

## Tension between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria

Since August 2014, more than 1,600 Christians have been killed by Muslim extremists in Nigeria. Jihadists in the area say the killings are for “Coptic Crusaders,” who they claim have forced Muslims to convert to Christianity (news.sky.com). I chose this issue because I believe that killing people over religion does not solve anything or help anyone.

This tension between Nigerians, the northern Christians and southern Muslims, is an issue that should be written about because it can lead to a major rift between the two largest religions in the world. This major conflict could lead to problems such as trade embargos, poor international relations, and hatred among people. Some archbishops, like George Carey of Canterbury, say, “If there are Muslims who believe that they’ve got to kill Christians to make a way for the Islamic faith in the West, not only would they be disappointed, but it will lead to conflict, there is no doubt about that,” (Carey). Carey clearly states that killing people isn’t a logical solution to their disagreement, and I think that many on both sides of this issue would agree. Muslims killing Christians just makes everything worse. No one is going to just stand there and let others kill them and their families; they are going to fight back or take revenge.

Not all Muslims are killing Christians. Actually, many Nigerians do not agree with their countrymen and think that Muslim extremists are not properly following their religion. To protect Christians, young Muslims in Kaduna, Nigeria secured a church over Christmas and warded off violent neighbors during services (Lodge). Most Muslims are similarly against killing because it is a part of their religion to be loving and caring, not violent or destructive. But those who have protected Christian neighbors have also been targeted by extremists. An Islamist from Cairo, Egypt, Mohamed El- Sawy, argues, “We either live together, or die together.” He and

some other Muslims fought to protect another church in Cairo, Egypt over Christmas of 2011. They called themselves “human shields,” (Benedetto XVI).

Before traveling for this assignment, I would do more research on Nigeria’s history and culture. When I got to Nigeria, I would ask the Christian citizens how they feel about this tension. I would also ask the Muslim citizens how they feel about their religion being corrupted by extremists. In addition, I would ask both sides what they would do if there was an attack. Would they fight back or run? When I got to Nigeria, I would go around and ask about the violence between these two religions and if it affected their normal, daily lives. Some other questions I might ask would be, “Are you afraid that you will be attacked?” Or “What do you think of the extremists?” “Have you ever been attacked?” I would ask them about their experiences and stories. After all, it’s their country and we should hear about it in their own words. People are dying too fast; we have to stop this cycle. For a better world, for our own good, and for our brothers and sisters.

## Works Cited

"Religion Is Not the Problem--extremism is': Carey, George L." Interview by Nunley Jan. Episcopal News Service Archive, 2002. Web. 22 Mar. 2015.

Lodge, Carey. "Nigeria: 200 Young Muslims Protect Christians from Attack." *Christian Today*. 29 Dec. 2014. Web. 22 Mar. 2015.

"List of Islamic Terror Attacks on Christians since 9/11." *The Religion of Peace*. Web. 21 Mar. 2015.

"Egyptian Muslims Form 'human Shields' to Protect Christians." *Benedict XVI - Benedetto XVI*. Facebook. 9 Jan. 2011. Web. 22 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.facebook.com/notes/benedict-xvi-benedetto-xvi/egyptian-muslims-form-human-shields-to-protect-christians/10150373945000521>>.

"Why Are Egypt's Christians Being Targeted?" *Sky News*. 16 Feb. 2015. Web. 23 Mar. 2015.