

**“Religion Is the Reason for Conflict.” *Maclean’s*, June 1, 2015, p. 7**

**The title of this letter to the editor is *Maclean’s* version of my original “Causes of Religious Crises in Nigeria.” The article below is my original version that the editor edited for reasons of space and, perhaps, quality. At any rate, herewith I present you with my original version. For the edited version I refer you to *Maclean’s* online. It’s not all that different except that it dropped some points I wanted to have included.**

It has long been the politically correct view among scholars that religious upheavals are the products of economic forces, never of religion itself—a Marxist mantra that even most non-Marxist scholars, including Christians, have adopted. However, the last decade the recognition of religion being a force of its own has been making a come-back by means of a considerably array of publications. Not everyone has come around.

I have lived in Nigeria for 30 years and written 8 volumes plus several articles about the country’s religious upheavals. There, too, many insist on an economic interpretation, my friend, Bishop Idowu-Fearon, whom I have known and respected for many years, being one of them (Nigeria’s Bishop Idowu-Fearon...” May 11). In my books I argue strongly against that thesis and insist that the dominant story is religion, with other factors playing secondary roles. Nigerians who insist on non-religious causation, I found in my research, always end up in inconsistencies.

The Bishop exemplifies my finding in a classic way. He states “...the crises are mainly *politically* motivated.” Two columns further it is, “We all know it’s mainly *economic*, but nobody wants to hear that”(italics mine). The example of the Fulani nomads vs agricultural settlers is true, but it is a side-show that does little to illustrate his points.

At the same time, in my books I express strong agreement with his insistence of working with Muslims on common social challenges, instead of preaching at or converting them. My agreement with him is stronger than the above disagreement.

*A question for English majors: How do you express the possessive of “Maclean’s?” The proper noun of the magazine already includes ‘s. How do you make that possessive? Please contact me at < [boerjff@hotmail.com](mailto:boerjff@hotmail.com) >.*