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## **Internal Migration in Nigeria and its Attendant Insurgent Challenges: A Proposal for "Theonomous Counterintuitive Strategy" as a Panacea**

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### **Abstract**

Except with the advent of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the country in the year 2020, insurgent activities associated with internal migration and, especially the ones perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria, have been daily news in recent times. Because of the widespread nature of the activities, complexity, persistence, acute dreadfulness, socio-political, economic, judicial, military, historical, and other perspectives have been engaged to examine the myriad instances. Several solutions have been proposed and implemented. Lamentably, none of the solutions has successfully been able to stop the Fulani insurgents. In joining the quest for the more viable solutions to the malicious perpetrations against the Christian fold, particularly in the Middle Belt and southern regions of Nigeria, the present article proposes a theonomous counterintuitive strategy as a panacea. Consisting of tripodal PRP-R techniques, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy is hereby put forward as the more viable way of resolving the migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria and beyond. The strategy is drawn from the application of Ephesians by Vernon K. Robbins's social and cultural textural reading of biblical texts.

## Introduction

Migration can be said to be as old as the human race. It started after the historic event in Genesis 3, which resulted in the first humans (Adam and Eve) to relocate. This was invariably the first human migration and since then migration in its different shades and gravity has been going on. In Nigeria, migration dates back to the pre-colonial period. Virtually every ethnicity in the country has experienced a form of migration at one time or the other. Migration takes place across regions, borders, and cultures with a variety of causative factors in play.

The late twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries have recorded a high level of human migration that consists of patterns that are both extraordinary and multifaceted. I will discuss the considerable attention that has been given to these in migration scholarship. Similarly, the key performers and the various consequences of internal migration in Nigeria have been carefully explored. Some of these scholars have painstakingly worked on the solutions to the numerous issues arising from internal migration in the country (also see the next section). This article joins this solution-seeking discourse in quest of the viable ways of tackling insurgent challenges that are associated with internal migration of, particularly, the Fulani ethnic group in the country.

From a careful examination, this article puts forward that the solutions hitherto are in essence rooted in the human instinct and lack the potency to resolve migratory insurgent challenges. Thus, it proposes a theonomous counterintuitive strategy which consists of tripod techniques that, trustworthily, possess the potency of resolving these challenges. This strategy is developed from the Epistle to the Ephesians with a few supplements from related texts. Given that internal migration in Nigeria and its attendant insurgent challenges, which Ephesians is engaged to address are societal and ethnic by nature, the article employs Vernon K. Robbins' conversionist, reformist, and utopian ideologies in his "social and cultural texture" interpretative approach. Hence, it reads the epistle as a social rhetoric (masterpiece) exclusively designed for the transformation of the society in light of its configured divine principles.

The article is structured into four parts. The first focuses on the migration indices up to the present time. This section establishes the reality of migration in general and internal migration in Nigeria in particular, to serve as a foundation for the subsequent discussions. The second part devotes attention to the contemporary attendant insurgent challenges of internal migration in Nigeria. The third surveys and appraises the hitherto solutions to the migratory insurgent challenges. The fourth section, the crux of the article, explores Ephesians to explain and advance the theonomous counterintuitive strategy.

## **1. The contemporary representativeness of migration**

In a variety of shades and phases, migration along with its natural outcome, immigration, is both prehistoric, historic, and universal (Bellwood 2013:2; see also Herrera and Garcia-Bertrand 2018). Both in the prehistoric and historic times, migration is considered to be a permanent translocation – a “movement of all or part of a population to inhabit a territory separate from that in which it was previously based” (Bellwood 2013:2; Linhard & Parsons 2019:4). Such a movement from one location or region to another to establish a new residence (permanent or temporary) within the same country is considered to be an internal migration (Oyeniyi 2013:13; Theresa & Uroko 2019:97). Historically, Bukola Adeyemi Oyeniyi (2013:14-17) surveys and categorises Nigeria’s internal migration into pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary trajectories. During the pre-colonial era, Oyeniyi appraises, migration was the translocation of the dominant ethnic groups (the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa people) from outside Nigeria into the country and a further relocation to villages and settlements in the interior. In the prehistoric and earlier historic times, which form part of the pre-colonial era here in Nigeria, such migrations were into virgin lands or “regions that had no prior inhabitants” where the migrants in question established the original settlements (Bellwood 2013:3). Though socio-economic, geographical, ecological, agricultural precepts are among the fundamental factors responsible for these (Bellwood 2015:59), it can be said that such migrations were simply an unconscious extension of God’s skewing and scattering of the primordial mono-linguistic people in Genesis 11:1-9 to continue the expansion of the human race and filling the earth (Gen. 1:28).

During the colonial era, migration was more of what Bellwood describes as movement into regions already having populations in residence (Bellwood 2013:3). Oyeniyi (2013:17-18) notes that during this period, both inter- and intragroup migration was rampant and three key factors, namely religion, colonialism, and western education, served as the impetus to its extensiveness. He narrates further that at that time, the inherent administrative authorities of both Christianity and Islam posted their preachers and teachers to different locations (mostly the interior remote or rural areas) to make and educate disciples for their religions. This created a sort of recurrent oscillated migration between the urban and rural areas. Similarly, the establishment of the earliest educational institutions in the urban centres orchestrated migration from the rural to urban settlements for the acquirement of basic education. Furthermore, for the sake of business and economic adventures, people moved from one location to another to settle and open shops by which they built their capacities and promoted the welfare of the initial inhabitants through bringing goods and services within their reach. Migration in this period can be said to be characterized by naturalness. The well-being of either the migrants or their host communities or both was spontaneously central in the initiative as well as the entire enterprise.

In the post-colonial period, according to Oyeniyi (2013:19), "...the location of industries, government offices, public and private agencies, infrastructural and developmental projects in urban centres ... continued to draw migrants, especially young ones, from rural areas". According to Godwin O. Ikwuyatum (2016:117), "... [This period] witnessed heightened labour migration from several parts of the country to the main administrative and economic centers (*sic*) of the country and to more varied destinations than ever before". The economic buoyancy resulting from the 1970s affluence in the petroleum industry along with its attendant developmental indices occasioned a large movement of people in the rural areas to the township in search for better life. Similarly, the decline in the 1980s and the compelling policy adjustments by the government and private sectors caused a significant movement back to rural areas due to the associated challenges of the economic decline (Oyeniyi 2013:19-20). Ikwuyatum (2016:117) substantiates this with specifics and date:

... The changes in the economic and political policies of the country resulted in changes in the pattern of intraregional labour migration

in Nigeria. One, in particular, is the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in June 1986. SAP dictated a shift from the official policy of full employment to substantially reduced government spending on critical services, such as health, education, and housing. This created a greater tendency for persons to emigrate.

This caused a mammoth migration from the cities and urban centres to other locations, especially the rural areas where the majority returned to farming, petty trading and the like.

Going further from the post-colonial era, Steven J. Gold and Stephenie J. Nawyn (2015:1) observe that the contemporary period is characterized "... by an unparalleled level of human migration ..." and its patterns are similarly unprecedented in several ways. The patterns, the nature of the actors, and the processes of the migration are dynamic, spatial, and complex (Ikwuyatum 2016:117-18). According to Ikwuyatum (2016:118),

The recent survey by the National Population Commission (NPC, 2010) ... revealed that migrants and return migrants showed a youthful age structure, that is, migrants between 10 to 34 years dominate the migration process in Nigeria ... The NPC (2010) survey further showed that migrants with no formal education, ranked highest (27%), followed by those with primary education (21.3%) and the least are people with Postgraduate qualification (0.6%).

Ikwuyatum (2016:118) continues that the bulk of this migration was from the northern to the Middle Belt and southern parts of the country. More than a few states in these regions have more than two-fifths of their overall populations as internal migrants.<sup>1</sup> The volume of internal migration in the

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<sup>1</sup>In another parlance, Ikwuyatum puts forward that, incongruously, the volume of internal migration in the country is inversely proportional between the Hausa-Fulani north and the other ethnic groups in the Middle Belt and southern regions. In his computation, the volume of internal migration in general in the middle and lower regions of the country is more than four times the one in the northern regions. However, this volume by gender is about 2:1 female vs. male ratio in the northern regions and 1:2

contemporary era can be said to have risen quite significantly. Scholars have associated this with several factors (Asueni & Godknows 2019:82-93; Ikwuyatum 2016:115; Kulcsár 2015:28-37; Oyeniya 2013:17-18) that are not crucial to the thrust of this paper. They are, hence, being discounted.

Significant efforts have been made in migration scholarship to narrow discussions and analyses on internal migration in Nigeria. Several scholars have paid closer attention to the key actors of internal migration in the country. The Fulani pastoralists and their internal migration indices are particularly selected to illustrate the key actors and their insurgent activities resulting from their migration to their host communities which are at the receiving end in each case of insurgency. The rationale behind the selection of this ethnic group is that their internal migration paradigm will, for the most part, enhance the attainment of the foremost objective of this article.

In allusion to Tauxier and Fricke, Agbegbedia Oghenevwoke Anthony (2014:57) states that the Fulani ethnic group originated from the plateau region in the north-central region of Guinea known as Fouta Djallon, from which they migrated massively to other parts of Africa including Nigeria. Another version traces the origin of the Fulani people to the Arabian lineage in North Africa and the Middle East (Falola and Genova 2009:135; also see Enor *et al.*, 2019:266). Within the Nigerian context, Nwaoga C. Theresa and Favour Chukwumeka Uroko (2019:97) note that the Fulani people originated from the northern part of the country from where they migrated to other regions. This internal migration has a long history. Anthony (2014:58) relates that at the dawn of the twentieth century, the Fulani migration to the Middle Belt and southern regions of the country was seasonal. At the end of the rainy seasons, they were mostly sited in different places in their destinations moving in the reserves in search of greener meadows for their livestock. Likewise, at the beginning of the new farming season, they were sited migrating back to the north. As years went by, considerable affability between them and the initial inhabitants in the

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male-female ratio in the Middle Belt and southern regions (see 118-19). An interesting plausible inference can be drawn from these statistics by Ikwuyatu: related female gender motivational factors which require further investigation and analysis are more predominant and compelling in the northern parts of the country compared to their counterparts in the Middle Belt and southern regions. Marriage, womanly labour and socio-economic activities are possible insinuations.

various communities was developed. They therefore began to settle more perpetually in their migrating destinations (host communities). Nonetheless, this later development came along with some unpredictable challenges in the hereafter (see the next section for these).

## **2. Contemporary attendant insurgent challenges of internal migration**

The Middle Belt province has recorded a considerably high population of the Fulani pastoralists in the latter part of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries consequent to the age-long human phenomenon, namely migration. In more specific terms, Anthony (2014:57-61) notes that, as a result of migration, the Fulani people in their numbers have penetrated and diffused Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Niger, Kaduna (especially the southern region), Kwara, Kogi and other states at the Western province of the country. Scholars have severally and sufficiently proven that insurgency, and especially, the one been perpetrated by the Fulani ethnic group, is very well intertwined with migration. Idowu Adetayo Johnson and Biodun Taofik Okunola (2017:52) are so categorical that, pastoralism, and more particularly that of the contemporary migrants in the Middle Belt and southern regions of Nigeria, is a new phase of terrorism in the country.<sup>2</sup> For Omilusi Mike Opeyemi (2016:48-74), these cattle grazers are roving bands of terrorists rather than innocuous nomads. On the one hand, migration is an inescapable reality of life, but on the other hand and especially in the contemporary backdrop, it is being accompanied by varied issues of identity, space, and insecurity or vicious conflicts (Olugbenga 2013:77-81; also see Schmid 2016:3-4,13-14,41-46). In March 2017, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State declared that the state was being attacked several times from Fulani herders who migrated to the

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<sup>2</sup>A noteworthy inference needs to be made here. From Johnson and Okunola's retrospection, it is worth noting that other insurgent activities around the country are limited to some localities or regions. The migrant Fulani herdsmen insurgency is national. It pervades virtually every locale in the Middle Belt and southern regions. (Are you sure about this? I would guess that Boko Haram has killed more people than the Fulani crises.) It is more widespread, often hostile, and has claimed more lives than every other crisis in the nation. It comes in a variety of ways ranging from kidnapping, raping or sexual abuse of victims, the use of more sophisticated weapons, and continues to increase day by day.

region from the northern parts of the country (International Crisis Group 2017:7).

Historically, the primal Fulani migrants had a peaceful and symbiotic relationship with their host farming communities; in exchange for the grazing rights, the herders' cattle fertilized the farmlands of the host communities in preparation for the subsequent farming season. Contrary to this, the contemporary relationship, more especially in the second decade of the twenty-first century, is unfriendly (International Crisis Group 2017:1; also see Ogbette *et al.*, 2018:46 for the more historical development of this tension).<sup>3</sup> Various statistics show that thousands of Nigerians are being brutally killed on account of this migratory herdsman insurgency (see the references to Enor, Ogbette, and others below).

Frank N. Enor, *et al.* (2019:270), report that, since 2015, these migratory malevolent acts have become a monthly affair. In 2015 alone, 97, 368, 635, 431, 267, 276, 81, and 136 were killed in May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December respectively. Afamefuna Samuel Ogbette, *et al.* 2018:46), narrate that, so far, according to newspaper reports (which are often editorially tampered with), over 60,000 people have been killed on account of Fulani herdsman attacks. According to Abdulbarkindo Adamu and Alupsen Ben 2017:23-37), in Benue State alone, in less than three years, 1 January 2014 through to 31 August 2017, 14 of the 23 local government areas of the state were attacked by the migratory Fulani herdsman. A total of 4,194 were killed and 2,957 were injured. A total of 195,576 homes and 30 church

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<sup>3</sup>From the report of this International Crisis Group, two things are worth noting. First, the savageness orchestrated by the migratory Fulani people and its attendant relational effects is occurring in the Christian dominated regions of the country. They are taking place in 22 of the 36 states of the country and these 22 are within the central and southern regions. Second, it is evident that the Fulani-Farmers' unfriendly relationship is alarmingly increasing and following the various factors that aggravate the tensions, their evolution especially with respect to their origins, their spread and human toll, the inadequate responses by the government, security agencies, etc., there is a greater tendency of a much more heightened unfriendliness than what is currently happening. Take for instance, the very way the Christians perceive what is happening and the supposed necessary measures they adopt (see the latter part of this section, pages 6-7 below, for some of these) have greater capability of exacerbating the animosity and its repercussions.



buildings were destroyed. Over 23,000 were displaced and no fewer than 100 women were abducted and sexually abused variously. They severally stress that the atrocities of the migratory Fulani herdsmen were horrendous and their victims were overwhelmingly Christians and non-Muslims (see Theresa and Uroko 2019:102, Enor, *et al.* 2019:269-78, Akerjiir 2018:17-21, and Afolabi 2016:12-15 for the incidences and stats in Plateau and other states). For Ningxin Li (2018:1), the Middle Belt region and, more particularly, Benue, Plateau and Taraba states are the most impacted states in the country.<sup>4</sup>

A very critical resultant effect of these unfortunate incidences is the rifted human relations created between Christians and the Fulani ethnic group and the Muslims in general. Ogbette, *et al.*, (2018:50) captures this thus: “Violent crisis in Nigeria ... have created a rift in human relations ... Fulani herdsmen and farmers’ crisis (*sic*) have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other ... [and] leading to new trends in the polarization of communities”. Upon their initial migration to a community, Anastasia Sandra Akerjiir (2018:41-46) observes that the Fulani people were often quite peaceful. They often went to the head(s) of their host communities to request and obtain permission to graze their herds in their neighbourhood(s). On the contrary, Akerjiir continues, the terroristic Fulani herdsmen of the twenty-first century were characteristically ferocious, insolent and confrontational. They often carry sophisticated weapons and rather than grazing around like the earlier set of herders, they have preferred grazing on people’s farmlands at will without permission, and destroyed food and cash crops. They often kill and destroy whoever questions their unbecoming attitudes. These and several other malicious treatments of farmers created a serious relational problem between them (also see Nzeh 2015:21). Similarly, from a more theological perspective, Moses Audi (2019:191-192), in allusion to several others, attests that in less than a decade into the twenty-first century, the Christian-Muslim relationship became increasingly more difficult. The former cordiality had given way to resentment.

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<sup>4</sup>It is worth pointing out here that the farmers are to blame for some of these crises. Joshua Bagudu Boyi observes that sometimes the Christians are the actual perpetrators of the violence.(80)

### 3. The solutions to the migratory insurgent challenges hitherto

Solutions to the challenges of insurgencies that are associated with migration abound. Scholars have offered numerous and varying proposals ranging from social, economic, security, governmental, judicial, etc. as solutions. For Johnson and Okunola (2017:51-53), the major solution to this incessant migratory menace ravaging the country lies with the government of Nigeria. In their opinion, a National Livestock Development Policy should be promulgated as that would be a viable route of resolving the migratory insurgent challenges (also see Ogbette *et al.*, 2018:52 for other things the government should do). It is worth noting here that any presumption that the solution to the current migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria lies with the government is highly an unlikely supposition. The governments of Nigeria are, expressly, known for setting up high powered technical committees and developing quintessential policies but failing in implementation. Take, for instance, according to the International Crisis Group (2017:10):

Soon after assuming office in 2015, President Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to formulate a comprehensive livestock development plan including measures to curb farmer-herder clashes. In August 2015, a FMARD committee recommended short-, medium- and long-term strategies, including the development of grazing reserves and stock routes . . . On 3 March 2016 . . . Agriculture Minister Audu Ogbeh announced that government was sending a bill to the National Assembly to prohibit cattle from roaming in cities and villages. He added that the government had ordered fast-growing grass from Brazil to produce “massive hectares of grasses”, which would be ready for consumption “within the next three months”. More than a year later [and till the time of this article], there has been no further word about the cattle banning bill and the promised grass.

A lot can be read between the lines regarding the unexplainable demise of this proposal. Thus, it is evident that the government of Nigeria, in particular, is bound to fail in terms of taking adequate measures to tackle the contemporary

migratory insurgent challenges. The solution, therefore, does not lie on the government whether at the Federal, State, or Local level. The effect of their failure irrespective of the unexplainable factors underlying such will be massive.

Li (2018:8-12) proposes a couple of strategies: the “Forcing and Competing”, “Win-Win”, “Compromising”, “Avoiding”, and “Accommodating” strategies and the “Transformative Mediation Process” as a conflict intervention panacea (also see Ozoigbo 2019:276-78 who proposes a couple of other solutions including restructuring and community policing). These proposals are essentially deficient in providing a substantial solution to the migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria. The “Forcing and Competing” strategy which suggests the use of force by the government to enforce law and order, for instance, is not realistic given that one of the parties might comply while the other may not. If, for example, the Fulani herdsmen could come out during a 24-hour curfew at the peak of one of the crises and attacked some communities and get away with it with no arrest nor prosecution despite the massive array of the law enforcement agencies, this strategy is not realistic (some people in some crisis areas who prefer to be anonymous have testified to this). Similarly, the “Avoiding” strategy which encourages the evasion of conflict situations only has a partial and temporal solution.

Additionally, the “Transformative Mediation” strategy will just be another “way forward” that has failed many times in different places. The common scenario is that one of the parties often makes efforts to keep their part of the bargain but the other party who may have a subjective idea of peace, often do not keep their part of the bargain. Peace resolutions and agreements were reached more than once in several places, but the Fulani herdsmen turned back and launched attacks on the other ethnic groups and communities. A most recent incident attests to this. The Christian host communities in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State have been experiencing serial attacks, killings, and destruction of property by the Fulani herdsmen in recent years. Interestingly, on April 26, 2020, the various religious, community and ethnic groups’ leaders were gathered and a reconciliation meeting was held where it was agreed that peace should reign from then henceforth. A number of the Fulani people were in attendance. However, quite surprisingly and disheartening in the evening of that same day, the Fulani people launched an

attack in one of the communities and no fewer than five people were killed. On May 12, 2020, the local television media houses, Channels Television and the African Independent Television (AIT), for example, reported another attack in which not less than 15 people were killed in *Gonan Rogo* settlement. In an AIT correspondent's interview with the villagers on May 13, 2020, the villagers testified that the attack was carried out by the Fulani people. It is noteworthy that in some other instance, some Christian militants have also violated peace treaties. Driven by vengeance, it is reported that several attacks were lunched on Muslim communities in Plateau during which many Muslims were killed and a large number were displaced (Boyi 2020:85). Thus, it is obvious that the popular peace dialogue fora in Nigeria and especially the regions predominantly affected by migratory insurgent attacks are essentially political displays that lack the fundamental elements to resolve the ravaging migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the host communities and victims of migratory insurgent challenges who are mostly from the Christian fold have devised some solutions in response to the blatant adversatives threatening them. Coming from the backdrop that the current migratory insurgent challenges are subtle forms of Jihad intended to subdue and forcefully convert the inhabitants to Islam, "Communities in the middle belt and south have formed self-defence vigilante groups" for reprisal attacks (International Crisis Group 8). The Fulani herdsmen were ordered to vacate the southeast territories or face the full wrath of the people of Biafra in April 2016, and the National Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) President, Reverend Olusola Ayokunle, issued a threat in May 2017 that, "If the government fails to stop the provocation by the Fulani (herdsmen), they should be prepared for war. No ethnic group has a monopoly of violence and

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<sup>5</sup>In much broader sense of conflict resolution, forgiveness and reconciliation ideologies as psychological pathways of transforming conflict and building peace among warring parties have been proposed. To achieve these, Hagitte Gal-Ed (2009:97-150) suggests the application of "ARTiculation" – "a grounded theory of art as dialogue-based process of realization and transformation. Augustine Nwoye (2009:vii &121-36) suggests the promotion of forgiveness through frequent organization of restorative conferencing. These proposals are palpable except that, according to the editors of this volume, they are designed principally for "those who are tired of war, hatred, and similar dilemmas that continue to plague all peoples". Also see Nel Noddings' care theory proposal (2018:295) which is designed to provide guidance toward the "establishment, preservation, and deepening of cooperative human relations.

no ethnic group should be a monster to others” (International Crisis Group 2017:8-9).

Similarly, Audi (2019:190-93) narrates that there is a significant change in attitude and response to the insurgency by the Christians. Instead of considering the present insurgent challenges as a clarion call to hearty spiritual awakening and rising to her responsibility of evangelizing the dying world, the persistent attacks from the Fulani herdsmen are breathing hatred into the hearts of the Christians and encouraging violent responses. Consequently, retaliation and the circle of violence, as well as the expressions of resentment, are the order of the day. Some have settled for the imprecatory prayers and fervently praying for the misfortune of their attackers and all who subject them or other Christians to grief and desolation.

From a closer examination of the solutions so far, whether proposed or applied, this article holds that the solutions are all rooted in the human instinct and, just as it is noted above, they evidentially lack the potency to effectually tackle the problem of migratory insurgencies. Donald Grant (2018:1-3) describes instinct in general as a basic and innate part of the human make-up which is very well buried in the human frame and inner self. It is the in-built might that is responsible for the predominant human actions. The killer instinct, in particular, is that “dark side” or “split [twisted human] personality” that is characteristically violent. It is the origin of human aggression and the urge to kill a fellow human being like it would be done of an ordinary fly, a mouse, or any lower animal.

Three things regarding human instinct and its ripple effects merit highlighting here:

First, the actual orchestrator of human instinct is the Adamic nature (configuration or make-up) of humankind. Grant’s description of the “dark side” or “split [twisted human] personality” can be linked to Paul’s characterization of the law of the mind that makes humans captive to the natural law of the sin that exists in them (Rom. 7:17-23). Frank J. Matera (2010:176-78) labels this as the human “*egō, ego*” which is “indentured [being slavishly-masterfully contracted] to sin,” the inner power that works contrary to anything good.

Second, the stimulants of human instinct are, by the same token, associated with the Adamic nature (configuration or make-up) of humankind. In his description, Grant (2018:3) portrays the killer instinct as being housed in the base structures of the human brain, the part which is sometimes referred to as the reptilian or crocodile brain. This killing intuition is being triggered when the human's "normal controls and inhibitions are degraded or removed ..." by some factors or influences. This is most predominant when the killer perceives the prey as "subhuman", a judgement being initiated by the social strata, colour, or religious affinity of the prey/victim. Such a dehumanizing view of a fellow human being is a product of the perverted human nature. It can be argued that the anger, insult, and the address of a fellow human as "fool" which Jesus condemns in Matthew 5:21-22 are tantamount to dehumanization that is rooted in sin. The nature of the reward here signifies Jesus' disavowal of such a reptilian (crocodilian) attitude.

It is against this backdrop that this article proposes a theonomous counterintuitive strategy by which, it strongly holds, insurgency in general and the one associated with internal migration in Nigeria in particular, can be effectually tackled. This then leads to the final section, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy as a panacea.

#### **4. The Theonomous counterintuitive strategy as panacea**

The term counterintuitive is derived from the words "counter" and "intuitive". The prefix "counter" denotes opposition. For example, it indicates an action that is or goes contrary to the normal action of the main element in question (Webster 2004:296). The term "intuitive" is an adjectival form of intuition which is used to refer to an instinctive action<sup>6</sup> (Webster 2004:668). Thus, the term counterintuitive is used here to denote that which is contrary to expectations or that which is not in accordance with the conventional way, feeling, or imagination. It particularly refers to thoughts and actions that are contrary to the dictates of the human intuition. Similarly, the term theonomy denotes the state of affairs being governed or directed by God. Thus, the

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<sup>6</sup>An instinctive action is "An inborn pattern of behavior (*sic*),"an innate motivation or impulse that is characteristic of a thing or person and "is often a response to specific environmental stimuli" (Morris 1969:675).

phrase “Theonomous Counterintuitive Strategy” refers to the counterinsurgent approach that does not follow the dictates of the human instinct. It rather follows God’s principles and directives in the Scripture. This is, particularly, applicable to Christians, those who are in Christ Jesus. God’s principles and directions in this article are drawn from the Epistle to the Ephesians, the encapsulated book of God’s philosophies, ideals, and methods of accomplishment which are, above all, functional for humankind.

Since issues of internal migration in Nigeria, including migratory insurgent challenges, are societal and ethnic by nature, the conversionist, reformist, and utopian ideologies of Robbins’ social and cultural texture analysis of a biblical text are employed to achieve the objective of the article (Robbins 2003:147-50; also see *Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (SRI); and De Waal 2010:51-52). The conversionist social rhetoric ideology holds that the world is certainly corrupt and full of evil because the people in the world are corrupt. Hence, the transformation of the people is proportionally the transformation of the world (Robbins 2003:147; De Waal 2010:51). The focus of this ideology is the transformation of the corrupt people. The reformist social rhetoric ideology places emphasis on the social structures of the society. It sees them as corrupt and the only solution lies in the transformation of these structures. It sees the solution as rooted in some supernaturally-given insights (Robbins 2003:149; De Waal 2010:52). The utopian social rhetoric ideology believes in the possibility of a new order in which evil is curbed and, in view of the shortfall of other principles, it places emphasis on the application of the divinely orchestrated principles as a more viable means of realizing such an order (Robbins 2003:149; De Waal 2010:52).

Principally, the discussion in this article is grounded in the complementarity of these ideologies. All three identify the corrupt settings that require transformation. The article, therefore, identifies the scenario of the internal migratory insurgent activities as the inappropriate state of affairs that requires urgent and more viable resolutions. Similarly, the three ideologies recommend transformation as the way forward. The conversionist ideology only recommends the transformation of the society via the people. The reformist ideology goes further to point out how this can be realized by noting the unusualness of the transformation element. It categorizes the element as “the supernaturally-given insight”. The utopian ideology particularizes these

supernaturally-given insights as divine principles and mechanisms which, here, are taken to be the Scripture. Thus, for this paper, the unusualness of the transformation element is the counterintuitive character of the strategy in view and its divineness is the theonomous aspect, the divinely orchestrated principles designed for Christians in the Scripture. Hence, the article reads Ephesians as a section of the Scripture which calls for an all-inclusive transformation. Consequent to this, therefore, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy in Ephesians is regarded as consisting of three techniques: the Perceptive, Reactive, and Prayer-Resistant techniques acronymically labelled as the “PRP-R” techniques. These are as follows:

#### **4.1 The perceptive technique**

The perceptive technique of theonomous counterintuitive strategy for countering migratory insurgent challenges has to do with discernment, and particularly, the Christians’ view of the migrant insurgents (the migrant Fulani herdsmen in more specific terms). In this section, emphasis will be placed on what these aspects of perception should be following the theonomous philosophy inscribed in Ephesians.

According to Ephesians, the Christian perception of the migrant insurgents (the Fulani herdsmen in particular) should be theonomous, the very way God perceives them. From the author’s narrative in the doctrinal section (chapters 1-3), before the salvation he wrought in Christ Jesus, God, from a standpoint, saw that the entire human race was “outside of Christ”. All human beings, once upon a time, existed “outside of Christ” in a monarchical atmosphere, the realm of a ruler and an abstract determinative force that paranormally sways his subjects to act in opposition to God and all that relate to him (2:1-3). While in their deadness and brutal enslavement in this realm, God perceived them as “helpless innocent slaves<sup>7</sup> in need of redemption”, thus, he prehistorically proposed to save them (1:3-14) by the demonstration of his incomparably great power and the subjection of everything under the feet of Christ (1:19-20).

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<sup>7</sup>This term is used here to refer to useful hard-working people who are being dominated and blindly forced to go the opposite direction and do the wrong things which they ought not to do (Rom. 7:14-24).



The author goes further in 2:4-8 to depict the lenses through which God perceived the human race in that depraved state: the lenses of love (2:4 and kindness in 2:7), mercy (2:4), and grace (2:5, 8). Love, mercy, and grace (along with others to be discussed subsequently) are, therefore, counterintuitive characters. Given that “mercy” and “love” in 2:4 both describe the character of God that occasioned his response to the deplorable condition of humanity (Thielman 2010:130, O’Brien 1999:164), it is logical to read the expressions, “πλούσιος ὢν ἐν ἐλέει, because he is rich in mercy” and “διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ, because of his great love”, as depicting the cause of his response contrary to the wrath of God which would have naturally been expected (Thielman 2010:132). Similarly, in 2:5 and 8, the author states that the salvation of those who were awaiting the full wrath of God is an outcome of his grace. This is another causal expression specifying another factor that caused God’s contrary-to-the-normal response (Arnold 2010:135-36). To Thielman (2010:141-42), the grace here does not only provide the foundation for the salvation, by the very way the author positions the term, grace, near the front of the clause, thereby giving it special emphasis, it can be said that it is the grace of God (the character which he demonstrated) that saved the people.

Furthermore, in the exhortative section, the author contrasts the current and the previous statuses of his readers and insistently instructs them that their present standing should be distinctive (4:17-24). His characterization of the Gentiles’ way of life here recalls and avidly elaborates their earlier categorization in 2:1-3. According to him, the activities of those who are outside of Christ (the contemporary Fulani insurgents, for example) are products of futile thinking, darkened understanding, and hardened hearts (4:17-19). By this, invariably, the author directs those who have become dearly beloved children of God (4:1) on how to view their previous life and those who are still in that camp. This describes the existence of the “Gentiles” under the influence of the world-rulers and abstract determinative forces of 1:19-20, 2:2, and 6:12. Consequently, for Thielman (2010:294), “... [They] are certainly culpable and pitiable ... They are suffering, but they are unaware ... their hopelessness has left them with nothing to live for but their greed. Their greed has, in turn, produced in them all kinds of bizarre behaviour”.

With this, therefore, Ephesians spells out the superlative way of perceiving those who exist outside of Christ and the roots of their activities. Situating this in the context of migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria with the Fulani herdsmen as a case of study, the Christians in the host communities should adopt this perceptive technique. Instead of identifying the insurgents in their communities as migrant “Fulani Herdsmen” who invade, destroy their property, and kill their loved ones, they should see them in the light of the characterizations above.<sup>8</sup> They are really in need of help. Instead of responding to their malicious activities from their human instincts, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy should be adopted and the first technique is to perceive them the very way God does. The very way Christians perceive the insurgent Fulani herdsmen in their communities plays a significant role in their counterinsurgency efforts in the contemporary setting.

## **4.2 The reactive technique**

The reactive technique of the theonomous counterintuitive strategy for defying migratory insurgent challenges has to do with response, and particularly, the most effectual approach of responding to these challenges. Contrary to the instinctive solutions highlighted above, Ephesians offers the reactive technique that constitutes the theonomous counterintuitive strategy. This technique predominantly involves the exhibition of the full Christian identity before, during and after any insurgent attack. This exhibition has three interrelated workings which are as follows.

### ***The efficient effectuation of ecclesial graces***

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<sup>8</sup>It is worth mentioning here that the contemporary Fulani insurgents’ vicious treatment of Christians can be analogically compared with Saul of Tarsus who was a terror to the early church to the extent that he desired nothing short of tutoring Christians and, perhaps, stamping out Christianity in Jerusalem and environs (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2). In his ravaging and quest to destroy Christianity, God perceived him as a useful hard-working person who was being evilly dominated and blindly forced to go the opposite direction and do the wrong things which he was not supposed to do. Hence, he was converted and he became Paul, the greatest Apostle of in the history of the church. Such a view of the internal migratory Fulani herdsmen is recommended. The likelihood of some of them becoming like Paul should not be relegated.

The first is the efficient effectuation of ecclesial graces. Ephesians 4:7 declares that, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, each Christian has been given grace to be effectuated while in this life. The grace (gift or enablement) to evangelize (4:11), for instance, is given primarily for "... [the never-ending engagement] in the preaching of the gospel" (O'Brien 1999:299) to make the redemptive message known, especially to non-Christians (Arnold 2010:259, Thielman 2010:274) and win (gain) them over to the Christian faith (Hoehner 2002:543). To Ruth M. Melkonian-Hoover and Lyman A. Kellstedt (2019:3), "Activism-the commitment to spreading the 'Good News' through evangelism and missions" is central in the cardinal belief criteria that define evangelicalism and the Christian faith". The very unfortunate scenario in the contemporary church is that the grace of evangelism is being neglected. According to Audi (2019:190-93), up to the end of the twentieth century (prior to the year 2000), Christians in Nigeria conceived Muslim opposition as an inevitable challenge and persisted in their evangelistic efforts to win the Muslims over to the Christian faith. On the contrary, in less than a decade into the twenty-first century, Christians lost their previous evangelistic virtues and turned to worldly responses.<sup>9</sup> Invariably, this paradigm shift has created a barrier for preaching to and converting the Muslims to the Christian faith. The counterintuitive logic here is this, with the right perception of the insurgents in their communities (as pointed out above), rather than going for any worldly way and against all other impulses, Christians are to resolve to make the redemptive message of Christ known to them. This is a working under the control of God and it has the potency of transforming the insurgents. In the opinion of the Institute for the Study of Insurgent Warfare (2014:10), the viable way of engaging and overcoming an enemy is not defined by the effort toward annihilating the enemy or destroying the enemy's property or belongings, it is rather defined by the strategy to make the enemy cease to be an enemy. The only basis for any insurgent to transform and cease to be an insurgent is for the insurgent to

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<sup>9</sup>In quite specific terms, Audi states that the various ways the church is currently responding to insurgency in Nigeria are worldly. These ways include (1) the application of situational ethics rather than the true teachings of the Bible, (2) the postulation, adoption, and implementation of the theory of "Self-Defence", (3) the retaliatory or affront attacks against the identified enemies, (4) the practice of imprecatory prayers, (5) the impulse to appease the masses rather than God and his sovereign will, interest or pleasure, and (6) the return of many to fetish practices in search for powers to protect themselves (see the reference to Audi in the text).

enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ as this alone would guarantee the change in the way of thinking and behaviour of the insurgent (Arnold 2019:292-93). The efficient effectuation of ecclesial graces such as evangelism is a crucial technique in the realization of this transformation.

### ***The act of living out the elevated status of the Christian***

The second proaction in the reactive technique is the act of living out the elevated status of the Christian. Imageries portraying the status of the believer in Christ abound in Ephesians. For example, 5:1 designates believers in Christ as “τέκνα ἀγαπητά, beloved children” of God. Thielman (2010:321) observes that this designation goes back to their characterization as adopted children of God in 1:5 whom he chose to unconditionally show his rich mercy, great love, and abundant grace (2:4; 3:17, 19; 5:2, 25) and by virtue of their adoption, these characters should pattern their behaviours. Harold W. Hoehner (2002:196-97) expatiates that under the Roman law, the one adopted does not only become a bona fide member of the new family setting, the adoptee also inherits the *patria potestas*’ position (the absolute authority of the adopter) and acquires new status, privilege, and property not available under the former setting. In the context of Ephesians, Christians are the adoptees, the life outside of Christ under the dominion of the ruler of the Kingdom of the Air and the abstract determinative force in 2:2 is the former setting, and God is the adopter. The *patria potestas*’ position Christians inherit is the transcendent position along with Christ in the heavenly realms (2:6, cf. 1:20-22). Because of this new status, they acquire the privilege of being indwelt by the Triune God (2:22; 3:16-17; 1:14; 4:6), the privilege of the working of God’s power (the incomparably great power, 1:19) in them (3:16, 20; 4:7; 6:10), and the privilege of being fathered by God (2:18; 3:14; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23) whose characters are pacifying and emulative (1:2; 2:14-15, 17, 6:15, 23). Thus, according to Ephesians, Christians are required to live out the new status they have attained and the privileges they have acquired in their daily living and in every facet of their lives. An example might suffice here.

Paul’s missional or apostolic efforts in Acts 16:6-15 (his effectuation of the apostolic and evangelistic graces) very well illustrate this reactive technique. According to the narrator, the missionary team journeyed through the region of Asia Minor. Under the total guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were prevented from preaching the gospel in that region (16:6-8). This illustrates the

functioning of the Triune God dwelling, working, and filling them as indicated in Ephesians 1:14; 2:22; 3:16-17; 4:6; and 5:18. This also portrays the keenness of, especially, Apostle Paul and his total submission to the workings of the Triune God. Similarly, the phrase “they tried to enter Bithynia” (16:7) is understood here to depict Paul's impetus enrobed in his zealously to preach the gospel everywhere. It is worth noting here that the passion and zealously to preach the gospel are good qualities, but they can sometimes be directed wrongly when the human instinct (even the good impulse) is in control rather than the Holy Spirit. The praiseworthy thing here is that this missionary team submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit rather than their intuition.

Under that divine providence, they arrived at Philippi where they suffered brutal and unjust treatments (16:22-24), which illustrate the various unexpected insurgent predicaments contemporary Christians experience. According to the narrator, while in the prison, Paul and Silas were practically counterintuitive (16:25). Instinctively, Paul and Silas would have been discouraged, doubted the genuineness of their overall or present mission, or questioned God about his leadership and sovereignty following the disgrace of being stripped of their clothes and severely beaten in a public square. Instead of these and, perhaps, other forms of natural human response, they prayed and sang songs of praise to God. In the same vein, when the gates were turned open, instead of impulsively taking advantage to get out of the prison since, as would be assumed, that was an answered prayer, they remained. Furthermore, they showed the jailer that they were more interested in his safety than their freedom (16:27-28). These combined theonomous counterintuitive activities occasioned the transformation of the jailer and his household (16:30-34). It is interesting to note, the history of Paul's apostolic activities shows that theonomous counterintuitive performances attracted a variety of miracles. Although it was not absolutely a persecution-free endeavour, God ceaselessly proved that he is most powerful, wisest, and was in full control of all situations which he always topstitched for the good of his faithful servants and the glory of his pleasure. This is exactly what happened in Philippi. The ability of this missionary team to live out the ideal Christian life as specified in Ephesians caused the members of the team to establish Christianity in Philippi afterwards.

### ***The concretization of the faith that extinguishes all the flaming arrows of the devil***

The third and last proaction in the reactive technique is the concretization of the faith that extinguishes all the firing arrows of the devil (6:16). The subject of faith occurs eight times in Ephesians (1:15, 2:8, 3:12, 17, 4:5, 4:13, 6:16, and 6:23). In four of these uses (2:8, 3:12, 17, & 6:16), faith is portrayed as “the means or instrumentality by which the verbal action ... is accomplished” (Wallace 1996:125). In 6:16 particularly, it is the metaphorical shield reminiscent of the ancient Roman foot soldier’s buckler by which “all the flaming arrows (attacks) of the evil one” can be extinguished irrespective of their viciousness or deadliness. According to Clinton E. Arnold (2010:497,294), Satan, being the evil one here and the principal opposing leader ranges a variety of forces against the church to reassert his dominion over her members. He also aims at destroying them physically to hamper the redemptive mission of the church in the world. By way of inference, all the powers (physical or spiritual whether known or not) and structures responsible for the insurgent activities against Christians constitute this variety of forces in the contemporary setting. The killings and protracted destruction of Christians and their property as well as the inexpressible hardships attending those who survive any incidence form part of the flaming arrows. All of these are aimed at causing Christians to question the reality of Bible truths that relate to them and their lives here on earth.

Quite counterintuitively, instead of any instinctive reaction which would be the human otherwise customary thing to do, this portion of Ephesians instructs believers in Christ to simply apply faith to extinguish these blazing missiles. The nature of this faith and its application are very well illustrated by the episode in Daniel 3:1-30. This passage relates a contention between allegiance to God on the one hand and Nebuchadnezzar’s golden statue on the other. The entire scenario was otherworldly schemed to cause the three young Jews to subvert their allegiance to God. This supernatural scheme was executed by human beings and their stratified structures and it came with death consequence such as the furnace of blazing fire (3:15) for any form of repudiation. Vehemently disregarding the imminent death that was staring at them (the furnace of blazing fire), the three young Jews concretized their faith in God. They unreservedly expressed their unwillingness to succumb to the intent of the otherworldly scheme even if it meant dying (3:16-18). It is interesting to note,

for this article, the high point here is the resolute conviction (trust) in God, his character, and the truths in his word (the Bible) which these young Jews expressed. The concretization here is the movement beyond mere conjectural, theosophical, or superficial acclamations about God to the application of an irrevocable conviction rooted in God himself, his character, and his truths. It is by such an exhibition of faith that Ephesians 6:16 says believers can extinguish all the otherworldly schemes against them. The three young Jews could not escape being thrown into the burning furnace that was heated seven times hotter, but certainly, they were able to quench the scheme and its intention. In the end, like it was the case of Paul and Silas in Philippi, the young Jews were rewarded with an unprecedented miracle that brought glory to God (3:19-30).

### **4.3 The prayer and resistant technique**

The prayer and resistant technique of the theonomous counterintuitive strategy for defying migratory insurgent challenges has to do with prayer and firm resistance.

#### ***The prayer technique***

The subject of prayer is also given prominence in the epistle to the Ephesians. The author informs his audience of his heartfelt prayer for them in 1:15-23 and 3:14-21. These sections embody the contents and purpose of Christian prayer. The contents include thanksgiving and supplication for wisdom (or “insight into the true nature of things”, Hoehner 2002:256) and the adequate understanding of who God is, what his eternal purposes for believers are (1:16-23), and the magnitude of his love for them who believe (3:17-19). Other items of the supplication are God’s inner strengthening of believers (3:16) and Christ’s total filling of them to the measure of the fullness of God (3:17, 19). By implication, these are to form the core of believers’ prayers. Whether before, during, and after insurgency attacks, Christians ought to thank and supplicate for insight into the true nature of things, adequate understanding of God, his eternal purposes for them, his abundant love, God’s inner strengthening, and Christ’s total filling of them to the measure of the fullness of God. In the third and last section on prayer, 6:18-20, believers are instructed to deeply engage in praying at all times and the contents of the prayer in the earlier sections are, in another way, restated. It is worth stating here that believers’ victory over the strategies of the devil himself and all other evil powers does not rest only

in their putting on of the armour of God (Eph. 6:10-17), in addition to this, they need to “pray with constancy, devotion, and alertness” (Thielman 2010:432).

The incident in Daniel 6:1-28 very well illustrates the reality of prayer technique as a theonomous counterintuitive strategy. While in a foreign land, despite the reception and relative political opportunities he and his fellow young Jews enjoyed, Daniel understood the potential opposition they could experience given the differences in the religious settings. Thus, Daniel resolved to pray with constancy, devotion, and alertness. Earlier in the book, Daniel’s deep-rooted ideology regarding prayer and his devotion in it did not just provide a solution to King Nebuchadnezzar’s puzzling dream, it kept all the wise men in Babylon from being put to death (2:1-49). It is also obvious from 6:5-10 that the man Daniel did not cease from praying with constancy, devotion, and alertness. The narrative relates that even with Daniel’s constant and devoted prayers, the evil schematization against him was, in part, successful. He was thrown into the den of lions. It is interesting to note, God allowed this partial success for the greater good, the revelation of the mystery he had in stock which no one (including Daniel) knew about. The mystery is this, God allowed Daniel to be thrown into the den of lions to extinguish the flaming arrows hurled at him. To the scheming officials and the evil one behind their plots, by throwing Daniel into the lions’ den, both he and his religion were to be eliminated in Babylon. This, being their ultimate target, God did not allow. Rather, Daniel was protected from any harm, his God was glorified, his conviction was strengthened, and his religion was promoted (6:19-28).

Applying this to the migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria, it is worth stressing that though Christians may have to experience the partial success of the evil plans against them like the insurgent activities of the Fulani ethnic group, they ought to pray with constancy, devotion, and alertness and be all the more resilient. The contents of their fervent prayer should include hearty thankfulness to God, plea for wisdom amidst challenges, better understanding of God, his eternal purposes, and the magnitude of his love for them despite their ugly experiences. They should also deeply solicit for God’s inner strengthening and Christ’s total filling of their hearts to the measure of the fullness of God. Like the case of Daniel, the ultimate goal of the devil will be quenched. The use of the future middle indicative of  $\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\alpha\iota$  in Ephesians 6:16 (Larkin 2009:161; Hoehner 2002:847) gives this assurance (Merkle 2016:468).



### ***The resistant technique***

In the warfare metaphorical depiction of the Christian life (6:10-18), the epistle stresses the need for believers in Christ to stand firm in their daily living. The idea of standing firm is insistently depicted in 6:11, 13-14 as an obligatory element of Christian living. This refers to the virtue of unwaveringly maintaining one's position amid and against all the strategies of the devil (Thielman 2010:419, Hoehner 2002:823). In the other New Testament passages, this virtue is tagged endurance (Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:11; James 5:11; and 1 Pet. 2:19), or perseverance (Rom. 2:7; Eph. 6:18; 2 Thess. 1:4; and 2 Pet. 1:6). "To persevere" in the original Greek language *hypomenein* (preposition *hypo* and verb *menein*) means to remain ... to be firm ... to bear, to wait ..." and the same idea "is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew" *qawah*, *yahal*, and *hakah* (Adiwardana 2010:174).

To Samuel E. Balentine (2015:16-23), this can be called patience and the man Job is a biblical archetype of this virtue. According to him, patience is the ability to subject one's emotions and motivations. It is a resolute standing against powerful and life-threatening adversaries and adversities. Such a resolute stand is not a passive response to these adversaries and adversities, it is rather rooted in a decisive refusal to submit to the pressures of the adversaries and adversities being fully aware that such will be attended with grievous losses, and perhaps (though definitely not entirely), even dying in the process. This sort of resistant technique (patience or perseverance) does not only run "counter to the contemporary culture" (Adiwardana 2015:173), it runs counter to the world's wisdom and intelligence. It is counterintuitive and profoundly rewarding. Remarkably, Job's patience (resistance, endurance or perseverance) was rewarded in the long run (42:7-17). If the adversary (1:9-11; 2:4-5) initially conceived that Job was going to become impatient due to the terrible effect of the adversities and, as a result, his allegiance and devotion to God would be dented, to his dismay, his intent and expectations were unsuccessful. The narrative recurrently states that amid all the adversities, Job did not waver nor sin against God (1:22; 2:10).

Christians in the history of the church also experienced dynamic challenges. The earliest disciples in Acts of the Apostles severally faced difficult times from the Jewish religious leaders and the government. According to Earle E. Cairns (1998:90-94), the persecution started by Nero in the latter part of the first

century lingered and kept increasing in form and intensity up to 250 AD when it assumed a universal status till 305 AD. The earlier disciples and church fathers suffered martyrdom during the different stages of this persecution. Despite this, Christianity kept growing in number and strength. Cairns notes further that “The rapid spread of Christianity, even during the periods of heaviest persecution, proved that indeed the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church” and this was the reward of Christians’ perseverance. On the contrary, Philip Jenkins (2008:97-98) observes that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in much of Africa, Asian and the Middle East, due to lack of perseverance which cannot be detached from certain nominally inclined factors and human intuition, very many professing Christians converted to Islam. Perseverance, together with the other counterintuitive techniques described above, is the most reliable solution to the highest severity of the worst situation that ever confronted and can confront believers in Christ anytime and anywhere. If apart from the revelation of God, his works, his eternal love for humankind and the salvation through Christ, the eternal glory in the hereafter, “the aim of the Scriptures is to promote *hypomone* [the Greek for perseverance] ...” (Adiwardana 2010:178), then perseverance ought to be given a topmost priority by every Christian. The cultivation of perseverance is, thus, not optional for Christians.

## Conclusion

Migration is an ageless phenomenon and is an integral part of human existence. It is, however, being attended by a variety of challenges. In Nigeria, the Fulani migration to the Middle Belt and southern states, in particular, comes along with different horrendous adversities on the Christian host communities as a result of the migrants’ insurgent activities. These insurgent activities and all forms of adversities are aimed at destroying Christianity in Nigeria, but, quite significantly, the outcome, in the long run, depends exclusively on the decisions reached by Christians both individually or collectively. The choices are between the normal human instinctive response(s) and the theonomous counterintuitive approach. Since, historically, the former has essentially exhibited serious lack of the potency to bring about lasting solution, the latter, as difficult and unintelligent as it may seem in the view of the world, suffices to be a panacea to the contemporary migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria and beyond.



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