

ADDRESSING RELIGIOUS FANATICISM IN NIGERIA USING ASOUZU'S IBUANYIDANDA PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

Nigeria as a nation is today characterized by religious fanaticism, which has led to violent religious extremism. This has made religion a factor that is disintegrating the nation instead of fostering national unity and development. It has also led to loss of lives and properties as well as create fear and instability in the country. This paper is therefore of the view that Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* philosophy can act as a possible solution to this social menace that is bedeviling the country. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is an ontology that harmonizes and unifies realities, regardless of their differences. This is possible through what Asouzu calls 'noetic propaedeutic' – the pre-education of the mind. It is this process that can bring religious adherents to practice religion within the bounds of reason since religious fanaticism takes them out of the realm of reason. This is indeed the path to unity and progress for the nation, regardless of religious differences. This paper employs the critical method of reflection, analysis, evaluation and reasoned prescription.

Key Terms: Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda* Philosophy, Noetic Propaedeutic, Religious Fanaticism.

Introduction

As a multi-religious nation Nigeria is faced with the problem of religious fundamentalism. This phenomenon is gradually plunging the nation into a state of anarchy as people tend to see their religion as all that matters. It is in this light that religious men and women no longer talk about, or identify themselves with, Nigeria but their respective religious groups. Hence, they can do anything in order to protect the interest of their religion at the detriment of national interest. This is what characterizes religious fanaticism in Nigeria. This situation has made religion to become a curse instead of a blessing. N. S. S. Iwe bemoans this condition of Nigeria as he writes

In a secular and religiously pluralistic nation such as Nigeria, violent religious extremism is a highly explosive and dangerous social phenomenon and the number one enemy of national unity and peace. Violent religious fanaticism is the only force capable of turning the twin religious and spiritual blessings of Nigeria, Christianity and Islam, into a cultural bane or curse, if it is not duly

eradicated and left to be exploited by unpatriotic socio-political forces and manipulators (*Religious Fanaticism* 7).

In deed if this evil call religious fanaticism that renders the practice of religion irrational, Nigeria is heading towards a state of complete disintegration. But the question is: how can this evil be eliminated from the Nigerian society? It is against the backdrop of this question that this paper becomes unique. The paper will argue that it is possible through a philosophical system called *ibuanyidanda* philosophy. This is a system of philosophizing developed Prof. Innocent I. Asouzu of the Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Calabar. This philosophical system does not bifurcate realities but unifies them as one. The role of this system in this paper will be twofold. First, it will be used to give a rational background to religious fanaticism. Second, it will be used to proffer the possible solution to this socio-political menace. This paper employs the critical method of reflection, analysis, evaluation and reasoned prescription to arrive at its conclusions.

Religious Fanaticism: The Nigerian Experience

Before looking at the Nigerian experience of religious fanaticism, it will be germane to consider the meaning of religious fanaticism. Religious fanaticism is an irrational practice of religion in which religionists make use of violent to promote their religious faith and teachings and give this evil practice a religious backing. What is implied here is that religious fanaticism is an evil practice of a belief system by some religionists in the name of religion. It is the manipulation of religion and religious beliefs by these practitioners of religion to satisfy their self-interest and it most at times involves the use of violence. Iwe holds a similar view to this as he asserts that “it is obvious that religious fanaticism is essentially a negative and vicious attitude to religion, characterized by exaggeration, excesses and violence” (*Religious Fanaticism* 11). This kind of emotional attitude is not only evil but irrational use of religion. It is in this vein that Iwe elsewhere notes that religious fanaticism is an “irrational attitude to religion which leads the religionist to practice religion beyond the bounds of reason and, therefore, without moderation” (*Socio-Ethical Issues* 44).

This negative practice of religion has coloured the altitude of religionists all over the world and in history. A lot of religionists in time past have been religiously fanatical and have done so many irrational things in the name of religion. For instance, Christianity in history has bred a lot of persons that has acted inhumanely to others in the name of religion. A case in point is the senseless murder of people like Polycarp of Smyrna and other martyrs in the name of the Christian faith. Another case is the manner with which Muslims were persecuted by Christians at the early state of their religion. The worst part of it is the way Christianity was violently and ruthlessly introduced to Africa and Latin America. This was done with killings of the indigenes in the name doing the will of God. The highest form of irrational practice of Christian Religion is giving colonialism a biblical backing. They even go as far as stating that colonialism is a blessing from God to the Africans that they see as the heathens.

Today in Nigeria, religious fanaticism is very persistent in the day to day life of the nation such that we cannot but say that it is an integral part of Nigeria. It has always been in Nigeria and the nation tends not have a way out of this social malady. It is good to note that the presence of religious fanaticism in the shore of Nigeria has bred nothing but violence and religious wars of various forms. Most scholars such as Eyimba Maduka (124), Ephraim Ikegbu (214), Eze Felix Chibueze (74) are of the view that these recurring religious crises or wars exist between adherents of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. This is not true; it also involves adherents of African Traditional Religion and it also takes the form of both, inter- and intra-religious crises or violence. According to S. P. I. Agi, there are six faces of religious violence in Nigeria, and these include: Muslim-ATR, Muslim-Muslim, Christian-ATR, Christian-Christian, Muslim-Christian, Muslims-the rest of us (*Political History* 24).

As stated above religious fanaticism breeds violent and holy war. It has a lot of negative impacts on the nation such that we cannot but wonder if religion is worth practicing in contemporary Nigeria. For instance, religious fanaticism leads to a situation where people take the laws into their hands and unleash mayhem on innocent people all in the name of religions. This has led to lose of lives and properties in various part of Nigeria. Iwe captures this as follows:

Quite often these fanatics are a law unto themselves. Through their nefarious activities, the fundamental rights of innocent citizens are often grossly and flagrantly violated: properties and lives are wantonly destroyed and places of worship desecrated and burnt. This is exactly the disaster the Kaduna rioters of March 2000 imposed on Nigeria, apart from ominously visibly and strongly threatening her unity and stability (*Religious Fanaticism* 36).

Religious fanaticism also leads to instability in the country. Ever since the inception of religious violence in the Northern part of Nigeria the country has experience socio-political instability in the North and this is gradually having rippling effects in the Southern part of country. There is tension in the Northern part of the country and those from the Southern part of the country that are resident in the North are also under the same tension and in most cases they are the main target of these religious fanatics. The rationale for their being the main target is that they are mostly non-Muslims. Thus, religious fanaticism denies Nigerians their fundamental human rights and freedom since the people live in fear of what will befall them if they freely practice their faith in the Northern part of the country. What we are saying is that there is no religious liberty and freedom in some States of Northern Nigeria.

It is also worthy of note that religious fanaticism and fundamentalism has been a threat to national security. It has led to a high level of insecurity of human lives and property. This kind of situation did not start today but has a long history in the country. For instance, Iwe notes that "This was the case with the periodic irreligious riots in Northern Nigeria by some Muslims

extremists and the Maitatsine religious fundamentalists who, in the early and mid 1980s, fanatically rendered lives and properties of several Nigerian citizens insecure” (*Religious Fanaticism* 36). There is also the continual disruption of public life and social order due to the activities of these religious fanatics and fundamentalists.

The worst effect of religious fanaticism on the Nigerian society is that it hinders national integration and social harmony. It denies Nigerians their right to peaceful co-existence and breeds mutual suspicion among members of different religions. It has caused Nigeria not to come to a speedy realization of all the positive values that come with modern democracy. It destroys the oneness of the nation and retards the growth and development of the nation since no individual thinks of bringing out his/her best in order to promote the good of the nation. According to Iwe, “these are exactly the humane values (peaceful co-existence, modern democracy, growth and development) religious extremists seek to sacrifice on the altar of religious violence and intolerance” (*Religious Fanaticism* 37). Religious fanaticism has led to various calamities and collapse of one political order or the other (Agi, *Holy War* v)

Iwe has in his monograph entitled *Religious Fanaticism: Causes, Consequences and Remedies* stated categorically about twelve causes of religious fanaticism. He has in it dedicated considerable space to discuss these factors. Since space will not permit us to discuss them here they will only be mentioned in this paper. The causes include: psychological disequilibrium, cognitive poverty, disinclination to change, religious ignorance, spiritual arrogance, religious triumphalism, paucity of experience, social maladjustment, vested material interests, material poverty, poor secular leadership, and poor ecclesiastical leadership (16-30).

Asouzu’s Ibuanyidanda Philosophy at Glance

Ibuanyidanda philosophy is a philosophy of complementarity that has its root in complementarity. This philosophical system that is developed by Asouzu stems from the complementation of two distinct ideas: Igbo-African background and Aristotle’s Western ontology. With respect to its Igbo-African root it can be said that Asouzu derived his philosophy from the Igbo word *ibuanyidanda*. This word is derived from three Igbo words namely, *ibu* (load or task), *anyi* (insurmountable or too heavy) and *danda* (a species of ant that always work together in complementation to one and another). Put together, this traditional Igbo aphorism literally translates into “no load is insurmountable for the species of ants called *danda*” (*Ibuanyidanda* 11). This is due to their complementary spirit. This concept according to Asouzu draws inspiration from the teachings of traditional Igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought, who having observed the mutual dependence exhibited by a species of ants called *danda*, concluded that the advancement of any course in life is possible within the context of complementarity. Hence, they adopted it as a way of life and it constitutes a typical Igbo work song *bunubunuooibuanyidanda-lift the load, nothing is impossible for danda, the ant* (*Ibuanyidanda* 11). Thus, *ibuanyidanda* connotes complementarity and Asouzu’s *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is also known as complementary philosophy or complementary reflection. In all,

Ibuanyidanda philosophy as noted by Chimakonam “is a good attempt, at constructing a world class philosophy using ingredients of a local culture” (41).

It is this complementary system of thought which is inherent in the Igbo-African life-view that Asouzu employs in addressing the bifurcating and polarizing metaphysics or ontology put forward by Aristotle and has influenced Western philosophy and thought-pattern in the history of Western idea. Aristotle has in his writing reduced and equated being to substance (essence) without accident (Book B, 5). Asouzu using this complementary system of thought notes that being should not be linked to an aspect of being like Aristotle has done. Asouzu rather postulates a complementary ontology in which he states that being consists of both substance and accident which are in a mutual complementary relationship. According to him, “by adopting this approach, the new complementary ontology wishes to grasp the notion of being from the preceding condition of its intrinsic interrelatedness devoid of polarization and exclusiveness” (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 10).

Based on the above discourse, one can only have a firm grasp of being through complementarity and not in exclusivity. Hence, the central thesis of the *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy of Asouzu holds that anything that exists serves a missing link of reality or that whatever exists has head and tail-end (*ihe di, nwere isi na odu*). This is the understanding of being in *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy. This understanding of being becomes clearer when being is seen in the sense of *not being alone* (*ka so mu adina*). Given this, any being that claims existence in exclusivity or isolation from other missing links of reality deserves to be pitied, as such perceived existence amounts to no existence. Asouzu captures this idea vividly when he says: “Hence, that person is to be pitied who thinks that a subject can afford to live alone, outside of the legitimacy provided by the mutual complementary relationship between all missing links, and calls this existence” (*Ibuanyidanda*, 10).

Thus seen, the *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy of Asouzu projects the thesis that no meaningful existence can be conceived outside the eddy of complementarity. This philosophy therefore admits of no division under whatever guise. Though we cannot escape the reality of the dichotomies of life such as the black-white, short-tall, rich-poor, fat-thin dichotomies. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy appreciates these dichotomies but views such as offering opportunities for harmonism. This is therefore a bold anti-thesis to the bifurcating and polarizing ontology of Aristotle which segmented being into hierarchies thereby deepening any conceivable gulf amongst them. This bifurcating ontology which is deeply rooted in the Aristotelian substance-accident divide is found in his *Metaphysics*, the Book A which segments beings into the wise and less wise and recommends that the wise must order and never be ordered, he must not obey another, but the less wise must obey him.

In its thesis of complementarity, *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy holds that human beings can only attain complementarity when some pedagogical work is done on their minds to attune them towards seeing other beings in their future referential dimension. Thus, it recommends that all bifurcating mechanisms such as the phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpuchi anya*) and the ambivalent tension-laden human existential situation, should be overcome. These are challenges

that appear inescapable, they are not insurmountable. They can be overcome when some pedagogical work is done on our minds just as *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy recommends. This pedagogical work is what Asouzu calls Noetic Propaedeutic. In the words of Asouzu:

Noetic propaedeutic is a pre-education of the mind and human reason with a view to overcoming the broken unity in human consciousness caused by the challenges of tension-laden human ambivalent existential situations and *ihe mkpuchi anya* (phenomenon of concealment). (*Inaugural Lecture* 48-49)

This is to say that noetic propaedeutic is a process through which the mind is trained to see beyond its narrow enclaves. It is an education or training that makes the mind to be receptive of others, and open for dialogue and communication. Hence, “the main objective of noetic propaedeutic is to make the acting subject adaptable and receptive towards understanding and sharing meaning, in a way that transcends artificial boundaries it creates around itself” (*Ibuanyidanda* 81). This therefore leads to mutual communication and sharing which in turn makes meaning accessible to all stakeholders. This is when the mind conceives reality in a more holistic manner. It is when this has been accomplished that one will acquire global mind-set and begin to think beyond oneself and enhance advancement in life.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy is built on two fundamental principles, namely: the principle of integration and the principle of progressive transformation. The principle of integration which states that “anything that exists serves a missing link of reality” (*The Method and Principles* 273), is metaphysical in nature. This principle is also called “the principle of harmonious complementation” (Asouzu, *Effective Leadership* 58). Explaining this principle Asouzu notes that “the missing link is by nature both an empirical and non-empirical reality which through its dynamism gives clues to its nature” (*Progress in Metaphysics* 88). It is this principle that is the basic foundation of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy and is found in most of Asouzu’s philosophical thoughts and works.

Next to the principle of integration is the principle of progressive transformation which states that “all human actions are geared towards the joy of being” (*The Method and Principles* 273), is according to Asouzu, a practical variant of the principle of integration and it addresses particularly the issue of human actions in the society. It is on these principle of integration and principle of progressive transformation that the complementary imperative which states that “allow the limitations of being to be the cause of joy” (*The Method and Principles* 273), is built. In other words, the complementary imperative is a secondary product of the principle of integration and the principle of progressive transformation. These culminate in the truth and authenticity criterion which states “never elevate any world immanent missing link to an absolute instance” (“*Ibuanyidanda*” and the Philosophy of Essence 105).

Asouzu in discussing his *ibuanyidanda* logic applies his truth and authenticity Criterion. By this Asouzu is saying that no logic should be considered to be more important than others at any instance. Hence, he argues that both the logic of human interest (with inherent tendency to

defend our interest even at the cost of the interest of others) and the ontological logic (legitimizing logic) are needed for effective functioning of the society. In his words:

One can say that fundamentally the logic of human interest and the ontological logic complement themselves since they are needed for the execution of any action that is truly human. Hence, without the logic of human interest that is freely constituted, the legitimizing role of the ontological logic would become ineffective...In other words, the ontological logic builds on the free operation of the logic of human interest as it legitimizes and directs it. (*Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection)* 106-107)

These two logics must therefore act complementarily for the human being to think and act correctly in any given situation of life.

Asouzu goes further to apply his *ibuanyidnda* logic to concept of truth as he argues that truth must be complementary truth and not truth in isolation. This is derived from his believe that “complementary notion of truth deals basically with what it takes to have the logic of human interest and the ontologically logic duly harmonized” (*Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection)* 107). Hence, he notes that the logic of human interest cannot lead to what is truth and neither will only ontological logic. These logics independent of each other can only lead to relative truths. In this way, we absolutize our fragmented truth or equate one’s (a group’s) opinion to truth. Asouzu points out this problem with such view as follows:

In this case, it is assumed that there are many truths as there are many individuals or groups contending for primacy. This is the dogma of relativism with which is very widespread today as the case of most philosophies dealing with culture has to testify. On the other hand is the dogma of absolutism that equates truth with one absolute truth. (*Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection)* 109)

He goes on to assert that many philosophers are only aware of the danger of absolutism but fail to take into cognizance the absolutism inherent in all positions that are relative. Hence, he asserts that relativism is more worrisome than absolutism since its absolute dimension is not very obvious to all. For him, it is because of this and its liberal nature that many see relativism as more appealing, and that “our human lives are more guided by common sense experience, which shares much with a relativist approach to reality” (*Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection)* 109-110). But this ought not to be so.

Following the principle of truth and authenticity Criterion, Asouzu notes that authentic epistemology is possible when we move from our putative raw primary cognitive ambience to the legitimacy bestowed by our complementary cognitive ambience. He asserts that our raw

primary ambience is one that is under the influence of *ihe mkpuchi anya* (phenomenon of concealment). It makes us to see the world we know as the basis of knowledge and our knowledge as objective as well as relatively reliable. This leads to ethnocentric epistemology. This indeed is not an authentic epistemology. Whereas,

our complementary ambience is that ambience we share with all missing links of reality as to constitute the domain of universally correlated thoughts. It provides thinking subjects the context of affirming their being insightfully as the capacity to be in mutual complementary relationship with all existence realities. (*Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection)* 81)

It is with it that an actor or inquirer shows that all missing links of reality are co-related and interconnected. It also shows that human being relates with reality in a transparent manner but without it the putative raw primary cognitive ambience dominates and leads to misrepresentation of reality and the world in tune with one's most cherished interests. This is to say that our complementary ambience act as a legitimizing ambience. It helps inquirers not to look to their own interest while interpreting reality and the world. It leads to meaningful interpretation of reality. This is possible through "*ibuanyidanda* mindsets". It leads to authentic complementary acts, which is born out authentic epistemology. This authentic epistemology in the view of Asouzu, can be arrived at through noetic propaedeutic (pre-education of the mind). It is through this that human consciousness is able "to re-establish its anchorage on the same ontological foundation distorted by the imposition arising from our raw primary putative ambience" (*Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection)* 82). This is what leads to a creditable epistemology and a better and firm grasp of reality.

Ibuanyidanda Philosophy and the Question Religious Fanaticism in Nigeria

If we should look at religious fanaticism in Nigeria with the lens of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy, it will be clear that the cause of religious fanaticism is more psychological than physical. What we are saying is that all of the causes of this social menace mentioned earlier boil down to one primary cause – psychological. The problem of religious fanaticism starts from the mind. It is the mind that has the inbuilt tendency to bifurcate and polarize reality or realities. It is this human mind or psyche that can be used or manipulated by leaders, be it political or religious leaders. Thus, the best way to manipulate religion is to manipulate the minds of religious adherents. Hence, religious fanaticism is a result of a mis-educating of the mind. A religious fanatic is one whose mind has been mis-educated through misinformation on the issues of religion such that he/she begins to see his/her religion as the only religion that is and that besides it there is no other religion. This is probably what Iwe captions 'religious triumphalism'. Discussing this cause of religious fanaticism he avers:

Addicted to spiritual euphoria and religious triumphalism, the fanatic here believes that his religion or church, which to him is the only authentic tradition and spiritual way of God and the only gate of heaven, has won for all its true adherents total victory which is also their exclusive monopoly. Here, the fanatic, in this religious triumphalistic mood, will patronisingly expect adherents of other religions and churches to be converted to his own religious traditions and rituals or pitifully face the consequences of religious discomfiture and eventual spiritual defeat, if not eternal damnation (*Religious Fanaticism* 20-21).

It is in this way that Christians view and treat non-Christians in Nigeria. They regard both Muslims and African Traditionalists as those who have no salvation in their religions and are doom for all eternity. Therefore, they need to be converted into the Christian faith in order to gain salvation. And in most cases, those who refused are forced into doing so. This is also the case with Islam in Northern Nigeria, where their adherents are so fanatical. These religious adherents see all non-Muslims as infidels that should be made by violence or any other means to become a member of their religion or be exterminated. It is this kind of mindset that has informed and engineered the activities of the Islamic sect called *boko haram*. This sect sees Islam and its educational system and *shariah* law as the only authentic education and law that all Nigerians should be taught and made to imbibe and live by.

This is also seen in another cause that Iwe discussed in his work. This cause is 'spiritual arrogance'. In Nigeria, adherents of Christianity and Islam are spiritually arrogant such that they regard adherents of other religions as nobody or non-being. This is due to what Asouzu calls 'the ambivalent tension-laden human existential situation', which manifests as members of a religion or faith relate with members of another religion or faith. These religious adherents are so self-opinionated such that other religious views amounts to nothing to them. This arrogance act is as a result of *ihe mkpuchi anya* (phenomenon of concealment) which prevents them from seeing and recognizing the good in other religions as well as members of other religions in the country. It is due to this that they live in what Iwe call 'religious ignorance'. They live in ignorance of other religions and their basic tenets, practices and values. It is with this ignorance that the fanatics conceive that their religion is self-sufficient for them and that other religions should not exist in Nigeria outside of their religion.

This kind of mindset is reductionist as well as absolutist. It is reductionist in that it reduces all religion to just one – the religion of the fanatic. It is absolutist in that it sees the religion of the fanatic as the only authentic religion that should exist and none else. This, points to the fact that the problem of religious fanaticism is not only psychological but ontological. It is ontological because it tends to bifurcate and polarize being or realities (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture* 18). In this case, religious fanaticism bifurcates and polarizes Nigeria along religious line. It is on this note that Nigerians talk more or less of their religious affiliations than the

nation. It is this bifurcating and polarizing mindset that Nigerians today live with – mindset that places the interest of their faith or religion before national interest. This is indeed a mental disorder that we can call ‘religious neuroses. This is a state of mental disorder in which people are brought to the level of acting abnormally in the name of religion. It is in this state of psychological disequilibrium that fanatics see the right thing the wrong way (Iwe, *Christianity, Culture* 221).

Those who are involved in religious fanaticism are people who are not mentally balance; they are those who are mis-educated and are being manipulated by both religious (ecclesiastical) and political leaders to misuse religion for their own selfish interest. They are therefore taught to see their religion as the only revealed religion from God and do all they can to promote the interest of their religion and its adherents. It is true that religious fanaticism is what colours Nigerian last presidential election. The politicking carried religious undertone. Christians were openly campaigning for Goodluck Ebele Jonathan while Muslims were campaigning for Mohammadu Buhari. This is because these religious adherents see these candidates as those who will promote the cause of their religion first before that of the nation and Nigerians in general. Hence, they do not vote for the best but for members of their religious faith. It is because of this that in our elections we vote for mediocre instead of those who will perform and bring out their best for the course of the advancement of the nation.

The second aspect of this section is concerned with how *ibuanyidanda* philosophy can help us overcome religious fanaticism. As stated above religious fanaticism in Nigeria is both an ontological and psychological problem. And to solve this problem one must go to the root of the problem and address it. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as stated earlier is a philosophy of the mind. It is a philosophy that seeks to solve human problems by addressing the mind where the problem stems from. According to Asouzu, it is the mind that has the capacity to bifurcate and polarize reality. In our context, it is the minds of the religious fanatics which has been mis-educated and mis-informed that cause them to bifurcate and polarize Nigeria and Nigerians along the line of religion and elevate their religion to an absolute instance.

The minds of all Nigerians need to be re-educated through what Asouzu calls noetic propaedeutic – a pre-education of the mind. It is indeed this process that all Nigerians need to undergo in order for them to be cured of their mental disorder or psychological disequilibrium that comes with mis-education. It is through this act of re-education of the minds of Nigerians that they will come to see religion for what it truly is. It is at this level that they will come to realize that no religion like being or reality is self-sufficient. Even religious fanatics will come to the knowledge that their religions stand in need of complementation from other existing religions in Nigeria. At this stage we can say that they have undergone ‘existential conversion’ (*Inaugural Lecture* 54), which brings about what Asouzu calls ‘*ima onwe onye* (self-consciousness)’. It is this that can help Nigerians to see religions as fragments, entities and realities that are missing links and not absolute. Thus, just as no being can claim to be absolute and capable to be alone, no religion is absolute and can exist in isolation (*ka so mu adina*). Just as beings always long to

be with others that is how religious adherents should long to be with members of other religious faith in the whole called Nigeria. This is because according to Asouzu, *to be (idi)* is to be with others. Hence, there is no need of absolutizing any religion because all religions have their strengths and weaknesses. They are all diverse paths to a common goal and ultimate reality – God.

Conclusion

Religious fanaticism will become a thing of the past in Nigeria if Nigerians undergo existential conversion through noetic propaedeutic. It is through this process and pre-education that the minds of religious fanatics will be ontological reconfigured to see religions in Nigeria as necessary aspects of each other that can complementarily inform and reshape the attitudes of all Nigerians. It is with this kind of re-educated mindset that Nigerians will see those of other religious faith as one with them. Hence, the destruction of lives and properties will disappear from the Nigerian scene and peace, unity and national integration will be enthroned. It is in situation like this that Nigerians will harness and use their inherent potential to better the lot of the country. Also religious liberty and freedom that has been sacrificed at the altar of religious fanaticism will be restored and enthroned in Nigeria.

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