

Letter to *The Banner*, submitted January 2017, but not published.

It has long been a mantra of scholarship, inspired by Marxism and secularism, that religion is never a primary causation in social or economic developments, but is, at best, a secondary cause or simply an excuse. Thus, missionaries in the 60s and 70s might be forgiven for interpreting the bloody upheavals in Nigeria as “fueled by a mix of inequality, ethnicity, and economics,” but that religion was not the main cause (Jan., 2017, p. 26). However, they had simply absorbed that opinion from the prevailing academic environment of the time, a most unprofessional and uncritical attitude!

Having researched and written eight volumes on religious violence in Nigeria over a period of 20 years (www.SocialTheology.com/Islamica), I can only concur with the more recent reversion of that theory that insists on religion often being the *major* factor that drags the economic along in its wake. That certainly holds for the Nigerian situation up till today.

Imagine, therefore, my surprise at Steven Timmerman’s comment: “These missionaries resisted the temptation to oversimplify the conflict into a matter of religious differences.” *Timmerman’s* oversimplified and overtaken theory only plays into the hands of Nigeria’s politicians who have long denigrated the role of religion, because they fear the consequences of calling a spade a spade—and indebts him to those same outdated Marxists and secularists.