesn’t mean other Muslims should be judge based on that. I cannot even walk out of my house with my traditional head tie without being insulted and judged. So, I will hope this research paper will help and shed light on this problem and help people become more aware.

# References

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