Contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism as a Challenge to Christian Evangelization

Introduction

This paper examines contemporary Islamic fundamentalism as a challenge to Christian evangelization. Although Islamic fundamentalism should not be confused with terrorism, it is argued that terrorism which is a product of extremism is the other face of Islamic fundamentalism. On the whole, religious fundamentalism has fueled contemporary acts of terrorism in the world. The paper begins by defining the term fundamentalism and continues to discuss the genesis of the term and the characteristics of fundamentalists before highlighting the causes of Islamic fundamentalism. Finally, the challenges posed by Islamic fundamentalism to Christian evangelization are discussed.

Definition of fundamentalism

A dictionary meaning of the term “fundamentalism” is the literal interpretation of scriptures or strict adherence to or interpretations of religious doctrines, set of principles etc. It could also be defined as an attitude, an effort or a movement that adheres to, or attempts to promote the fundamental principles of a given ideology. It could therefore be argued that those who profess the fundamental teachings of Christianity are Christians, and those who profess the fundamental teachings of Islam are Muslims. Fundamentalism is synonymous with religious extremism and (or) fanaticism. And is sometimes manifested in acts of terrorism against real or perceived enemies.

Origin of the term “Fundamentalism”

As an Anglo-Saxon terminology, fundamentalism was initially used in regard to the Protestant Christian groups in the USA in the later part of the nineteenth century. In 1878, a Bible Conference was held in New York attended by the representatives of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Disciples of Christ churches. This conference laid down nine fundamental principles. These included: the infallibility of the Bible, Trinity, eternal sinfulness of humankind, atonement of Jesus for sins and his imminent return to a reign of a thousand years. The signatories of this declaration called themselves fundamentalists and regarded their opponents as heretics. This was the genesis of the term “fundamentalism”.

The fundamentalists aimed at reverting to original and orthodox Christianity typical of the early Christian groups. For example, they practiced a life of abstinence and adopted a literal interpretation of the Bible. Fundamentalist Christian theology was highly conservative and became polarized against Catholicism and Protestantism which were regarded as heretical.

Despite its Anglo-Saxon derivative, fundamentalism is found in virtually all religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, among others. Fundamentalism is associated with religious groups or individuals that display extreme behaviour manifested in intolerance towards members of society who do not subscribe to the beliefs and opinions of the such groups or individuals. It is also manifested in certain activities toward others such as terrorism, violence and killings, destruction of property and human right abuses. All these activities are committed

2 Maina, N.K. “Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism”, in AFER, 2001, vol. 43, No. 6, p. 280
3 Ibid., p. 280
in the name of God and religion. The other term that is closely associated with fundamentalism is extremism which is currently manifested in acts of terrorism.

**Islamic Fundamentalism**
Although fundamentalism is a phenomenon common to all religions, thanks to the media, the term has been so much associated with Islam than any other religion. Thus contemporary “Islamic fundamentalism” cannot be divorced from the mass media. “Islamic fundamentalism” has always been a catchphrase for the media especially the western press which sometimes use screaming headlines that portrays a negative image of Islam when describing the phenomenon of Islamic resurgence. This brings us to question: is the term “fundamentalism” appropriate to describe Islam and Muslims?

Muslims scholars such as Ba-Yunus, Abdallah and Al-Ashmawy consider the term “Islamic fundamentalism” a misnomer because of its negative connotations, imagery and vocabulary which are borrowed from the Christian fundamentalist movement in America. They assert that Islamic fundamentalist is a label coined by the West to discredit Islam and Muslims and therefore an inappropriate description of Islam and Muslims. They further argue that the term fundamentalism is inappropriate to describe Muslim extremists who use violence in the name of religion. According to Abdallah, the term fundamentalism could only be applied in Islamic discourse to show the existence of extreme forces in the Muslim world that are anti-progress. What comes out from these scholars’ perspective is that in the context of Islam, a distinction should be drawn between an extremist and a fundamentalist. In this case, an extremist or a fanatic could be defined as one who uses religion to gain some religious, economic or political mileage. A fundamentalist on the other hand could be defined as one who holds dear the fundamental teachings and practices of Islam as found in the Qur’an and the traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad.

As a result of the mass media, the terminology of Islamic fundamentalism gained widespread currency in the eighties through the nineties when it was almost considered as conventional language by both Muslims and non-Muslims, with the former being self-consciously defensive of being fundamentalists. Islamic fundamentalism is best described from a Muslim perspective, as Islamism, while an Islamic fundamentalist can be described as an Islamist. The other term commonly used for Islamic fundamentalism is Political Islam. For the purpose of this paper, the term Islamic fundamentalism and extremism will be considered synonymously like two sides of the same coin.

**Islamic (Muslim) Fundamentalist Groups**
One may not talk of a homogenous Islamic fundamentalist groups. Some groups are moderate and non-violent and they acquiesce in the socio-political *status quo* of their countries. These groups include some moderates among the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Jordan, the

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4 For example, “militant Islam on the march” and “soldiers of Allah advance”, see *ibid.*, p. 290
5 See Ba-Yunus, I. 1997, p. 2 “the Myth of Islamic fundamentalism” in *ibid.*, p. 282
6 Abdullan, M.S. 1994. “what shall be the answer to contemporary Islamic fundamentalism, in Maina, ibid, p.282
7 Al-Ashmawy, M.S. 1994. “Islam and the Political Order”, in Maina, ibid, p.282
8 *ibid.*, p. 282
9 *ibid.*, p.283
Renaissance Party of Tunisia, Jamaat Islami of Pakistan, Afghani Mujahideen and the Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyya of Indonesia. There are also apolitical groups such as the Jamaat Tabligh of Pakistan and the Salafi factions in Saudi Arabia.\(^\text{10}\)

The other variant of Islamic fundamentalist groups are the radical extremists that are associated with violence and terrorism. They include the latest ones such ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), Al-Qaeda and its affiliates such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab; Hizbollah, Abu Sayyaf guerillas, Salvation from Hell and Gama’a al-Islamiyya etc.

Muslim fundamentalist groups such as ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab are behind the latest spate of terrorism, human right abuses and destructions in many parts of the world. A narrative of terror activities across the world from the 1990’s – some of which targeted Christians - to the present, is a pointer to this claim. These include and are not limited to the killing of eighteen Catholic Church workers by assassins in the Philippines on Christmas day in 1992; the kidnapping of thirty-six Christian commuters and the killing of four priests of Missionaries of African Institute (White Fathers) in Algeria on 27 December 1997; hijacking and killing of tourists by the Abu Sayyaf guerrillas in Philippines on Christmas Day 1992\(^\text{11}\); burning of churches in Indonesia, indiscriminate implementation of the sharia in some states in Nigeria\(^\text{12}\).

In Egypt, the minority status of Copts as a Christian community make them easy targets of Muslim fundamentalist groups. Copts experience many human right abuses such as murders, extortions and fires are set on their churches. Gama’a al-Islamiyya, Egypt’s largest militant Muslim fundamentalist group since 1992, has been blamed for the deaths of more than 780 people mainly tourists, policemen and Christians.\(^\text{13}\)

The Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS)\(^\text{14}\) is the latest Islamic fundamentalist militant group that has struck terror around the world. According to the New York Times\(^\text{15}\), ISIS has instigated and inspired some of world’s deadliest terrorist massacres. These include: The 22 March 2016 Brussels massacres in which 31 people lost their lives; the shooting down of a Russian passenger jet in Egypt that killed all 224 people on board on 31 October 2015; Paris bombings that killed 132 people on 13 November 2015; the killing of more than 100 people in a peace rally in Turkey on 10 October 2015; the bombing of a mosque in Yemen in January 2015 which killed 130

\(^{10}\) Engineer, A.A. 1984. “Islamic Fundamentalism and the Muslim World”, p.5

\(^{11}\) Maina, op. cit., p. 287

\(^{12}\) The introduction of the sharia in some states such as Zamfara, Niger, Kaduna, Katsina and Kano exacerbated tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Clashes between Christian and Muslims led to deaths of many people. The introduction of the sharia in these states was considered by Christian groups such as Christian Association of Nigeria and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria as a violation of human rights of non-Muslims, as it intimidated, oppressed and marginalized Christians (see Oduyoye, M. 2000).

\(^{13}\) Maina, op. cit., p. 287

\(^{14}\) The group began in 2004 as al-Qaeda in Iraq. In 2006, it rebranded as ISIS. It was an ally of, and had similarities with Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda. But ISIS, unlike al-Qaeda, which disowned the group in early 2014, is brutal and more effective at controlling territory it has seized stretching from northern Syria to central Iraq (https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/14/world/).

people. These are some of the terror activities in Europe and Middle East that are blamed on ISIS.16

On the other hand, Boko Haram insurgency has wrought havoc in destruction of property and loss of life of countless number of people and displacing thousands in Nigeria and the surrounding nations of Chad and Niger.17

Elsewhere, alleged Al-Qaida terrorists bombed the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, on 7 August 1998 killing more than 200 people and injuring scores. The terror group was equally blamed for the 9/11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA in which close to 6,000 people lost their lives and which remains the worst form of terrorism ever visited on any country. Since 1998, terrorism attributed to religious extremism has intensified in East Africa, especially in Kenya, following the incursion of Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) into Somalia in 2011 to flash out Al-Shabaab militants.18 In Kenya, Al-Shabaab is blamed for terror attacks mostly targeting Christians. According to media reports, there have been more than 45 terror attacks in Kenya since the year 2011 which have left more than 400 people dead. The latest was the killing of 147 students of Garissa University College on 2 April 2015.

**Characteristics of Muslim Fundamentalist groups**

Muslim fundamentalist groups share certain characteristics. These include a demand for a return to the teachings of the Qur’an and Hadith. By promising people social and economic justice, the fundamentalists argue that things have gone wrong for Muslims because of deviating from the true path of Islam. The fundamentalists challenge the western oriented legal and government systems that are in place in most Muslim countries. They call for the establishment of an Islamic government and the implementation of *sharia*. This call emanates from people’s increased resentment against corrupt and repressive regimes perpetuated by the West; neo-colonialism and

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16 New York Times, Ibid.

17 For example, according to CNN, in January 12, 2015, Boko Haram militants opened fire on northern Nigerian villages, leaving as many as 2,000 people dead. And on 1 February 2016, according to Al-Jazeera TV, Boko Haram killed 86 people, including a number of children, in a series of attacks on a village in north-eastern Nigeria (www.cnn.com/2015/01/09/africa/boko-haram-violence/; www.aljazeera.com/.../boko-haram-blast-kills-scores-nigeria-maiduguri-160. According to Reuters, on 14th April 2014, Boko Haram terrorists abducted 276 school girls when they raided a school in Chibok northeastern state in Nigeria. Dozens of the girls escaped in the initial melee in 2014 but more than 200 remained unaccounted for (Ola, Lanre, 2016. Nigerian schoolgirl rescued after two years as Boko Haram captive.

18 Al-Shabaab, a Somali based militia and terrorist group has claimed responsibility for many of the terrorist attacks in Kenya since KDF invaded Somalia. These include: the 1 July 2012, killing of 17 people in two churches in Garissa. Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi that killed 70 people on 21 September 2013; killing of 6 people in a Church in Likoni, Mombasa on 23 March 2014; killing of 6 people in a food kiosk in Eastleigh, Nairobi on 31 March 2014; the Mpeketoni attack that killed more than 60 people between 15 and 17 June 2014; the two attacks in Manda: one in which 28 Nairobi bound passengers were killed on 23 November 2014, and the other 36 quarry workers killed on 2 December 2014. And Garissa University College attack in which 147 students lost their lives on 2 April 2015.
the West’s support for Zionism. In many countries where there is repression, Muslims yearn for a political system that could guarantee their socio-economic and religious aspirations. A return to Islam is seen as a panacea for the various political strains and stresses afflicting the masses.\textsuperscript{19}

Another common characteristic among all Muslim fundamentalist groups is their open hostility towards Zionism and Israel occupation of Palestinian land. Israel is the arch foe of virtually all the Arab and by extension Muslim countries. In this connection, Muslim fundamentalist groups target Israel citizens and their properties for terror attacks in various countries around the world.\textsuperscript{20} In their efforts to drive Israelites out of the Arab lands, some Arab countries insidiously support Muslim extremist groups in their war against Israel. For example, Syria who lost the Golan Heights to Israel in 1967 Arab-Israel War support Hizbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Israel-occupied Palestinian territories of West Bank and Gaza strip.\textsuperscript{21}

The other common feature of the Muslim fundamentalist groups is the hatred for the West especially the USA. Fundamentalists unanimously agree on the need to wage jihad to drive the non-Muslims out of Muslim lands. For example, in the nineties, Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden issued a fatwa (religious decree) to liberate Islamic lands and holy sites from the USA. The sites include the Ka’ba in Mecca and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem - Islam’s third holiest city after Mecca and Medina. Osama’s hostility towards Americans ostensibly stemmed from his resentment of their occupation of Saudi Arabia during and after the Gulf War (1990 – 1991). His hostility to the Americans and Israelis prompted him to sponsor terrorist activities targeting Americans e.g. the twin embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, in August 1998.

Muslim fundamentalist groups use religion to justify their terrorist activities. They misinterpret the concept of jihad to justify their actions\textsuperscript{22} and especially attacks against Christians and other real or perceived enemies of Islam. The suspected mastermind of the 1998 attacks in Kenya and Tanzania and the 9/11 attacks in the USA, Osama bin Laden, invoked the name of God and Islamic teachings for his terrorist activities against USA and its allies. He was quoted in Al-Jazeera Television saying:

\begin{quote}
I swear to God that America will not live in peace before peace reigns in Palestine, and before all the army of infidels depart the land of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). God has blessed a group of vanguard Muslims, the forefront of Islam to destroy America. May God bless them and allot them a supreme place in Heaven, for he is the only one capable and entitled to do so.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19} Maina, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 285

\textsuperscript{20} The bombing of the Israel owned Paradise Hotel in Kilifi, Coast Province in which 13 people died on 28 November 2002; the unsuccessful missile attack on Israel jetliner taking off from Moi International Airport Mombasa on the same day and the Westgate Mall attack (an Israeliite property) should be seen in that light.

\textsuperscript{21} Maina, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 288.

\textsuperscript{22} For example, Qur’an 9:13; 22:39-40,78; 49:15. Although jihad has been legitimized by the Qur’an, it does not warrant killing and wanton destruction of property for the sake of it.

Evidently, the way the fundamentalists interpret Islam and commit terrorism in the name of religion has given Islam a bad image. That terror groups invoke and quote the Qur’an text, has led Christians to view Islam as a brutal religion that promotes terrorism. Indeed, some Christians have posed serious questions about Islam for example: “If the Prophet Muhammad was sent to mankind to preach mercy as Muslims claim, why is there so much violence associated with Muslims and Islam?” Islam is portrayed and associated with violence and terrorism. Consequently, the Islamic faith and the entire Muslim community carry the blame for terrorism or violence perpetrated by Muslim extremists such as Al-Shabaab.

Notably, Islam is not a religion of violence. The name “Islam” is derived from the Arabic root of salm, that means peace. Islam is therefore a peaceful submission and complete surrender to the will of Allah. In this regard, a Muslim is by definition a person who professes the “religion of peace” (Islam). Violence is not the kernel of Islamic message. The Qur’an (2:256; 109:6) teaches about tolerance of people of other faiths. It is therefore paradoxical and unfortunate that a religion that preaches peace and tolerance should be associated with violence and terrorism that is visited by Muslim fundamentalists.

**Challenges posed by Islamic Fundamentalism to Christian Evangelization: The Kenyan Case**

Undoubtedly, religion can be used to bring peace and unite diverse communities. Conversely, it can also be a source of social/religious conflict. One of the biggest challenge to Christian evangelization in Kenya today is the threat of terrorism that emanates from fundamentalism.

In an environment of religious pluralism, Christians perceive Islam as an intolerant religion, a perception borne of extremism by Muslim fundamentalist groups. Arguably, this extremism is evident in terror attacks targeting Christians. This creates animosity that strains the relations between Christians and Muslims. Consequently, the environment in which Christians can engage in evangelization is hostile and highly charged.

In the recent memory, terror attacks have targeted churches, entertainment joints such as restaurants; shopping malls and public transport and bus parks etc. Although Muslims also die in the terror attacks, Christians largely view themselves as the targets because a number of these attacks have targeted them and their churches for example, the bombing of two churches in Garissa and the gun attacks in a church in Likoni. There is more evidence of the claim that terrorists target Christians. Since Westgate attack in September 2013, one of the characteristic

24 Kariuki and Lubanga, “War Against Radical Muslims,” 6
25 There is always a backlash on Muslims in countries where they are a minority, following terrorist attacks. For example, this was evident in Kenya after the Westgate Mall attack in 2013 and in the USA after 9/11. This backlash clearly demonstrates that many non-Muslims hold Islam culpable of the attacks. The entire faith and community is blamed for the activities of individual Muslims and groups. In both Kenya and America, there were futile attempts by the political leadership to portray the terrorist acts as work of individuals in order not to portray the war against terrorism as war against Islam and the Muslims.
26 These verses say: “there is no compulsion in religion…. (2:256); “unto you, your religion unto my religion” (109:6).
27 The grenade attack in a mosque in Eastleigh, Nairobi - predominated by members of the Somali community - led to death of 2 people and injury of the local Member of Parliament. The other attack in a bus in the city of Mombasa killed 4 people (see Sunday Nation, “Four Killed,” 2).
features of all the terror attacks is the terrorists’ deliberate isolation of Muslims from Christians with the former spared while the latter were mercilessly massacred. This leaves no doubt in the minds of Christians that they are the targets. This was evident in the Westgate, Mpeketoni, Mandera and the Garissa University College attacks. After the Likoni church attack, the Christian clergy warned Muslim leaders to tame their youth and moderate their religious teaching. Some pastors even appealed to the government to supply them with guns for self-defense against Muslim militants. Although this request is probably yet to be granted, a non-conducive atmosphere would undoubtedly impede the mission of the church, in preaching the gospel and reaching out to others, in the midst of insecurity and especially where church leaders see themselves as easy targets of Muslim goons.

Terrorism has implications on Christians outreach to Muslims especially in the predominant Muslim areas of Coast and North Eastern provinces. It has exacerbated the polarization of Christians and Muslims. The terrorists use the Qur’an text to justify attacks on Christians. Indeed the killing of the 17 people in the attacks on the two churches in Garissa were religiously motivated and targeting Christians as evidenced by the report from Al-Shabaab spokesman, Hassan Takar who said: “The Mujahedeen (holy warriors) punished with their hands those believing and worshipping other than Allah. The militants will continue until such practice is eliminated.” Although the Kenyan constitution guarantees the freedom of worship and movement, the threat of terrorism with its accompanying insecurity would definitely create fear among Christians in Muslim predominant areas. For example, there was mass exodus of Christians who worked in Mandera following the two terror attacks involving a Nairobi bound passenger bus on 23 November 2014, and quarry workers on 2 December 2014. The same situation obtained when many Christian students had to be re-located from Garissa following the Garissa University College attack on 2 April 2015. The implication of this situation is the decimation of the Christian population in those areas and amidst insecurity, Christians are unlikely to venture in such areas to establish new churches or to spread the Gospel.

Terrorism has led to a rising anti-Islamic rhetoric among Christians and this has raised the tempo for the hostile climate towards Muslims in Kenya. Consequently, the fault lines between Christians and Muslims have widened. Arguments by Muslims that “terrorists are not Muslims” or “terrorism is the work of the devil” have done little to absolve Muslims and

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28 Ayman, “Why Al-Shabaab,” in Star, 1
29 In the Westgate Mall attack, the gunmen were asking the victims questions on basic Islamic concepts such as “the name of the mother of Muhammad” or the “Islamic confession of faith” as a way of distinguishing Muslims from non-Muslims, and the latter were summarily gunned down when they failed to answer those basic questions on Islam.
31 Some Qur’an texts used to legitimize violence and aggression towards Christians are: chapters 22: 39; 66:9; 2:190
33 Ayman, 2015. “Why al-Shabaab is the number one enemy for Kenyan Muslims.” The Star. p.1
34 Kagwanja, P. 2014. “How Kenya fiddled as jihad came to our country.” Sunday Nation. p.21
35 This has become a mantra in any forum where there is a discourse on radicalism and extremism, touching on Muslims and Islam. For example, during the “Scientific Conference on “Radicalism, Islam and World Peace” held at the University of Nairobi, 15 March 2015, the statement was repeated by various Muslim speakers.
36 This was a response by Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) condemning the Westgate Mall terror attack (see Kemei, T. & Obuya, P. 2013. “Group distances Islam”, p. 11).
Islam from blame as the attacks are committed by members who allegedly bear Muslim names and invoke the name of Allah. Hence the unfortunate cliché "not every Muslim is a terrorist, but every terrorist is a Muslim" has gained currency as a blanket condemnation of Islam and Muslims. This has brought much tension between Christians and Muslims in Kenya since many Christians may not distinguish the acts of an individual from those of a community and a religion. This is a challenge to Christian evangelization since the Gospel cannot be spread in an atmosphere of tension especially among the followers of the two dominant religions.  

Muslims feel that the notion of associating Islam and Muslims with terrorism should be corrected arguing that Islam is a peaceful religion which should not be used as a scapegoat to justify partisan political ambitions and interests and unjust acts of terrorism. Undoubtedly Islam does not condone killings of innocent people and wanton destruction of property. However, the activities of terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab, who use religion to pursue their vested interests has given Islam and Muslims a bad name. And this is a concern of Muslims too as captured in the following remarks:

As a Muslim, I am deeply ashamed that the identity of my faith has been hijacked by this group who are using it as a justification to perpetrate violent acts which have only served to harm the reputation of Islam as a religion which advocate for peace, tolerance and coexistence.  

The Muslim community has been blamed for terrorism. Equally, its members have been victims of terror attacks. Muslims residing in areas where they are a minority are looked upon with suspicion and sometimes subjected to discrimination and profiling by Christians. For example, in the wake of Westgate Mall attack, members of the Somali community had to bear all sorts of harassment and discrimination such as insults, and being forcibly removed from public service vehicles. This scenario challenges the church when Christians who are supposed to be peace makers engage in negative response to counter violence with violence instead of preaching peace and love for one’s neighbor by emulating Christ.  

Another challenge of terrorism on Christian evangelization in Kenya is the irrational or perceived fear of Islam and Muslims or Islamophobia. The social perception of Muslims as people, who thrive on violence, has led to Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a socio-religious discourse that some Christian leaders of the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches employ to

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38 Peace is underlined in many verses of the Qur’an (14: 23; 13: 24; 24:61; 39: 73); respect for human diversity and pluralism (49: 13 and 30: 22); religious tolerance (2: 256; 11: 118); killing of innocent lives; suicide bombing is forbidden (cf., 4:93; 25:68; 6:151).

39 Ayman, op.cit., p. 2

40 Ibid., p. 2

warn their followers about the Islam menace. They use sermons to spread more Islamophobia. The warning about the danger of Islam derives from a perception that Islam is competing with Christianity as evidenced by statements and sermons from religious leaders. The competition has provided fodder for propaganda purposes, hence more Islamophobia. This does not augur well for Christian evangelization in Kenya.

The threat of terrorism has contributed to heightened levels of Islamophobia among Christians. This is due to high levels of security and usual terror alerts that have become part and parcel of life. Kenyans are nowadays subjected to frisking and other security checkups when they visit churches, shopping malls, supermarkets, high rise buildings and in boarding public service vehicles. Terror attacks have prompted many churches to invest heavily in security through hiring of guards, security gadgets and closed circuit surveillance cameras. When Christians troop to their churches, they are thoroughly subjected to the security checks! This constantly reminds them about the threat of terrorism; and that security cannot be taken for granted even in the church, hitherto a place of refuge and safety. This is a challenge to evangelization as the church engages in other activities of providing security instead of its core business of spreading the Gospel and winning souls for Christ.

**Conclusion**

Religious fundamentalism fuels the contemporary spate of terrorism in the world. This is true of Islamic (Muslim) fundamentalism. The threat of terrorism poses a great challenge not only to Christian evangelization but also to Christian – Muslim co-existence in many parts of the world where terrorism is a reality. In the midst of terrorism, what is the way forward? Should Christians turn the other cheek or confront terrorism by countering violence with violence? This is a difficult question to answer! Taking the first option would encourage more violence, perhaps because in the eyes of the enemy you are a weakling left to the mercy of the tormentors. The second option might be counterproductive as the victims may become guilty of the very evil that they are presumably fighting. Fighting violence may not be the right way to deal with violence. Christians are supposed to be peace makers and therefore the church should not be seen to promote violence. On the contrary it should preach peace as Jesus did. It is paramount that the church should preach against and condemn terrorism. While acknowledging that terrorism does not have any religious boundaries, Christians should awaken to the reality that the war against

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42 Ibid., p. 53
43 These include the various calls by clergy of the mainstream churches to intensify evangelization in order to stem the tide of the spread of Islam in Africa. For example, head of the Catholic Church in Kenya, late Cardinal Maurice Otunga (1923 – 2003) during an opening ceremony of the Secretaries of the Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in Nairobi, 12 – 16 January 1993, called on “Christians to stand up and fight the spread of Islam in Africa” (Maina, N.K. 2003, p. 175; Kahumbi, N.M. 1995, p. 11). Another call was made by, Bishop Stephen Kewasis of the Anglican Church of Kenya Eldoret Diocese, who urged Christians to intensify evangelization in North Eastern and Coast provinces of Kenya through building of churches as a method of challenging Islam, since Muslims were reportedly building mosques in all parts of the country (Maina, N.K. 2003, pp. 174-75)

44 Maina, *op.cit.*, p. 53
45 Ibid., 53
terror requires concerted efforts from all parties of good will including the majority of peace-loving Muslims. Therefore, the Christian leadership should work closely with Muslim leaders to tackle the problems such as social injustices, that fuel fundamentalism. Dialogue between Christians and Muslims provide is vital in the war against terrorism.

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