
An Analysis of the Potency of Common Grace in the Context of Terrorism in Nigeria

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Abstract

Terrorism is growing qualitatively and quantitatively globally with the aid of modern technology. This paper is not intended to unravel the causes of terrorism and how to tackle it. Rather, the purpose of the research is to take an intellectual analysis of the concept of common grace, which is believed by many scholars to be an instrument by which God regulates the excesses of evil in the world. It is assumed that *the affairs of mankind could have been far worse but for the regulative principle of God's common grace*. The alarming rate of crime growth, especially in Nigeria rather calls into question the nature of the effectuality of this concept of common grace and seeks a better way of understanding how God sovereignly controls the growth of evil in the world. While affirming this principle, this paper also argues that God created social institutions or structures for the purpose of helping people to responsibly evolve into a civic society, which is essential for checking the growth of evil. This is a cultural mandate that Christians and non-Christians must account for as a duty given by God to partner with him in the administration of the world to his glory.

Key Words: *Efficacy, Reformed, Calvin, Evil, Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen*

1. Definition of Common Grace

Common grace is the grace by which God endows all humanity with excellent gifts as well as restrains the excesses of humanity. In this universal non-salvific form of grace, God permits the sun to shine upon both the righteous and the unrighteous. In view of the given explanation Grudem views common grace in light God's incalculable, generous blessings upon mankind. Grudem explains: "Common grace is the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation." McKim expounds on it further, as "God's universal, non-saving grace in which blessings are given to humanity for physical sustenance, pleasure, learning, beauty, and so on, expressions of God's goodness. It is particularly contrasted in Reformed theology with God's special or saving grace." By this kind of grace, God does not discriminate between the righteous and evildoers.

2. The Problem in View: Human Wickedness and Terrorism in Nigeria

Nigeria has been in terrorist's crosshairs since 2009, subsequent to the advent of Boko Haram. Prior to the rise of Boko Haram, the Nigerian people were devastated by the activities of Niger Delta militants that attacked and destabilized the revenue base of the nation. The second edition of the Global Terrorism Index graded Nigeria the fourth most terrorized country in the world. The GTI offers a wide-ranging summary of patterns and global trends in terrorism based on total lives lost, injuries, and property damage. Boko Haram is a group of Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists with the purpose of launching an Islamic state in Nigeria. It is a fanatical, factional group whose opinions are in conflict with those of mainstream Nigerian Muslims.

The group upholds that democracy is contrary to Islamic commands, Western education is anti-Islamic, and they denounce anyone employed by any government institutions. The group is basically made up of cynical youths, unemployed graduates, and former *almajiris* in Northern Nigeria. The penetrability of Nigerian boundaries has permitted the group unlimited ability to hide and efficaciously traffic small and light weapons across and within Nigeria. Boko Haram focuses on socio-economic issues and variances in religious orientation across Nigeria; it is a reaction to the upsurge of the Islamic jihadist movement across the globe induced by the US War on Terror. This terrorist group has grown up from a largely small group of devotees to a full-fledged, sophisticated group with a conceivable link to the Al-Qaida networks. The group in its striving to establish an Islamic state in Northern Nigeria has launched innumerable attacks. In January 2015, the group launched an attack in Baga that killed no less than two thousand civilians and charred the whole municipality, leading about twenty thousand people to flee their homes to neighboring Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

Boko Haram initially attacked primarily security forces and politicians but afterward began attacking civilian places such as schools, churches, and markets. There were six suicide bombings by Boko Haram in one day, the largest single-day total anywhere in the world. It also commits kidnappings, once trapping about 270 school girls in a secondary school in Chibok, 14 April 2014. In addition, it has had a particularly enormous impact in north-eastern Nigeria, where twenty thousand people have been killed since 2009, at least two million people displaced, and five thousand women made widows.

The terrorist group that broke the camel's back is the fourth, the Fulani militant group operating in Nigeria and parts of the Central African Republic, which has killed thousands and rendered tens of thousands homeless. Some estimates suggest about 2,500 killed countrywide, mostly in the North-West and Middle-Belt in 2016, a toll higher than that caused by the Boko Haram insurgency over the same period. In the Plateau attacks of June 22–24, more than two hundred people were killed in horrible ways, often maiming and butchering their victims into parts. Post-conflict economic and social marginalization renders women and girls even more susceptible to sexual and economic predation as the families of men slaughtered in the crisis often dislodge widows from their farmland. The economic toll has similarly been enormous. Terrorism spells out in murder, genocide, rape, kidnapping, repression, and more.

The conundrum is how to reconcile God's sovereignty with indescribably human suffering and affliction. In the context of mass murder, people are emotionally challenged to the point where they cannot articulate an intelligent prayer. This research is intended to show that the concept of common grace, which is believed to be the instrument by which God restrains human monstrosity, is not sufficient to explain how God sovereignly controls human actions because it has not shown to be effective enough to curb the extreme wickedness of terrorism in Nigeria.

3. The Origin and Development of the Idea of Common Grace

The doctrine of common grace states that God treats his entire creation, and especially rebellious human beings, even those to whom he does not grant eternal life, better than they deserve, providing life itself and the necessities to maintain it. This stunning fact triggers some thought-provoking questions: how do we explain the reasonably logical nature of life in the world when the entire creation lies under the curse of sin? By what means does the earth produce valuable fruit in rich abundance instead of merely producing thorns and thistles? Why does evil man still recall some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between good and evil, and demonstrate some respect for virtue and for good outer conduct? How can the unregenerate still express the truth, do good to others, and lead externally virtuous lives? To what extent can we measure how common grace checks the menace of terrorism in our time? The doctrine of common grace is an attempt to respond to these enquiries.

The doctrine of common grace is traced back to Augustine. His constructive and systematic teachings were classic and were endorsed as foundational to Reformation theology. Augustine scarcely used the term grace to denote saving grace, instead applying it to, for example, the ability of sinful men to live as rational beings. A thousand years later, Calvin laid out the foundation for the development of the idea of common grace. The common grace of God operates within nature, in governments, in public opinion, and in punishment and reward systems, which results in the slowing of God's judgment upon the world, the restraint of sin, the instilling of truth, morality, virtue, and civic righteousness, and provision for the flow of natural blessings. Common grace serves two main purposes: On the positive side, it serves to maintain a measure of order and morality on earth, making life possible after the entrance of sin. Through common grace, God distributes gifts, talents, and abilities among men, both converted and unconverted. It promotes the development of the arts and sciences and of general human culture. If Calvin were here today, he would instantly consider the growth of scientific progress under the terms of God's common grace. Lastly, it showers many temporal blessings on all mankind. On the negative side, common grace curbs, though it does not crush, the destructive power of sin.

The degree of our focus on Calvin is well justified. Opposing the Calvinist confession of grace, the Remonstrants or Arminians asserted that common grace is adequate to empower men to repent and believe, but the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–1619) argued that only prevenient (saving) grace can produce these marks of regeneration. Though Calvin does not use the term common grace, he nevertheless develops the idea of the “general grace of God,”

which subsequently Reformed theologians termed “common grace,” the gifts of the Spirit of God that manifest in the good things we see in the unregenerate. The fuller expression of this concept came in the nineteenth century when Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) and Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) took it up fully. In America, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, and A. A. Hodge all upheld Calvin's teaching, though the Hodge's overlooked all reference to natural profit from common grace. The motif of common grace in Calvinism, which was overlooked in Europe, was developed by Bavinck, but it took on new and unparalleled importance with his associate Abraham Kuyper.

4. A More Expansive Consideration of the Function of Common Grace

Kuyper further states that while common grace does not regenerate the sinful heart unto salvation,

it keeps down but does not quench. It tames but does not change the nature. It keeps back and holds in leash, but thus, as soon as the restraint is removed, the evil races forth anew of itself. It trims the wild shoots, but does not heal the root. It leaves the inner impulse of the ego of man to its wickedness, but prevents the full fruition of wickedness. It is a limiting, a restraining, a hindering power, which brakes and brings to a standstill.

Bolt states that Kuyper's views on common grace sprouted from his idea of the “principle of divine sovereignty,” which is based on “the conviction that prior to, and to a certain extent independent of, the particular sovereignty of divine grace in redemption, there is a universal divine sovereignty in creation and providence, restraining the effects of sin and bestowing general gifts on all people, thus making human society and culture possible even among the unredeemed. Cultural life is rooted in creation and common grace and thus has a life of its own apart from the church.” This administration by God allows human productivity in family life, education, business, science, and arts, which divine law regulates. Kuyper used this concept “polemically to motivate pious, orthodox Dutch Reformed Christians to Christian social, political, and cultural activity.”

Kuyper was not the first to resuscitate the doctrine of common grace after it had been buried, but he is honored as the academic who did the fullest work on the theme and most fully developed the doctrine after the Reformation and the works of Calvin. Kuyper argued that the grace of God was present everywhere and could not be confined, just as God himself cannot be restricted to “temples made by man” (Acts 17:24). God thus both restrains and regulates the curse of nature and the evil tendency of the human heart so that not every unregenerate individual is a horrible person: the destructive forces of sin have been momentarily halted. According to Van Til, Kuyper's view shows that the “restraining power of God” is the primary purpose of common grace. Subsequently, there is an optimistic and advanced function whereby God “equips human life ever more thoroughly against suffering, and internally brings it to richer and fuller development.” Kuyper finds an inner function of common grace that yields “civic virtue, a dense of domesticity, natural love, the practice of human virtue, the improvement of the public conscience, integrity, mutual loyalty among people, and a feeling for piety leaven life. In spite of the penalties of the fall, common grace has conserved within

humanity a logic of God and morality, which causes in the capacity of the unregenerate to do 'civic good,' actions that are good, right, and true, but not ethically admirable."

Calvin's view of common grace is broad as regards the relationship between moral and structural goodness in unregenerate humanity on the one hand and divine grace on the other. Calvin restricts his view of common grace to a negative and preventive stance; he deeply regards common grace as simply the curb of sin and preservation of order. He sees it as a divine retort to fallen humanity, defending his doctrine of total depravity by ascribing all good things in the unregenerate to the activity of the Spirit of God.

Calvin recognizes that the natural grace of God is congruent with human nature such that it works God's purpose in all human conduct in the world. By the power of this grace that is common to all humanity, some people strive to be virtuous in life. On this note, human nature cannot be condemned in totality as being corrupt since it is evident that many people conduct themselves excellently and honorably. Drawing from the exemplary life of Camillus, Calvin asks, "If a natural man excelled in such moral integrity, undoubtedly human nature did not lack the ability to cultivate virtue." Though some scholars think common grace is "not special grace," it may be observed that there is another sense in which common grace may still be special or particular in that the gifts it bestows on the unregenerate are not so natural or meritorious from human nature but they are "special graces of God, which he bestows variously and in a certain measure upon men otherwise wicked." In this sense, a disparity is involved in the dispensing of common grace, and its effect connotes some particularity or special focus. This grace, though does not cleanse human filth or regenerate human nature, restrains its excessive tendencies inwardly. By God's providence which is the exercise of his grace, he "bridles perversity of nature, that it may not break forth into action; but he does not purge it." He believes that the basic function of God's general grace is to keep humanity sane.

In the absence of God's controlling instrument of grace, sin would certainly leave vulnerable humans in the merciless hands of others. But "if the Lord gave loose rein to the mind of each man to run riot in his lusts, there would doubtless be no one who would not show that, in fact, every evil thing for which Paul condemns all nature is most truly to be met in himself (Ps. 14:3; Rom. 3:12)." Without this restraining grace, every human being possesses the tendency to "commit infinite wickedness [Rom. 3:10-18]." Elsewhere, Calvin accentuates the natural tendency of the wicked as "so habituated to plunders, acts of violence and wrong, to savageness and cruelty, that they know not how to act kindly and courteously." Indeed if "every soul" were let loose to "wander according to its own inclination," the result of evil would be above the raging of a mad beast or a hurricane. Calvin attributes two kinds of efficacy to common grace. First, common grace suppresses our inner volition from exploding into monstrosity so that many people control themselves to keep from falling into shame, foulness, and fear of the law. Second, by this grace some are more prone to "consider an honest manner profitable" as they aspire to it while others simply "rise above the common lot, in order by their excellence to keep the rest obedient to them." Common grace is this two-sided coin of the restraint of sin and the progress of human life that Kuyper and Van Til develop.

In addition to common grace, God introduces special grace to nurture the human nature of the elect and sets them apart to himself in whom his grace works to not only restrain them but also regenerate them so that they can live and possess the heavenly glory and not suffer the

consequences of sin with the reprobates. It is only by God's grace that the human mind is delivered from foolish confidence. God takes these gracious measures to reduce potentially innumerable human beings from becoming monsters in character. Since the grace of God, whether general or special, is given to people in varying degrees, some surely possess it in greater measure and so are more self-controlled and rise above others in virtue. Others have it far less and due to the innate human rebellion that results from the fall, they resort to excessive wickedness; though God wills their repentance, he "does not touch the hearts of all." This degree of disparity in the exercise of grace in human beings explains why some people are more wicked than others and some are more humane than others.

The Reformed school of thought refers to the grace of God as either common to all humanity or common to everybody within a specific scope of influence because its benefits are experienced by, or intended for, all homo sapiens without exception. It is grace because it is undeserved and sovereignly bequeathed by God.

Special or saving grace, by contrast, is understood by Calvinists as the grace that spreads only to those whom God has chosen to save. Common grace is God working in the heart of the sinner to replicate the Christian life but not efficaciously saving that sinner; the grace known as special, irresistible, or efficacious is given only to those whom God elects to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Berkhof posits three groups of common grace: Universal common grace, a grace that extends to all creatures; General common grace, a grace that applies to mankind in general and to every member of the human race; Covenant common grace, a grace that is common to all those who live in the sphere of the covenant, whether they belong to the elect or not. He lists the various fruits of common grace in God's administration of the universe and human society and includes the stay of full execution of divine justice upon man at his fall, the restraint of sin, the preservation of some truth, morality, and religion in human lives, performance of good deeds, and other natural blessings.

The Reformed thinker Jonathan Edwards writes in rather less-nuanced terms, "There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints." Edwards regards common grace as necessary for moral and intellectual goodness in the unregenerate precisely because it alone can be credited for the divine restraint of sin and preservation of the created order. Scholars have accused Calvin and his followers of limiting common grace to a negative function of restraint and preservation, only holding in abeyance the flow of evil and leaving the unregenerate "without excuse" and waiting for the elect to be saved at the eschaton. Calvin's own view shows that such analysis is illogical.

God is kind to both the elect and the reprobate, as Christ asserts when he comments that God "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt 5:45). God shows favor to all the reprobate because common grace is "earlier," entrenched in God's original relationship with Adam. Mouw argues from this point that God takes delight in humans both elect and reprobate: not only does God have a positive disposition towards the reprobate, shown by his gifts of rain and sunshine, but God also takes personal pleasure in their external pursuits and accomplishments. Regarding the exegetical

case for the doctrine, Murray declares, “The evidence drawn from Scripture, then, induces the deduction that the world as a whole, though subject to the curse incident to sin, receives the showers of manifold blessing, that men who still lie under the divine condemnation of sin, including even those who will finally suffer the full weight of that condemnation in perdition, are the recipients in this life of multiple favors that proceed from God's lovingkindness.”

Some Reformed theologians, including Engelsma, Hoeksema and Schilder, deny common grace altogether, contending that God cannot show favor to those under his wrath. Engelsma, however, does acknowledge Murray's words as “important in the controversy over common grace.”

Geisler posits that common grace is potent because “the effects of sin on fallen human beings are so great that without God's common grace (i.e., His non-saving grace that is available to all persons) society would be uninhabitable and salvation unreachable.”

5. A Critical Analysis of Common Grace

Undeniably, without the efficacy of common grace of God, the world, because of sin, would have been destroyed due to the persistent and irresistible forces of evil. Common grace is thus God's great means for sustaining creation. Fallen man in this life is in a state of total depravity, but he is not yet in a state of absolute depravity, where his inner character is fully worked out and he is as bad as possible, and irredeemably so. God's common grace grants all human beings the impetus for excellence and self-control in civil society, so the majority of humanity, which has not been given over to the control of evil, should realize their call to the cultural mandate to govern the world aright. The difference is the result of the intervention of common grace.

If common grace exists and is how God works to achieve his gracious will and purpose in the creation, the compelling question is how we can actually measure the effect of this common grace given the appalling extreme wickedness in our time. Can we assume, for example, that if a terrorist decapitates his victim, he would have done worse if common grace had not restrained him? But if instead the terrorist commits the highest evil of which he can conceive, was he bereft of the controlling effect of common grace? In the context of growing terrorism in our time, understanding the idea of common grace and its efficacy is a challenge. Ridderbos proposes that in the eschaton, the restraint by common grace may be suspended, thus making plain the antithesis between good and evil in order to fulfill the cosmic plan of God. Though this antithesis has existed throughout the course of human history, it will become increasingly important at the end of the eschaton.

It might also be the case that this antithesis with all its attendant consequences serve the purpose of God. Wellman argues, “Every good and every evil works in conformity with the eternally decreed will of God. When human governments carry out evil, they are, in reality, being used by God to move the affairs of mankind to do what is according to His will.” God permits evil to discipline and humble nations and individuals before himself. Could the unprecedented events in Nigeria be part of the fulfillment of this eschatological reality?

The belief that common grace serves as a response to the problem of evil, especially by

curtailing it, raises a number of questions. Munlochy sharply criticizes Murray's extrapolation of common grace and asks, "Is the restraint of sin whilst we await the Second Coming to be understood only within a framework of common grace?" He suggests approaching this matter of the restraint of evil through "creational structures," which include God working through his people to bless the unregenerate, the unregenerate also performing good works due to the moral law written within their hearts, and the establishment of civil governments. Rather than common grace, he emphasizes common law. As a result of sin, unbelievers are more prone to working against God rather complying. So if the grace of God does not change the unbeliever, it will rather harden him to destruction (2 Cor 2:15–17): "If we hold that the artistic abilities of men and women are gifts of God's common grace as understood in the federal schema we would have to recognise the God-denying work of men and women in rebellion against God as being inspired by or founded upon grace."

To place everything that happens well outside of Christ under the auspices of common grace creates unnecessary liability for the concept. Though existence comes under the grace of God, it should be noted that when God created man, he specifically endowed man with certain qualities that would work his purpose. Since he foreknew the fall, he created man in his own image with qualities that could survive the fall and still manifest his own glory. Therefore, "the Fall does not literally de-humanise, depriving mankind of its essential nature, for then human beings would become other than human." Though the fall smeared human reason, will, and conscience they still function to actualize the potential that God vested in the creation, which explains why Paul acknowledges the intellectual acumen of the heathen philosophers (Rom. 1:18f; Acts 17:28). Calvin acknowledges that the intellectual abilities of the heathen owe from "nature and common reason," "which is naturally engraven in men's minds." Despite the fall, mankind "retains his humanity with its natural and mental powers" to act responsibly in the world. Calvin has given support to this, saying that the universal power of the Spirit of God preserves all parts of creation to serve the purpose of God, and for human beings, this involves also the "excellent gifts of the mind." They exert "true principles from that fountain," which is God. What these heathen philosophers exemplify is an affirmation of the "image and similitude of God" in them. It is by these ontological structures of human nature that God endowed with restraints that even the ungodly sometimes perform more good works than some believers. Therefore, to emphasize common grace at the expense of these natural structures that God created to regulate human conduct in the world is a misrepresentation of facts.

The issue of commonality is flawed as another important question arises: "In what manner do believer and unbeliever have the 'facts' in common? Does common grace create a neutral domain in which believer and unbeliever can labour side by side to God's glory?" According to the argument, what appears to be commonality of grace is simply "unity of knowledge" through "shared rationality," which affirms both the antithesis and the identity of facts in the creation. This argument falls hollow, however, because by affirming a unity of knowledge, it has lost its own point of disputation. The rational unity that believers and unbelievers share is actually the starting point of the human response to the grace of God. The antithesis comes with our obedient or rebellious response to God, as attested by the Scriptures (Rom. 1:18f; 8:18–21).

The entire creation is a revelation of God, and the human being, by divine law and as a rational moral being, inescapably knows God, even though he suppresses that knowledge (Rom. 1:18–21). It is, therefore, plausible to assert that “the fundamental conditioning laws which make possible the existence of things, events, social structures, etc., remain in force.” Piper states that God restrains evil and prompts benevolent actions through natural means. So, in effect, God set creational structures within humanity to regulate human actions, which accounts for the restraint of evil, the development of society, and the acquisition of the knowledge of arts and sciences. These structures are not an end in themselves; they are set by the gracious will of God to serve his purpose. Every created thing stands on the grace of God. Therefore, the general or common grace of God “is 'grace' because it is undeserved and sovereignly bestowed by God. In this sense, it is distinguished from the Calvinistic understanding of 'special' or 'saving' grace, which extends only to those whom God has chosen to redeem.”

Finally, Munlochy asserts, “We must reject any concept of grace which is not rooted in Christ. Any operation of grace must be rooted in saving grace.” While it is plausible to see the operations of God generally in the world within the structures that he created to govern the affairs of the world that limit the excesses of sin, it is rather too narrow to place everything within the grace of Christ. Though the Old Testament may have the shadow of Christ, it is overstretching to allocate the grace of Christ to the pre-Christ event heathens. The particularity of Christ highlights his incarnational activities rather than the general work of the triune God in the Old Testament. We should avoid the extremes of emphasizing common grace at the expense of the natural laws that God himself created and of denying that grace altogether. Both must be harmonized, as the natural laws work under the canopy of God's grace since all things exist by his gracious will (Rev 4:11; Ps 33:9–11; Eph 1:11).

The question of the persistence of evil in the world is not one of whether common grace is effective or not: the opposition to the things of God is becoming more evident, and as we approach the end of the eschaton, it will become more intense. This much agrees with Calvin's view: “The more pressingly God offers himself to the world in the gospel and invites men into his kingdom the more boldly will wicked men belch forth the poison of their impiety.” How then does common grace function very well in the eschaton when wicked people seem to defy its force in their lives? Can God's grace fail?

Paul classes himself with the children of God, and, at the same time, exhorts all the children of God to prepare for enduring persecutions; for, if this condition is laid down for 'all who wish to live a godly life in Christ,' they who wish to be exempt from persecutions must necessarily renounce Christ. In vain shall we endeavour to detach Christ from his cross; for it may be said to be natural that the world should hate Christ even in his members. Now hatred is attended by cruelty, and hence arise persecutions, In short, let us know that we are Christians on this condition, that we shall be liable to many tribulations and various contests.

Calvin grants in the above comments that the end of time will usher in more hostility in spite of the effect of common grace. For those who are perishing, the grace will be of no effect, for they will be subjected to eternal doom. This will heighten their fury against Christ and believers. He admits that all human beings have universal principles of civic righteousness that regulate

human conduct. And if by this exercise of common grace, men “rise above the common lot, in order by their excellence to keep the rest obedient to them,” then since such men who are bereft of such grace are not the majority, the majority should rise to resist terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Does common grace act more negatively or positively in the world? Through common grace, evil is reduced and cannot be said to be more in magnitude than good. Similarly, by endowing virtues in human beings, it also increases goodness. If these ideas are taken together, the magnitude of evil cannot be more than the magnitude of goodness, though the weight of a particular evil might be enormous.

The responsibility to create a decent society where terrorism is strongly opposed by all falls upon every human being. Common grace and the universal structures that God created have built great values into our human constitution: “This life and the vocation in it given us by God are a part which we have no right to abandon, but which without murmuring and impatience we must faithfully guard, so long as God Himself does not relieve us. So to view life as a *vocatio Dei*—this is the first principle, the foundation of all moral action; this imparts unity to our life and symmetry to all its parts; this assigns to each one his individual place and task, and provides the precious comfort.” Calvin says if human nature is “carefully cultivated” it will shine forth some form of goodness. This understanding provides room for Christians and non-Christians to work together for a better society in the general cultural mandate that God has given to all humanity. “A just society needs more than a structure of laws, courts and enforcement agencies.” The core principles of a just society are truth and honesty. As human beings under God, we all should be conscious that “Divine sovereignty transcends all other loyalties” so that the principle of “the moral limits of power” should be built into the fabric of national development for a better guarantee of freedom and equity to all citizens. On this ground, all efforts should be done to eliminate cultural and social structures of inequality and injustice that devalue and discriminate against vulnerable groups.

6. Conclusion

In compliance with the divine mandate, the Nigerian government should reinforce and resource its security forces as a matter of urgency in order to offer sufficient protection to vulnerable communities. The people should also respond positively to the responsibility that God has placed upon them in cooperating with government in the smooth development of the society. This is living to the responsibility that God created with the natural structures of containing crime in the society. Government and non-governmental organizations and individuals should rework the structures and institutions that are meant to function for good governance and enable a civic society to evolve. Such structures include family values and relationships, the rule of law, and development of national values that underscore the dignity of human life and sensitize people to its value.

Though the concept of common grace helps us to appreciate God's providence in the world, those instruments that he uses in the administration of the world such as the common law should not be diminished. Those natural structures should be given their proper value in order to heighten appreciation of the original plan of God. It is not exclusively through the idea of common grace that we can cooperate with unbelievers but evangelism and such cooperation are divine mandates that cannot be conditioned upon anything but the simple command to be stewards of the world. We should also note that those structures and the cultural mandate were given before the fall, so the common grace of God only nourishes them to achieve his purpose.