

**STATE AND RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM TODAY****Oliver TersooAgundu**

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**Abstract**

In recent times, there is a widespread manifestation of religiously induced extremism fuelled by fanaticism and fundamentalism in almost parts of the globe. Worth noting is the fact that this religious fundamentalism has a strong tendency to exhibit intolerance, bigotry and sectarian violence against those who think differently from their thought pattern, principles and ideologies. In their characteristic nature they hide under religious sentiments to promote social dictatorship, ideological conflicts and of course, the potency to breed group stereotype. Most people in such organisations strongly believe that the direct use of violence in the propagation of one's religion is obligatory. Hence, some of the world's most dangerous terrorist organisations today such as Boko Haram, Hamas, Al-Qaeda, Isis are ideologically fed by religious fundamentalism and bigotry. They are also convinced that in their earthly holy wars, they will be adequately rewarded in the next life; they will directly go to heaven. This unfortunate and irrational belief system however removes a sense of fear and guilt feeling, thereby making killing and dying much easier. It is pertinent to note that all these excessive religious devotion, unchallengeable truth and intolerant to alternative belief systems are been carried out within the state. This work, therefore seeks to interrogate the exclusive possession of divine truth often propagated by the religious fundamentalists and to examine the effects of such ideology on the State and to also evaluate the roles the State ought play in curbing the hypocritically rules and observances these extremist uses in justifying their nefarious acts which often run contrary to constitutionalism upon which most modern Nation-States anchored. The paper therefore engages expository and critical-evaluative approaches to lay bare the issue of religious fundamentalism and the inherent problems therein while at the same time exposing the critical roles the state can play in curtailing rampaging menace of Religious extremism today

**Keywords:** State, Religious Fundamentalism, Extremism, Discourses

**Introduction**

Religion and state share strong affinity as both are conceived and practiced within the state, hence, they often overlap at least at some points in the emergence or perhaps in the development of some ideological traditions. Since the emergence of the civil order, the State is generally regarded as the highest of all human organisations. As such, even religion is subservient to the authority of the state. However, both the state and religion plays complimentary roles in ordering the human society and for peaceful co-existence. It is in this respect that so many ideological pattern in the state often have religious underpinnings. For instance, ethical socialism seems to have been grounded in various religious creeds; such as Christian socialism, Islamic socialism and so on. But when we attached “religion” to fundamentalism, its meanings differ sharply in the sense that it views state, and indeed all aspects of personal and social existence as been lower or secondary to the acclaimed revealed truth of religious doctrines. The religious fundamentalists believe that the state and its components are indeed, inferior, or perhaps have less overriding authority. Accordingly, religion seems to satisfy the abiding human desires for higher spiritual truth. From the perspective, I shall be arguing that religious and political life of man should be organized on the basis of what the “state” considers as “absolutely necessary truth” that must be practiced within the ambit of the laws in the state. This implies that religious teachings and doctrines should be practiced from the perspective that is devoid of any manipulations which seems to have characterized our society of recent. Nevertheless, the paper further notes that despite the fact that fundamentalism is essentially about conformity, excessive devotion, authoritarianism, unchallengeable and overriding authority regardless of their veracity; it however fosters unity and frowns at social disintegration which of course pave way for human development.

**The Conceptualisation of the State**

Many scholars regard state as the most important institution formed by man and the central concept in the study of politics. However, when we trace the origin of the state, we normally turn to the social contract theorists though with different accounts, of the origin of the state. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) postulated the origin of the state – tracing it to the state of nature. That is, the state or condition in which men primitively lived prior to the emergence of the modern state. This state of nature according to Hobbes, is a state of war, a state of continuous conflicts, a state of perpetual fear and death. In fact, it was a state in which there was no law nor protection, a state of the survival of the fittest and elimination of the unfit. In the state of nature, there was no sense of guilt since there was neither law nor morality. Man, in the state of nature was simply aggressive and selfish and the life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Consequently however, man realizing that such scenario could not continue forever, they then decided to form a state with law to protect men’s freedom and as well, to protect both the rich and the poor. They formed a society and appointed one man, gave him unlimited power to enforce the laws and maintain peace. They as well entered into an agreement with each other not to harm one another hence the origin of the state. But the critics always points out that the Hobbesian account of the origin of the state is a mere utopian postulation since it lacks any historical evidence to back up such claims. But

then, there was a state or human society, no matter how crude or imaginary. Such a postulation cannot be a mere wishful thinking. Hobbes has at least, an element of existence of state in his discourses.

Though, state according to J.W. Garner “is a community of person, more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent or nearly so of external control, and passing an organized government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience” (15).

Similarly, Joseph Nye and David A. Welch, conceived state “as a particular type of political unit that has two crucial characteristics; territory and sovereignty: a state governs a specific identifiable portion of the earth surface. Sovereignty is the absolute right to govern it” (88). In most cases, when you encounter the word “state” in discussion of world politics, the best single synonym would be “country”. For instance, Britain, France, Argentina or Japan are all states. Being a sovereign state means that they have no higher authority to which they must answer. State is of course a product of human creation, and in fact, the protector of the people living within that particular territory. It usually, has the legitimate powers of coercion which no other social association have. The essence of adopting the legitimate power of coercion is basically to ensure total obedience of its members to the stipulated laws enacted by the state hence, Appadorai argues “that the energy of state is force and its method is rigidity” (17). So state is an organized political institution that exercise authority over a particular territory.

Be that as it may, state is also an ethical institution which encourages the right morals and as well, ensure high degree of equality on people’s social life. It primarily considers human behaviour and conduct and also attempts to determine and distinguish the right actions from the wrong ones while applying the instrument of force to achieve it result. As an ethical institution, it enacts and stipulates what is to be morally right or obligatory.

From the views of G.W.F. Hegel, “state is the actuality of the ethical idea-the ethical spirit as substantial will manifest and clear itself, which thinks and knows itself and implements what it knows in so far as it knows it. It has its immediate existence in customs and its immediate existence in the self-consciousness of the individual” (275). This suggests that the life-wire of any state is its customs and the substantial will of the individual that make up that state. His belief was that these customs must be rational and directed at rational people. He believes that the reason for laws in the state is that oftentimes, men in their ability to make free choices end up choosing the ends that harm others. Insofar as their act harm others, their behaviour is therefore irrational. Hence the function of law in the state is therefore to bring rationality into behaviour

What make an act rational is that it at once achieves a person’s private good as well as the public good. Only a person who act rationally can be free, because only rational act can be permitted in society, because only rational acts avoid social harm. The function of the state is therefore not to compound personal harm or misery by issuing arbitrary and therefore irrational commands, but rather to increase through its laws, the aggregate of rational behaviour (Hegel 318).

### **Understanding the concept and nature of Religion**

Our major concern here is not to create disaffection or even to be hostile on religion but our modest attempt to rationally relay an unprejudiced investigation into the meaning and of course the purpose of religion which the extremists usually known as fundamentalists often hide under to perpetuate evil. It is true however that the idea of religion usually means different thing to different people depending on the background one comes from. For instance, the psychologist as exemplified by Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis conceives religion as nothing other than mankind's childhood mentality and everlasting memories extended into his adulthood. For the anthropologist as represented by Ludwig Feuerbach in his book as cited in Omoregbe;

The essence of Christianity" observed that "religion is nothing other than the delusional worship of human nature. The God which the religious man worships is nothing other than the projected image of human nature (Omoregbe 4).

Feuerbach however sums it up that:

Religion itself, not indeed on the surface but fundamentally not intention or according to its own suppositions, but in its essence, believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature(7)

Interestingly however, religion as Omoregbe remarked is such a striking phenomenon in human life that it cannot be ignored even by the sceptic, agnostics or even the atheists. There is no other phenomenon which moulds and controls man's life as much as religion does. Men have given up not only their possessions, but even their lives for their religious beliefs. Men born into wealth and destined to inherit wealth have renounced wealth and turned themselves into beggars for their religious belief (xiii). So, the nature of religion has always been an issue of intense concern for every reflective person since it addresses and offers answers to the fundamental questions of human existence. Although secularist often thinks that humanity has finally come of age that they no longer have any use for religion, yet most human beings still engrossed themselves with question posed by the great religions of the world. Such questions often includes what happens to a human person after death? Accordingly, religion as noted by Stephen Evans and Zachary Manis "has long been an important force in human life and human history and there is every reason to believe it will continue to be so throughout the foreseeable future" (1).

Although, no any society that want any meaningful development that can downplay the role of religion since it guides, forms and directs the behaviour of people towards issues, people and their relationship with God, and their society. But then, any attempt to define religion often attracts parochial interest among scholars. These diverse interests usually gives room to lack of universally accepted definition of the concept. Religion though a bi-polar phenomenon is derived from three Latin words; "ligare – meaning relationship. Etymologically, religion is something that links or unites man with transcendental being, a deity often believed to exist and worshiped by man" (Omoregbe3). William James conceives religion "as the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they consider the divine" (31). James's definition simply believes that religion is a line or an inferior-superior relationship between individual men and his conceived divine deity which he believes to exist. These essential relationship man

established between himself and transcendental deity evokes A.C. Bouquet to define religion “as a fixed relationship between human self and some non-human entity, the Sacred, the Supernatural, the Self existent, the absolute or simply God” (3). This may of course mean that religion is all about interest that influences one’s worldview and his relationship with his creator.

So, religion therefore becomes relationship, strong devotion to and absolute faithfulness to the supernatural powers. This supernatural being is believed to be the architect of one’s existence, hence, man gives absolute trust to any creeds or doctrines associated with this supernatural entity. The purpose of obeying these creeds or the designated behaviours is simply to win salvation for oneself and perhaps others. These designated behaviours nonetheless involves devotional and ritual observances and it is morally driven in governing the affairs or conducts of mankind. In fact, those set of beliefs guiding the religious practices is usually dogmatic in nature as it is often enshrined in their various sacred books, such as the Bible, Qur’an, Bhagavad-Gita, Pali-Canon or Tripitaka, Toa-Te-Ching, Wu Chang or the five classics etc. It would be noted that these creeds or the guiding religious practices is society-inclined; that is, it is socio-cultural system crafted and nurtured by an individual or group with the intention of uniting humanity with the spiritual entity and ultimately to satisfy earthly desires and wealth.

Often times, however, religious practices usually includes sermons, veneration of deities, sacrifices, festivals, meditations, prayers, sacred histories and narratives, holy places that often give meaning to life, prophecies, symbols, reverence for God or the gods, piety, faith etc. Note however that faith is traditionally considered as a source of religious beliefs and practices across the world, nevertheless, some charismatic individuals often emerge at many times and places in the world to institutionalise these practices which is always intended to be bidding for all the adherents.

However, it is an attempt to enhance the strict compliance of religious doctrines that prompted some over-zealous individuals who usually arrogate the powers of God to themselves to emerge in religious circle. These individuals are the fundamentalists who often stipulates and instigate an unwavering attachment to a set of their beliefs.

### **State and the Threat of Religious fundamentalism**

Despite the widely and the extensive usage of fundamentalism both in the media and among scholars, there seems to be no consensus on the definition of the term. However, fundamentalism is derived from the Latin word ‘Fundamentum’ meaning “Base”. It is a style of thought in which certain principles are recognized as essential “truth” that have unchallengeable and overriding authority regardless of their contents (66). It is often associated majorly with religion, although, it is also used pejoratively to imply inflexibility, dogmatism, authoritarianism, and devotion to principles. However, religious fundamentalism can be understood to mean the total adherence to one’s religious beliefs and practices in absence of any rational justification, to the total exclusion of, or the blind rejection of other religious beliefs and practices. These fundamentalists usually emphasize on the need for her members to return to the original creeds of the founder(s) which they believe that other members might have deviated. Within the state, the religious fundamentalists primarily obstruct development in the state by instigating fears to the individuals spreading ignorance and hatred, destroying state

facilities, like hospitals, schools, telecommunication etc. Again, the fundamentalists usually sow the seed of deprivation and discrimination and above all, they attack state security agencies like military and other allied forces. They promote social dictatorship, ideological conflict, breeds group stereotype, religious intolerance and rivalry undue rigid religious influence on secular life. Infact it encourages toxic theology, sectarian conflicts and discrediting the state values.

In addition, the religious fundamentalist suppresses the power of reason by intentionally not allowing reason to be an arbitrar in the affairs of religion. Obviously, rationality is removed from any aspect of human life. The human person becomes a slave, a fool, a puppet and a willing tool for manipulation. This unarguably has been the trade mark of religious fundamentalists.

M.E. Yilmaz argued that “religious-driven violent can also be connected to terrorism in many cases. In fact, some of the world’s most dangerous terrorist organisations today, such as Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Al-Qaeda are ideologically fed by religious fundamentalism. Most people in such organisations strongly believe that the direct use of violence in the name of religion is obligatory. They are also convinced that if they die in their “holy struggle” they will be rewarded in the next life; they will directly go to heaven. This belief removes fear and guilt feeling, making killing and dying much easier” (4).

In fact, religious fundamentalists usually appeal to people’s emotions and hence lack any rationality in executing issues as they are noted for being doctrinally rigid. They see themselves as peace-loving, honest, virtuous and good while those outside their group membership are indeed regarded as evil and deceptive. “Fundamentalism has to do with certain other social and political features that their society share. These would include low levels of development, entrenched traditions of state control, political cultures that inhibit diversity in tolerance, the absence of a tradition of private property and lack of separation of state and law” (B.M. Edward 112). In this context, fundamentalism implies a direct link to violence and terror act. The fundamentalist exhibits intolerance, bigotry and sectarian violence to those who oppose its style of thoughts and principles. For instance, the former governor of Zamfara State – Nigeria, Ahmed Sani Yerima who catapulted himself to limelight by pronouncing the killing of Fatwa, a young journalist whose crime was her comment that Prophet Mohammad did not lack an eye for beauty in womanhood. This according to him is an insult to Islam and this led to the destabilization of the Nigeria Capital City Abuja and the unleashing of an orgy of death and destruction that stunned the world in its mindlessness and ferocity.

Again, the religious fundamentalists strategically manipulate religion in order to retain power, control and inhabits human rights. In many ways, the fundamentalists contradict and violate the fundamental human rights through its authoritarian manipulation of religion and other extreme violence in order to extend or “gain social control and influence. As noted earlier, the religious fundamentalists tend to be absolutist, rigid, intolerant and coercive as they often employ religious theories in order to gain power. This of course undermine human right particularly women’s rights and freedom. Often times, women’s bodies have been used as battlefield in their struggle to achieve their evil mission. A good example here is the kidnapping of Chibok girls in 2014 here in Nigeria. This has violated the health rights and reproductive rights including rights to bodily integrity, the right to choose one’s partner and the right to decide on sexual

relations. In fact, the fundamentalists violates all aspect of women's rights including right to marriage, divorce and custody of children, freedom of expression, belief, association and opinion. All these are done through their extreme interpretations of religious law in order to justify their violations of women's rights. More often, the girl child's right to education is considered threatening by religious fundamentalists as they use violence to spread fear and to prevent girls from accessing schools by burning schools in order to prohibit school attendance.

In fact, the religious fundamentalists hypocritically establish rules and observances, in temples, churches and mosques without asking whether this way was pleasing to God. As far as it satisfies their ego, then, that pleases God too. According to Abd-Ru-Shin "whatever the religious fundamentalist considered right was to be rewarded by God as righteous: what they choose to call wrong God was to punish (162). The fundamentalist craft these religious laws to serve their earthly desires thereby neglecting "the inexorable Holy will of God" which had existed from the eternity and yet never changed. They indulge themselves in self-concert and as such justifies their ridiculous belief that they know everything about God and their faith, yet deep down, they have never respected the will of the creator. They are quick to pick up stones to do away with anything that is irksome enough to challenge their consistent irrational beliefs which they hitherto construed to please their emotions and flatters their poor mental false belief and their petty earthly desires. Their cherished values are to create laws and establish an intolerant of an alternative belief system.

Religious fundamentalists see religious authority as holistic and absolute. They claim exclusive possession of divine truth. It is instructive to note that, all religious fundamentalists is anti-intellectual, as it renders religious belief absolute, excluding respect for the opinion and right of others, and strives to force these beliefs onto others with or without the use of violence. They neither accept criticism nor re-interpretation. They are intolerant of alternative view including those of different fundamentalist groups within the same religion such as the Sunni and Shi'a in Islam. Each sees its own teachings and values as absolutely correct. Notable examples of religious fundamentalist includes: Judaism which provides example of stoning to death in ancient time as well as ostracism in the medieval era. Christian fundamentalism has a long and bloody record of conversion by force and other dangerous group like Klukux Wan. The Islamic fundamentalism provides the origin of such term as Jihad – "Holy War", fanaticism and assassination. Others are the Jewish fundamentalist in Israel, Hindus and Buddhists in Sri Lanka among several others. Although, irrespective of their differences, each is capable of inspiring and influencing large numbers of people to make a radical change in their lives.

### **The Possible Causes of Religious Fundamentalism**

The pertinent question at this juncture is what could probably be the cause of religious fundamentalism in a state?. In attempt to answer this key question many scholars have clear identified injustice, structural imbalance as well as social exclusion as the most potent factor behind extremism of any kind in the society. The argument is that there is usually widespread discontent when majority of people are left at the lowest ladder of the social strata unattended to, thereby denying them opportunities and other good infrastructure they needed. So, they quickly look for an alternative means to dislodge those they consider as their oppressors hence they hide under the religion, taking



into cognizance that, as a rule, membership in any fundamentalist groups is voluntary and unbureaucratic resulting principally to equality among the members. M.E. Yilmaz also believed that the cause of religious fundamentalism is social injustice, he writes that:

Religious fundamentalism serves to reduce anxiety by promising justice. Indeed, structural conditions, over which the individual has little or no control, bring about many frustrations hard to bear with. The powerful ones use the underprivileged, some exercise power over others. In most parts of the world, economic and social conditions are such that some enjoy prosperity and well-being while some others hardly survive. Thus, in the face of earthly injustices, religion functions as a palliative pill by promising that justice will be done and all sins will be punished eventually. In the next life, everyone will get what he or she actually deserves. This belief helps the individual face life's difficulties with relatively comfort and confidence (7).

Again, others have established a strong nexus between religious extremism and leadership failure and the unwillingness of our leaders to rise to their basic responsibilities that triggers religious fundamentalism. After all, religion is not the primary condition of human existence. As Wole Soyinka sums it more clearer when he avers that: "Not many would wish to dispute the claim that religion is not a primary condition of human existence – certainly not as a critical necessity for our very being or the evolution of the social being" (1).

Similarly, there poor value orientation in most societies as citizens are not adequately trained or sensitized to know the significance of tolerance in a pluralistic society and the value of accommodating diverse belief systems, opinions, associations or groups. Again the challenge of the confronting the practice whereby most people are brainwashed into paying allegiance to their own faith and tribe to the detriment of other higher society values.

More importantly, the quest to adhere to religious creeds, principles and ethics as well as the desire to be pure and holy is one of the necessary factors that encourages religious fundamentalism in any society. Obviously, it is believed that excessive religious devotion or enthusiasm might lead to insanity which in extension usually triggers instability in the state.

### **Some activities of religious fundamentalists in the state**

The religious fundamentalists normally engages in an irrational acts that causes social harm and misery in the state. So, the aggregate of rational behaviour in the state is therefore thwarted by its activities. Religious fundamentalists usually involve themselves in brutal tactics which in extreme instances uses bullets and bombs to destabilize the life of the citizen and the economy of the state. They respond dangerously but in militant style in disregarding the state laws and other religious values that is not in accordance with their own. Although it is found in almost all religions but in fact, they strike at the heart of the common good of people hence it is simply considered as a religion of rage and extremism. It is imperative to note that not all fundamentalist movements are violent. But because they are mostly intolerant of dissent, they of course, have the potential to be violent. The central aim through which the religious fundamentalists express their violence is to prove a strong commitment to whatever values they stand for.



Although imprisoned in their prejudices they believe that they are absolutely certain that they are right in whatever values they stand for irrespective of how dogmatic or myopic such value might be. So, their refusal to re-examine their moral tenets or their unwillingness to believe that any part of their beliefs may be in error often lead them to colloid with the state laws which normally result in crisis.

### **The State and the Imperative of curbing religious fundamentalism**

It is instructive to note that religious fundamentalism usually sows the seed of intolerance, fanaticism, bigotry, discrimination, hostility, holy-war, persecutions, etc in the world. Nevertheless, the state has uncontrolled authority and unbounded powers to protect the majority of her citizens against the brute force of religious fundamentalists.

Again, since there is no any other social organisation that is superior to state, it should sincerely promote the life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of her citizens. Indeed, the state has to protect the private citizens through the law against the terrorist gang of the fundamentalist since the state is a society guided by laws. These laws must be made known to the public and that such state laws should predominate any other law the few criminal gangs might intend to enact.

Oftentimes, the religious fundamentalist creates various laws to back up their nefarious acts thereby negating St. Augustine's "theory of illumination". In his account of the relation between sensation and knowledge, Augustine asks; how our mind could make judgments involving eternal and necessary truths? He adds that ...So far in the account of human knowledge, all the elements involved are mutable or imperfect, hence finite and not eternal. The sense objects are mutable and the bodily organs of sense are also subject to change. The mind itself is a creature and is therefore finite and not perfect. How, then, can these elements be deployed in a way that rises above their own imperfection and mutability and discovers external truths about which we have no doubts? (Stumpt 131).

The religious fundamentalist believes that the laws or their religious creeds are absolute and infallible forgetting that religion is an activity of thought including all other elements involved in making such laws are mutable and imperfect. It is therefore impossible for something that is imperfect and mutable to suddenly and perhaps discover external truth that is certain and leaves no doubt, hence, the need for state to intervene and stop such coercive power of certitude.

But then, insofar as there are aspect of our human life that bears our supernatural, the state however, must not put an arbitrary hindrances in a way to frustrate the spiritual life of her innocent citizens. It is therefore the duty of the state to follow dutifully the categorical imperative of Kant where he urged that "act as if the maxim of your action were to become universal law of nature" (299).

More so, a state should not purport to be officially neutral in matters of religion as this may prompt the fundamentalists to hide under the umbrella of a secular state and unleash terror to the innocent citizens. Although, granted that a secular state claims to treat all the citizens equal regardless of religion, it does not necessarily mean it cannot use the instrument of force to curtail the deadly acts of the religious fundamentalists in the state since the aim of the state is to secure the greatest good to the greatest number of people.

On the contrary, what happens to states that are sympathetic to or sponsors religious fundamentalism like Yemen, Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc? In such situation, the United Nations usually steps in and impose sanctions. They often suspend any official assistance to such state. That was the fate of Sudan in 1993 and 1996 respectively. The complex repercussions such state faces were briefly highlighted by B.M. Edward, when he writes that:

The ascendance of Al-Turabi as a radical fundamentalist leader and the posturing of the Sudanese state eventually led the USA to suspend official assistance after the coup in 1989. Sudan was subsequently designated a state that was a supporter of terrorism in 1993, followed by a sanctions regime imposed by the United Nations in 1996 that was to last some five years (88)

The implication is that any state that engages in sponsoring religious fundamentalism are usually blacklisted as a terror zone. This often affect her economy, the psyche of the people and the socio-political landscape of such a state. Indeed, the sanctions and withdrawal of official support and assistance from the global community coupled with few but strong opposing voices within that state often serves as a deterrent measures to tame the evil of religious fundamentalism.

#### **A critique of religious fundamentalists' activities in the State**

It is true that the origin and nature of religion is traced to human spirit in search for its source; that is, the infinite spirit or reality. This infinite spirit contains in itself abstract reasoning concerning its very existence, yet the object that conceives this reality or infinite spirit is human mind which is imperfect. Since human mind is not perfect, the religious knowledge about the infinite spirit or the world may be unattainable for we cannot know as Kant maintained "what sort of reality lies behind our mental apparatus or behind the phenomenal world" (126). Although infinite spirit transcends or goes beyond the realms of experiential knowledge, we simply do not actually know what the forms of inexperienceable objects might be, hence, the need to scrutinize every religious creeds and laws using the lenses of the state.

Similarly, any religious fundamentalists who tries to raise the forms of intuition, reason or revelation to discuss about God, and his divine laws can only end up in contradictions and inconclusive results. in fact, "he can only wander in a maze of Errors" (Egbeka, Aja 127).

Nevertheless, irrespective of our limited knowledge about religion, it has done a lot of good to mankind. For instance, religion has its devoted believers inner security caused by the perceived frightening environment. This however, reduces uncertainty and anxiety and is achieved by sticking to religious creeds and accepting it as the ultimate source of knowledge. It indeed satisfies the individual's desire to know, and to comprehend the ultimate source of the universe thereby satisfying the cognitive needs of the persons.

Religion so to speak satisfies the substantive need of the individual in an imaginary world. The material needs which one cannot fulfill in earthly life are believed to be eventually fulfilled, if not in the present life, then in the next life. This belief in turn, provide individual with a sense of confidence. It therefore provides purpose to human life thereby providing mankind with sense of direction about life.

### Conclusion

In the foregoing we have established that religious fundamentalism promote social dictatorship, religious intolerance, undue rigidity and religious influence on secular life but equally encourages sectarian conflicts. But we noted that if ideology is positively construed in its purest state devoid of all forms of extremism then it can as always becomes a vehicle for social harmony and development. This is so because when group of people who shares same ideology unite together, they quickly bound by trust, loyalty and fraternity which are the forces behind any development.

The conclusion reached however is that the human mind which crafted the religious laws and creeds is finite and imperfect and as such, their claims or discovery of absolute truth about God can be misleading. The paper therefore posits that there is need for a state to use all the instrument at her disposal to stop such coercive power of certitude. After all, there is no any known organizations that is superior to state.

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