

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Almost in all societies of the world, religion has become a key index that catapults the socio-economic, cultural and political structures either for good or for bad. Like any multi-cultural society, Nigeria has a number of religious movements and practices viz: Islam, Christianity and indigenous religion. Before the intrusion of the colonial masters into the hitherto peaceful Nigeria, our ancestors were staunch adherents of the African Traditional Religion (ATR). The ATR was a system of belief and worship that was totally devoid of acrimony, hate and conflicts. It was in consonance with the above stated that Fagan (1994) averred that a stable society is that which prizes highly the value of religion.

For administrative convenience, Fredrick Lugard conceived a merger of northern and southern protectorates. In 1914, an entity called Nigeria emerged, bringing about 250 ethnic groupings together into one political and administrative entity. Today ironically, the merger became a bane of peace, progress and stability of the Nigerian nation. Although Nigeria has witnessed some pockets of religious conflicts over the years, it assumed an alarming proportion when Nigeria assumed democratic ideals in 1999. As a multi-ethnic and religious entity, Christians and Moslems (the two major religions in Nigeria) have over the years tried to outwit each other in terms of belief, adherence, structure and growth viz-a-viz the Nigerian nation. Consequently, a dimension of fanaticism was introduced into the religious practice. Unfortunately, the so-called religion has become a source of strife, anarchy and bloodletting in Nigeria in recent time.

Today, there is a sharp deviation from the core values of religion, occasioned by the alarming nature of religious crisis in Nigeria, leading to destruction of lives and properties. Rather than entrench peace, unity and stability, religion has somewhat threatened the whole essence of Nigeria's nationhood. Religious dichotomy in Nigeria has been much pronounced in the largely Moslem dominated north. In 1985, there was Moslem- Christian conflict in



Gombe and Bauchi States; Religious riot in Kaduna, Kaduna State between the Christians and Moslems and in 1991, Bauchi riots disrupted the National Sports Festival holding in Bauchi State then. It was the realism of these religious conflicts in Nigeria that prompted former military dictator, Gen. Babangida to describe one of such religious riots as "civilian equivalent of coup" in a national broadcast. The quest to entrench Islamic faith led to the enforcement of Sharia legal code in Zamfara, Bauchi, Sokoto and Kaduna States. This singular factor further worsened the already strained relationship between the two dominant faiths in Nigeria.

Suffice to state that religion has been the bane of most societies of the world, particularly in the Middle East and parts of Asia. Africa has experienced her own share of religious conflicts over the years. In Nigeria, the Christian south wants Christ preached everywhere while the largely dominated north wants Nigeria Islamized. Although religious leaders still believe the unity of Nigeria hinges on religion, other social critics believe it is tearing Nigeria apart. It was in reflection of varied religious crises and their attendant tolls on our collective lives that made Maduagwu (1991) to say that religious war is the most dangerous and tragic experience, and any country that engages in it scarcely survives. Since 1999, religious intolerance has increased in geometric proportion, while tolerance maintains arithmetic amplitude. This has consequently attracted the attention of mass media of communication, print media in particular.

According to Emery, community development broadcasting is very effective for mobilizing the people. Hence it possess illiteracy and appeals to the individual person. Broadcasting is a medium of mass communication which almost all experts agree, is the most appropriate for rural emancipation programmes.

The reasons for this confidence in broadcasting are many. In other words, Broadcasting beats distance and thus has immediacy effect. It beats all literally barriers. One does not need to know how to read and write before one can learn from the broadcasting. Broadcasting also helps in community development because it is individualistic and so has



the personal touch which leads support to attitude and opinion change. On the other hands, the broadcasting is a populist medium. Thus, it massages across to a very wide segment of the population. More importantly, the broadcasting is the only medium of mass communication with which the rural population is very familiar. This is because it is used widely in the rural areas.

The underlying principle of community development according to Garvery (1982: 42) is really economic and social "essential" Men, the author stated, require certain essential, for good existence. Those essentials must be occasionally reviewed and define." At present, the average Nigerian would be happy of the wave guaranteed life. Security, food and water, good shelter enough were clothing fair communication, health service for the family and education available at least to the secondary level.

Towards community development and government programs which are, intended to improve the lots of the rural dwellers and the country at large. These programs are channeled through various media of communication. Some of these programs are operation find the nation, mass mobilization, program (MAMSER).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The fact that religious differences produce hatred and intolerance is never in doubt. Over the years, religious crises have been a reoccurring decimal and every effort to promote unity, peace and progress in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria has defied all known solutions. One important function of the Press in any society is that of correlation, where media coverage ought to be streamlined for uniting divided ends, but this seems to not have been the case in Nigeria. Besides, there are allegations from various quarters that the media (especially the print) have been sensational and biased in the reportage of religious crises in the country.

Various religious crises in the past were actually reported by the news media, particularly the print media. Be that as it may, the growth of the Nigerian media, as well as their coverage of religious crises may not have yielded desired ends after all over the years,



particularly between 1999 and 2011 when religious crisis attained its peak in Nigeria. There seems to be this theory that connects religious crises with media coverage, but the link remains undefined in past studies. The pattern of media coverage, and the extent to which the news media (newspapers in particular) have helped in curtailing religious crises in Nigeria are problematic areas in socio-communication research, which prompted this study in the first instance. Therefore, the researcher sets out to find the roles of the mass media in the fight against religious crisis a case study of Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The general objective or main objective of this study is to investigate the roles of the mass media in the fight against religious crisis in Ilorin metropolises of Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- i) To determine the causes of religious crisis in Nigeria specifically Ilorin metropolises
- ii) To identify the benefits of media reportage to the society
- iii) To examine the media challenges of crisis reportage in Ilorin metropolises
- iv) To understand the prevalence of religious crisis in Ilorin metropolises

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following are some of the questions which this study intends to answer:

- i) What are the causes of religious crisis in Ilorin metropolises?
- ii) What are the benefits of media reportage to the society?
- iii) What are the challenges facing media reportage on religious crisis in Nigeria specifically Ilorin metropolises?
- iv) What is the prevalence of religious crisis in Ilorin metropolises?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research will set the tone for the media to embrace national integration and religious tolerance as the core functions of the modern day Nigerian media. Through this



investigation, therefore, both the print and broadcast media in Nigeria will understand their shortcomings and subsequently drive a synergy aimed at curtailing religious crises in Nigeria. The result of this research will entrench professionalism in the coverage of religious-related conflicts in the future. Also, this research will significantly bring to the fore the media/religious crises theory, by defining the extent to which media reports could fuel or exacerbate religious crises in Nigeria. Therefore, the study will strive to unbundle the theory for other scholars to replicate or possibly refute. More importantly, this research will contribute significantly to literature that will be useful to communication teachers, social workers, scholars and researchers in various fields of learning, particularly those embarking on similar studies in the future.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This research will cover radio coverage of religious crises and the consequential effects of such crisis in the socio-economic and political fortunes of Ilorin metropolises. It involves a critical and evaluative analysis of religious crises in Nigeria specifically Ilorin metropolises as well as radio coverage of same, particularly as it concerns direction of reports, balance, use of pictorial illustrations, space allotment and prominence of coverage within the study period.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The inappropriate and careless storage of newspapers, magazines and journals in libraries in Nigeria is a major undoing of this research work. The ability of the researcher to assemble all the publications is not only arduous but tasking. These were setbacks the researcher encountered in the course of this research.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used in the course of this study:

**Crisis:** Francis (2006) defines crisis as the pursuit of incompatible interest and goals by different groups. In this research, it is a crisis of belief system and faith of Christian and Islamic religion, as well as Christian and traditional religious differences.



**Media:** Newspaper organizations in Nigeria that engage in daily publication of news. In the context of this research, *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun* and *The Nation* newspapers were chosen because they are national in their publication, daily and privately owned.

**Media Coverage:** Newspaper report of events published daily.

**Religious Crises:** A blind and fixated mental and psychological negative attitude towards religious beliefs and practices that are contrary to ones cherished beliefs and practices, Ekwunife (1992).

**communication:**

Communication is a process of transmitting ideas, thoughts, feelings and messages from one person to the other

Four main concept are worthy of definition in this write-up. They are as follows: Role, Community, Broadcasting, and Corporation.

**Role:** The word "Role" can be seen as a function that a person or thin typically has or expected to have.

**Community:** This can be defined as a group of people of the same religion, race, occupation, etc or with shared interests. It can be further defined as the people living in one place, district or country, considered as a whole.

**Corporation:** A group of people having authority to operate as a single unit with a separate legal existence.