

## SOCIAL CONTRACT IN DEFINING A SAINT OR CHRISTIAN HERO IN THE CHURCH

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### **Abstract**

A Christian hero must have commitment because the promotion and defense of noble values is usually a demanding, long drawn-out endeavor. Christian heroes are often canonized as Saints in the Church because they have been widely described as a people of honor; courageous, or brave which translate in many culture and biblical writings in Church history as the saints. Heroes of Christian faith are people with integrity and honour that possess good reputations and know what is right and what is wrong, though taking steps to always follow and do what is right. Christian heroes are sometimes famous, and sometimes they are not. But the one characteristic that makes Christian heroes different from other people is that they have willing hearts to do a special task to rescue others. They put other people before themselves, and sometimes endanger their own lives. The attributes of leadership in Church ministry and the demand on character reflect on obligations and sacrifice in performing duties according to the expectations of their faith. It is also necessary to state that even though the Christian heroes often hold a high moral standard, they do not have to be perfect. Even a hero could yield to a temptation and in his zeal for the Christian faith goes too far. Christ was considered by the theologians to be the only perfect hero. He was the only one who had defeated the sinfulness which held humanity as a whole, imprisoned. Thus, Christ was the only true hero of freedom.

### **Introduction**

Social Contract theory explains that the people live together in society in accordance with an agreement that establishes moral and political rules of behaviour. Many people therefore believe that people live by the ideals of social contract which is morally binding as a matter of choice and not necessarily because it is a canonical law or divine obligation.

It is obvious in the application of social contract is that it serves the common or greater good to ensure the efficacy and continuity of the human society and to protect its individual members as a moral guide. Bringing the relevance and functions of social contract to fore in Christianity, scholars often centred their enquiry round doctrinarism and church heroism as a way of mentoring and developing public conduct and social character.

This takes us to defining heroism using the widely acceptable concept of Bernstein who had a good description of heroes which he described thus: "an individual of elevated moral stature and superior ability who pursues his goals indefatigably...because of his unbreached devotion to the good, no matter the opposition, a hero attains spiritual grandeur, even if he fails to achieve practical victory." He went further to

state the four components of heroism as moral greatness, ability or prowess, action in the face of opposition, and triumph in at least a spiritual, if not a physical, form.<sup>1</sup>

### **Theoretical Framework of Heroism in Secular and Church Doctrines**

Bernstein reiterated that a hero's moral stature is by far his most fundamental attribute, on the platform of which he willingly embraces the challenge of a struggle, engaging in a 'strongly motivated striving, the pursuit of goals involving great exertion or difficulty.'<sup>2</sup> He maintained that the heroes generate high levels of self-motivation that enables them to attain real commitment to the concept of ensuring the well-being of all people, whether they are known to them or not. They are also committed to promoting the well-being of their community, since this is the best context in which the well-being of individuals can thrive and survive.

It is obvious therefore that hero must have commitment because the promotion and defense of noble values is usually a demanding, long drawn-out endeavor.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the story of Daniel as told in the Bible, speaks of a man who made an early resolution not to 'defile himself' because of his commitment to Almighty God, and maintained that commitment under the pressure of peer opposition over the reign of several kings in Babylon.<sup>4</sup>

Christian heroes are often canonized as Saints in the Church because they have been widely described as a people of honor; courageous, or brave which translate in many culture and biblical writings in Church history as the saints. Renowned scholars in church history have described the heroes of Christian faith or the Saints as a people with integrity and honour that possess good reputations and know what is right and what is wrong, though taking steps to always follow and do what is right.<sup>5</sup>

Christian heroes are sometimes famous, and sometimes they are not. But the one characteristic that makes Christian heroes different from other people is that they have willing hearts to do a special task to rescue others. They put other people before themselves, and sometimes endanger their own lives.

The attributes of leadership in Church ministry and the demand on character reflect on obligations and sacrifice in performing duties according to the expectations of their faith. Suffice here is a quick reminder of the Peter's enquiry into the actions of Church Elders in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts of Apostles 5 verses 1-11. The duo have decided to deceive the Church and earn vainglory for themselves that is not only undeserving but misleading, they also wanted to destroy the very essence of the call to righteous living which is an evidence of transformation as a Christian surrenders his old ways and become new in Christ. The engagement and the provoking of the righteous anger of the Holy Spirit led to their untimely death as a medium of instant judgment. This is a reverse of heroism.

Keith (2003) noted that the categories of Christians who are thought well of and commended for their good works by the people and whom the Church and the society invariably respect and hold in high regards<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Bernstein, 2002. *The Philosophical Foundations of Heroism*. London: Mentzer-Sharkey Enterprise, 2.

<sup>2</sup> A. Bernstein, 2002. *The Philosophical Foundations of Heroism*. London: Mentzer-Sharkey Enterprise, 6.

<sup>3</sup> A. Bernstein, 2002. *The Philosophical Foundation of Heroism*. London: Mentzer-Sharkey Ent., 9.

<sup>4</sup> A. Bernstein, 2002. *The Philosophical Foundation of Heroism*. London: Mentzer-Sharkey Ent., 11

<sup>5</sup> S. A. Keith, 2003. *Super Heroes of the Bible*. London: Sunday School Network, 4.

<sup>6</sup> S. A. Keith, 2003. *Super Heroes of the Bible*. London: Sunday School Network, 4.

would be eventually described as Church heroes. He asserted that they are “willing hearts who changed the course of history.”<sup>7</sup>

Following from Bernstein and Keith’s definitions, it can be more readily understood that some of the behavior and activities of the ‘heroes past’ to whom the Nigerian National Anthem refers;<sup>8</sup> heroes tend to be people who are dedicated to the promotion and defense of important values that leads to a good life.

### **Heroism in Cultural Settings and Nigeria’s National Ideology**

Kolade (2013) noted that to be effective, a hero’s commitment to values must be supported by strong ability, even prowess, which may have to be sustained over multiple generations. For example, in considering how many succeeding governmental regimes in Nigeria have declared ‘war’ on indiscipline and corruption in the land; yet, today, corruption has not surrendered any of its energy to all of their rhetoric.<sup>9</sup>

He stated further that “the hero who sets out to make a positive change soon encounters the enervating apathy or downright opposition of many people. Some of the opposition is instinctive; people just tend to resist any change that they do not understand or agree with. Then there is the type of opposition that is deliberate, well planned, and backed by forces that may be physically or legally superior to the capacity of the hero. Both kinds of opposition require considerable intellectual ability and prowess through which the hero overcomes resistance by a disciplined and reasoned demonstration of the real benefits of the proposed change.”<sup>10</sup>

Kolade asserted that “the beauty of the hero’s position is that he can obtain the reward of seeing others become apostles of the action that he initiates. He may even find that, through his example, other people come to discover new dimensions of their own courage and capacity. The elevated moral stature of the hero makes him constantly sensitive to the fact that good intentions, if they are to score any success, must always be supported with credible means of effective implementation”.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> S. A. Keith, 2003. *Super Heroes of the Bible*. London: Sunday School Network, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Excerpt from the Nigerian National Anthem

<sup>9</sup> Address Prepared By Christopher Kolade, Christ’s School Alumni Association (Worldwide) at Annual Conference Held On June 26, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Address Prepared By Christopher Kolade, Christ’s School Alumni Association (Worldwide) at Annual Conference Held On June 26, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Address Prepared By Christopher Kolade, Christ’s School Alumni Association (Worldwide) at Annual Conference Held On June 26, 2013. He stated further thus: He explained further “in spite of the hero’s pursuit of excellent values, determination, commitment and courage, his actions do not always score the success that should be expected. Even if he eventually wins, the success may not follow his action immediately or quickly. In Nigeria, for example, much of the freedom of information enjoyed by today’s journalists and media people is a direct result of many years of their predecessors fighting the necessary battle to win the freedom. Indeed, some media practitioners were sent into detention or prison because they would not give up the fight until it was won. One should also recall that M.K.O Abiola, who was a symbol of fairness in Nigeria political election process in the last decade of the twentieth century, eventually died in detention without spending even one day in office. He likewise considered heroes and heroines like Nelson Mandela, and more recently, the medical doctors, missionaries, and health workers from different part of the globe, who were courageous enough to come to Africa to administer drugs and medical care to the people infected by the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, but lost their lives by contacting the Ebola Virus from the very people that they were seeking to help.

He concluded that the “contemporary experience shows that Nigerian is a people with great skills in the diagnosis of her problems and the identification of ways of solving them. Even the habitual perpetrators of evil are well aware of the distinction between right and wrong, but they are comforted by the reality that the rest of the citizenry will complain or agonize endlessly, without ever mustering the resolve to do something about the malady that oppresses country. We seem to be willing, or helpless, or victims of the ailment known as analysis paralyzes.”<sup>12</sup>

It is obvious from the foregone that commitment is hardly ever enough for heroism to be established because it should be supported by credible action. Indeed, credible action is not just a requirement; it is a critical factor in bringing positive value in an environment of decaying values. The difference with the hero is that his commitment is often reinforced by action that is well thought out and well directed, since he knows full well that talking alone does not lead to sustainable change.<sup>13</sup>

### **Heroism as a Spiritual Essence of Goals Attainment**

Kolade (2013) stated that heroism must be driven by spiritual essence of its objective, so as to help the hero to see the risks and dangers in the correct perspective. The lesson one can deduce here is that for all aspiring heroes, they must be consistent in doing what is right and exhibit moral courage, an ability to stand resolutely by what one believes, with the stamina to persevere with the cause until it is won, or until the opportunity expires.

### **Limitations on Western Perspectives of Heroes of the Christian Faith**

Alexander Maurits (2009) examined how leading theologians within the Church of Sweden during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century elaborated on historical men as heroes in public speeches and in their works on the history of Christianity.<sup>14</sup> He described the historical Christian hero, within an evolving nationalistic discourse, as a prototype for contemporary Christians. He stressed that the historical hero was of crucial importance for the idea of society as an organism and the conception of history and its development which some of the leading theologians within the Church of Sweden fostered.<sup>15</sup> But in his analyses of the hero, Maurits elucidated various theologians’ view of manliness and masculinity. Thus, the role of the heroes, in his views, can be found at the intersection of ecclesiology, historiography, nationalism and gender by applying the interaction between religion and the construction of masculinity in the Sweden Church during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Maurit opined that the divine spirit was seen as the creator of, and the driving force in a hero. He submitted that progress occurred when the intention of this Holy Spirit was made fully manifest within the human social order and in different individuals.<sup>16</sup> But in addition to this, Maurits said God could further mankind’s

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<sup>13</sup> Address Prepared By Christopher Kolade, Christ’s School Alumni Association (Worldwide) at Annual Conference Held On June 26, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> A. Maurits, 2009. *The Exemplary Lives of Christian Heroes as an Historical Construct*; JMMS. Vol. 3

<sup>15</sup> A. Maurits, 2009. *The Exemplary Lives of Christian Heroes as an Historical Construct*; JMMS. Vol. 3. 4

<sup>16</sup> A. Maurits, 2009. *The Exemplary Lives of Christian Heroes as an Historical Construct*; JMMS. Vol. 3. 9

development in a resolute way, by choosing different persons in which God planted his intention for history and the future, God made further development possible. The men which were chosen were described as heroes. Initially God intended to let his spirit be active through all humans, but this plan was overthrown by mankind's sinful nature. In contrast to other humans, these heroes could grasp God's true intention as reflected throughout history.

In his book '*Chosen Peoples*' Anthony D. Smith argues that nationalism and national identity have their roots in religion. Consequently, ethnicity and religion are key concepts to understanding nationalism and national identity. Smith argues that the ideas of the nation as a chosen people, the hero and the golden age were constitutive for national identity. As to the heroes, Smith argues that they were models of conduct, and that they exemplified true virtue and thus were worthy of emulation.<sup>17</sup>

A Swedish theologian Kjell Blücker, submitted that an ecclesial type of nationalism grew stronger within the Church of Sweden during the nineteenth century as a response to sectarian movements and changes towards a multi-ideological society.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of this ecclesial nationalism, according to him, was to "preserve, reconstruct and develop a lost unity".<sup>19</sup> Blücker also emphasizes that a pronounced ecclesiology and a touch of nationalism was central in Church history writings of the period.

Blücker argues that both the national and the ecclesial discourse of the nineteenth century were male gendered.<sup>20</sup> From the works of these theologians, it could be argued that there also is a connection between nationalism and masculinity. It will serve this research work well to connect both genders in Ekitiland in the search for heroes of ecclesial discourse. This is necessary because the Ekiti people in general and the Church in particular were characterized by the work and progress of these great men and women who served as both leaders and educators for their kith and kin. It was in these heroes and heroines that the idea of the Ekiti nationality was incarnated.

Wetter Flensburg stated in the *The Swedish Church Journal*, that "heroic efforts were most common during the apostolic period and the Reformation. The apostolic period was considered to be a prototype for the Church in all times. In the Reformation, the hero Martin Luther appeared and reunited the Church with the lost principle of the apostolic time."<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that Flensburg made a distinction between the earthly heroes who fostered the causes of religion and morality, and Jesus Christ who was seen as the absolute hero of all times. While earthly heroes try to restrict the sin of humans, Christ had defeated sin once and for all.

Maurits in his book, "*The Exemplary Lives of Christian Heroes as an Historical Construct*" extensively wrote about Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632)<sup>22</sup> who occupies a special place in Swedish nationalist historical writing. Maurits regarded Gustavus as the great king who gave his life for the cause of Sweden and

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<sup>17</sup> A. D. Smith, 2003. *Chosen Peoples*. U.K: Oxford University Press, 1-25

<sup>18</sup> Kjell Blücker, 2002. *The church as nation: A study in ecclesiology and nationhood*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 106.

<sup>19</sup> Kjell Blücker, 2002. *The church as nation: A study in ecclesiology and nationhood*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 159-161.

<sup>20</sup> Kjell Blücker, 2002. *The church as nation: A study in ecclesiology and nationhood*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 105.

<sup>21</sup> W. Flensburg, 1855. *Utländsk litteratur*. The Swedish Church Journal (1855-1863), 52.

<sup>22</sup> A. Maurits, 2009. *The Exemplary Lives of Christian Heroes as an Historical Construct*; JMMS. Vol. 3. 13

Protestantism during the Thirty Years' War. Some decades after his death on the battlefield close to the German city, he was considered to be a hero. Maurits considered Gustavus Adolphus to be a true hero, like Christ, he bore the burden of the cross. The fallen king had taken his vocation seriously since he had not hesitated to sacrifice his life for the sake of the faith.

Sundberg, in his own submission, said Gustavus Adolphus was an imitator of Christ and with his act of sacrifice, he, like Christ, glorified the name of God.<sup>23</sup> As to Gustavus Adolphus as a hero, it is important to note that Sundberg emphasized the importance of prayer for the king. Sundberg regarded this as the most important explanation of Gustavus Adolphus's success as king. It is also interesting to reflect upon the fact that his heroism was intensified by his death on the battlefield. According to Sundberg this heroic act, to give one's life for the faith, rendered the king even more glorious and gave him direct entrance to the Kingdom of God.

Looking at the two speeches held to honor the memory of Gustavus Adolphus and Martin Luther, Maurits said it becomes apparent that the myth of the hero was used as a corrective device for the people who listened to or read the speeches. He said "to me, positioning the hero as an ideal role model seems to be the most important function of the myths about these brave men. In both speeches the question is asked whether or not the listener is prepared to make an equal sacrifice for the faith and the nation. In this regard one should note that the historical heroes were used to promote the nationalistic discourse of the nineteenth century."<sup>24</sup> This is most obvious when considering Sundberg's description of the heroic king Gustavus Adolphus. In this king, the Christian hero and the national hero merged into one. In the case of the king, his deeds should be considered equal to the highest sacrifice of losing one's life for the Christian faith and the fatherland.

In the sacred roots of nationalism the hero as corrective and exemplary was very important according to Anthony Smith, the sacred past stimulates emulation and results in eagerness from the public to adopt the virtues of the hero.<sup>25</sup> It is, as Smith emphasized, not the person of the hero which is important, rather their virtues, conduct and qualities.<sup>26</sup> Concerning the use of history it is interesting to note that Smith says that, "Documents and artifacts and oral traditions could be used by nationalist movements, under the influence of Romanticism, to seek and recover a golden age for the designated nation, and to draw from it the moral lessons needed to mobilize and unify the people."<sup>27</sup> Such a description fits very well with the actions of Church heroes and heroines.

It is also necessary to state that even though the Christian heroes often hold a high moral standard, they do not have to be perfect. Even a hero could yield to a temptation and in his zeal for the Christian faith goes too far. Christ was considered by the theologians to be the only perfect hero. He was the only one who had defeated the sinfulness which held humanity as a whole imprisoned. Thus, Christ was the only true hero of freedom.

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<sup>23</sup> A. N. Sundberg, 1857. *Svensk Literature*. The Swedish Church Journal. 18

<sup>24</sup> A. Maurits, 2009. *The Exemplary Lives of Christian Heroes as an Historical Construct*; JMMS. Vol. 3. 14

<sup>25</sup> A.D. Smith, 2003. *Chosen Peoples*. U.K: Oxford University Press, 41

<sup>26</sup> A.D. Smith, 2003. *Chosen Peoples*. U.K: Oxford University Press, 171

<sup>27</sup> A.D. Smith, 2003. *Chosen Peoples*. U.K: Oxford University Press, 190

Tine Van Osselaer has emphasized that Christ as the supreme hero was a distinctive feature of the Catholic Sacred Heart Devotion; thus the same role was given to Christ within both a Catholic and a Lutheran context. However, the strong emphasis on the grace of God within Lutheranism made this idea more obvious within this confession. If the grace of God was more salient within Lutheranism this confession lacked the devotion of the Mother of Christ which was so important within Catholicism.<sup>28</sup> This difference may be one of the reasons why heroism within Catholicism could be achieved also by women, while the heroes in this research were both men and women.

Even if the context has a distinct character, the speeches made by Sundberg and Bring in remembrance of Gustavus Adolphus and Luther could be considered evidence for an opinion that certain men brought about historical change. However, the actions of the heroes depicted by Sundberg and Bring include contradictions. Sometimes the historical hero is honoured because he upholds an existing social order, and sometimes the hero's contribution to societal change is emphasized. The hero is considered the upholder of the social order at the same time as he founds a new era. According to the theologians one of the more important tasks for the hero was to protect the freedom of the church. As an example, a hero like Luther prevented the church from becoming a sectarian group. Thus, the hero ensured that the church remained faithful to its divine mission. As such a guardian, the hero personified the pure essence of the true Church. The hero also was considered to be a watchman for a certain ecclesiastical and social order, and the heroes that occur in the materials analyzed in this research, closely mirror the ecclesiastical and political agenda propagated by these theologians.

Apart from the restrains of scholars above, there also, exist many inspiring and well-known Biblical heroes of Christian faith we hear and read about in the scriptures, and also exists many unsung Bible characters that had contributed immensely to the development of Christian faith. Attempts should be made to review the contributions of some of these Bible characters.

Pink, a renowned Bible scholar, outlined the names, life, characters and achievements of some Biblical heroes of Christian faith in the likes of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the Judges. He explained how they had, individually, contributed to the advancement of Christianity during their eras.<sup>29</sup> Barrick, on his part, gave personal qualities of some of these heroes; he talked about Abel's sacrifice; Enoch's testimony; Noah's heritage and motivation; Abraham's obedience, and Sarah's strength.<sup>30</sup> The heroes and heroines of Christianity in Ekiti shared, virtually, similar virtues with these Biblical heroes in terms of their relentless efforts in introducing Christian faith in Ekitiland.

On the other hand, Rasco, submitted that the Biblical heroes of faith are role models, though not perfect in all of their thoughts and actions, but they point us to the life of faith that God expects from Christians. He reveals the kind of faith that works in characters like Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Elijah, Josiah, Daniel and Esther,<sup>31</sup> as obtainable in the life of Ifamuboni, Mary Oja, Olubobokun, Fatoregun and other heroes and heroines of Christianity in Ekiti.

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<sup>28</sup> Tine Van Osselaer, 2008. "*Heroes of the Heart: Ideal men in the Sacred Heart Devotion*" In Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality. 18

<sup>29</sup> A. W. Pink, 2000. *The Heroes of Faith*. Florida: Chapel Library, 4

<sup>30</sup> W. D. Barrick, 1999. *Biblical Heroes of the Faith*. USA: The Masters Seminary, 12

<sup>31</sup> B. Rasco, 2003. *Heroes of Faith: A Study of Hebrew 11*. USA: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian, 14-20

However, Wilson, in his book, *The Unsung Heroes of Faith*, gave a glory attribute to characters like Shiprah and Puah, whose names probably do not ring a bell, yet they were major players in the plan of God when their turn came to step out in faith. He further stressed that these heroines of Christians faith were not afraid to withstand the might of Pharaoh and were happy to risk their lives for their kith and kin in Israel, and able to stop the intentions of the Egyptian King in destroying the Israelite while in slavery at Egypt.<sup>32</sup> These two Hebrew midwives were ordinary people but they withstood Pharaoh at the risk of their lives for what they believe in.

Furthermore, Wilson revealed the works and efforts of some unsung heroines of Christian faith who risked their lives throughout Bible history. He spoke about Rahab, who put the scarlet thread in the window before the battle against Jericho. He talked about Esther, Ruth, Naomi, the wife of Moses and many other amazing people who did wonderful things through faith and dedication to the work of God.<sup>33</sup>

Renowned authors like Elisabeth Elliot, Michael E. Rusten, Ruth Tucker, Patridge A. C., David Daniell, Allan Burgess, Mildred T. Howard, and Nick Mulvenney, wrote to offer the society the real heroes worth emulating. Missionary heroes were described to have high moral standards and values. These heroes lived truly, great lives; lives that were marked by moral depth, strength of character, and an unswerving commitment to faith.

### **Heroism in Today's Culture and Changing Perspectives of the Church**

Elisabeth Elliot, in her book, *Through Gates of Splendor, and Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* tells the story of the five missionaries who were martyred while participating in Operation Auca, in an attempt to evangelize the Huaorani people of Ecuador and how two of the wives and a daughter eventually brought the Gospel to the Aucas who killed the five men.<sup>34</sup> She gave a detailed narratives of her martyred husband, Philip James "Jim" Elliot (and other four missionaries), who spent his youthful life preparing to propagate the Gospel with those who have never heard it in Ecuador.<sup>35</sup> These five missionaries' activities in Auca were similar in nature to the evangelism exploits of the pioneer Evangelists of Christian faith in many African countries..

In the book, *William Tyndale: Man with a Mission*, David Daniell gave an account of another great Christian faith hero called, William Tyndale, an English scholar who became a leading figure in Protestant reform in the years leading to his execution. He is well known for his translation of the Bible into English in the 16<sup>th</sup> century England. He was arrested and jailed in Castle of Vilvoorde for over a year, and later convicted of heresy and executed by strangulation, after which his body was burnt at the stake.<sup>36</sup>

In our society today, many people have all kinds of heroes thrust upon them either from Hollywood celebrities to music artists and sports figures; it would seem that there are plenty of heroes to go around. The heroes offered up by popular culture often influence people, especially children, to assume that physical perfection, financial success, and fame are the most important goals in life. The morals and values

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<sup>32</sup> A. Wilson, 2003. *The Unsung Heroes of Faith*. USA: Allan Wilson, 3

<sup>33</sup> A. Wilson, 2003. *The Unsung Heroes of Faith*. USA: Allan Wilson, 5

<sup>34</sup> E. Elliot, 1981. *Through Gates of Splendor*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 12.

<sup>35</sup> E. Elliot, 1989. *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 35.

<sup>36</sup> David Daniell, 2005. *William Tyndale: Man with a Mission*. London: Christian History Institute, 27.

presented by these heroes are often in direct opposition to the standards parents will wish to pass on to their children. So, while there is no shortage of heroes, there is a critical shortage of heroes worth emulating.

Many of the Church heroes and heroines of Christianity face a lot of persecutions in the course of evangelizing the people. The early converts to Christianity in Africa with focus on Church history in Nigeria also suffered severely from the hands of the traditionalists and Islamic Jihadists. Some of them were publicly flogged; others were rendered homeless and even declared person non-grata in their hometown. In most of the cases, traditionalists used their festive occasions to attack the torch-bearers of Christianity.

Today, Christians suffer similar fates in the hands of Boko Haram and other Terrorist Groups invading Nigerian soil in the Northern parts of the country having destabilized the region and seeking for Islamization of the country. Among these Christians are undocumented heroes who stood against the attacks or were rounded, maimed, stoned to death or killed mercilessly for refusing to renounce their faith. The popular symbols of the resistance to Islamic conversion was one of the captured Chibok Girl – Leah Sharibu who was never seen again and the case of the student murdered for praising Jesus among her classmates - Deborah Yakubu.