"THE POWER GAME: 'KADUNA MAFIA' AND THE CHURCH IN NIGERIA"
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EDITORIAL

The publication of this combined volume has been delayed. As the EANT meeting shifted from Jos (October 1989) to Enugu (January 1990) it was felt that expert input was needed to adequately study our chosen theme:

Church and Contemporary Nigerian Society.

What was uppermost in the minds of the membership of EANT was the issue of economic, social and political justice which is ever elusive to the Nigerian nation. The papers and discussions appeared to indicate that the majority of Nigerians are labouring under the burden of being dominated/manipulated by elite groups. And social analysts in Nigeria appear to be indicating that some elite groups are more visible than others in the control of power in the Nigerian polity. Social scientists and theologians in the rank and file of EANT were invited to explore this phenomenon for the benefit of the generality of Nigerians and to propose evangelical principles for freedom, justice and fair play.

Interest was drawn towards the so called “Kaduna Mafia”. Other Mafiosi like the Langtang mafia, the Ikenne mafia and the Nsukka mafia are alleged to exist and to have each its hidden agenda. But the Kaduna mafia appears to be the most visible group.

From the papers and the discussions the membership was sensitized on how power blocks are installed on national, regional or ethnic levels (military or civilian) with the preservation of a minority interest as their aim; how a minority exploits a particular religion (in this case Islam — in its fundamentalist or puritanistic version) for political ends. Since religion in Nigeria is a major political and security issue papers which deal with the Strategies of Islamic Expansion and the security risk created by a fundamentalist Islamic movement like the Maitatsine group are included in this volume.

The overriding interest of EANT in arranging these discussions is how to transform our decadent and corrupt political culture for the birth of a Nigerian nation, how to minimize or eliminate the violence unleashed on the generality of Nigerians through graft, corruption, patronage and religious intolerance. That is why three papers explored how the church’s Social Teachings can help reshape our
country, how the church can contribute to peace and Stability and also protect Human Dignity in Nigeria.

The membership of EANT is dominated by theologians. In the midst of the violence and suffering which we live in Nigeria the christian community would need to take another look, as J.B. Metz insists, on the irrevocable unity between our profession of love of God and love of our neighbour:

The christian is expected to turn the other cheek when he is struck on the right cheek, but he is not allowed to encourage someone else who is struck on the right cheek to turn the other cheek as well... For ... the christian is not only responsible for what he does or fails to do, but also for what he allows to happen to others.

As a group of theological researchers we felt the need to sharpen a contextual political theology for the Nigerian society. The paper on the Response to the Book — “the Kaduna Mafia” — from the point of view of Political Theology and the reflection on Bonhoeffer and christian Social Ethics are pointers to areas yet to be researched.

Elochukwu E. Uzukwu C.S.Sp.  
(Editor-in-chief).
THE KADUNA MAFIA AND THE CHURCH IN NIGERIA

By

Bala J. Takaya

Many a Nigerian still asks the question "Do they really exist?" We therefore begin by an attempt to clear that doubt.

The book, *The Kaduna Mafia: A study of the Rise, Development and Consolidation of a Nigerian Power Elite*, is not a fictional work. The term "Mafia" applied to the Kaduna-centric jingoists is not a mere metaphor either: for like the Italian or American *Mafiosi*, the real kernel of the Kaduna-oriented social formation see themselves not only as descendants of some specie of old leadership that is threatened by political extinction but, to avoid that real possibility (of extinction), also as a targeted group that must fight back by systematically extending and foisting "Northern" hegemony over the rest of the nation. The ultimate objective is to project their particularistic interests and sub-culture as those of the Nigerian nation. They believe this is possible only if they can create and control a modern day caliphate, based on the *Usmania* tradition for Nigeria. As such, as unknown to other Nigerians, they have embarked on a vicious subterranean game of power with the long-run goal of imperial rebirth and domination.

The findings of the study upon which the book is based would indeed suggest that a stronger appellation, implying a more sinister and all-embracing underground manipulations than the term "Mafia" evinces is needed, given their ultimate goal of political domination on the basis of the "Caliphal philosophy".

A further clarification that needs to be made, for the avoidance of doubts, relates to the fact that it was mainly academic interest that motivated the authors to undertake the study project which led to the publication of the book. As academicians in a social sciences faculty of a Northern based university, they couldn't fail to notice the unusually high public interest often manifested in the ever recurring and exciting debate generated by the controversy on the existence or otherwise of a "Kaduna Mafia". The allegations that such an association of persons exist as an interest group which also has an unusually deep and wide influence over public policies, coupled with the divergent analyses, explanations and distortions of facts involved...
in the debates, suggested the need for the authors to rise to the social responsibility (as behoves social scientists) of investigating and clarifying the facts surrounding the issue for the benefit of both academic knowledge and general public education.

True, many an author has attempted to trivialise the idea of the existence of what they consider to be "the supposed" Kaduna Mafia through various media write-ups and presentations (Newspaper articles, weekly magazines and electronic media commentaries). In even more permanent forms still, fictional novels like Patrick Fagbola's *Kaduna Mafia* are even employed in this trivialisation mission. In this category, Fagbola's work is rivelled in circulation only by Charles Enanchong's (Popular market type pamphlet) *Secrets of the Kaduna Mafia: who they are! How they Operate*. One therefore, suspects that such publications are sponsored to de-emphasise and wear out readers' interest by vulgarising the idea of their existence in order to divert our attention from appreciating the grim socio-political reality the group's success poses for the nation's future.

More or less by chance, however, the existence of this social group has often been confirmed by notable persons who have had close encounters with them. In such a category is the farewell lamentations of a former Military Governor of Kaduna State, Lt. Colonel Abubakar D. Umar. In what was reported as his "valedictory" speech, the Governor made interesting disclosures on the "nefarious" activities and attempts of the Kaduna Mafia to thwart the efforts of his administration in that state. Later, Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, a retired Police Officer and the first Director of Nigeria's foremost Security and Intelligence Agency, the NSO (now SSS), similarly gave personal testimonies on his encounters with the group — confirming and disclosing the real names of living members when he granted an exclusive interview to a weekly news magazine.

Thus the question is not whether or not the group is a reality. What should now pre-occupy our minds, instead, are the nature of the goals pursued by the group, the changing strategies by which they pursue these goals and the overall implications of such sub-national values to the Nigerian nation.

The Kaduna Mafia purportedly stands as a group that defends the interest and culture of the "North". But shorn bare of their cloaks of pretences, the Kaduna Mafia, like any other, is an association of narrow-minded, self-centred and acutely greedy elite that operates as a political interest group. Firstly they claim to represent and defend the interests and culture of the North. But there is nothing germane to the cultures of Northern Nigerian people, no matter how
defined, in the so called Northern interests they claim to represent. Certainly, there is nothing of the Maguzawa (Hausa-Habe), the Kaje, the Dakarkari, the Marghi, the Mwaharvul, the Berom, the Higgi, the Kilba, the Mumuye, the Gude, the Fali, the Kanuri, the Nupe, the Ig-ibirra, the Jukun, the Tiv, the Idoma, the Yergam, the Mada, the Tangale, the Gara, the Gbagi, the Kambari or even of their original Fulbe about their interests, values or ways of life.

Secondly, by “Northern culture”, they also invariably mean “Islamic culture”, the obvious deceit of reducing Islam into ethnic specificity notwithstanding. In reality, however, the inner circle of the Kaduna Mafia does not socially equate muslims of, especially, the “Minority” ethnic groups of the Middle-belt or of the Yoruba and Bendel states origin, with true and pure muslims but as the *tubabbu* (assimilated) types. In fact even the Hausa and the Kanuri muslims do not belong to the Nigerian Islamic culture. To the Hausa-Fulani, these too are second-class muslims. Islamic culture is thus seen only from the cultural perspectives of the “settled Fulani” despite the fact that Islam was embraced by the Hausa and the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria before the Fulani tribes arrived Nigeria. From that perspective, however, one appreciates both the limited nature of the cultural base of the Kaduna and the historical recency of that base; it is that social force which came into existence as a legacy of the Dan Fodio Empire.

More narrowly still, the new generation of the Kaduna Mafia is a faction of this imperial legacy; being a collection of young, western educated Hausa-Fulani public servants (with, at the outer circle, their cohorts of other ethnic origins) who regrouped together, initially for collective security, following the assassination of Ahmadu Bello, the regional leader. During the Nigerian civil war, they had constituted themselves into a think-tank to, among others, assist the Federal forces with the needed propaganda and civilian aspect of war mobilisation. It is this group that became starry-eyed for power on the collapse of the Biafran secession bid.

It was also at this point in time that this young, western educated Hausa-Fulani formation stepped into the political vacuum created by the death of Ahmadu Bello and the the consequent dispersal of his political cohorts. The absence of a towering personality to step into the leadership shoes of Ahmadu Bello notwithstanding, they have been able to continue with the sardauna cohort’s Mafia-like projections, intrigues and manipulations of the Nigerian socio political system, thanks to those predecessors’ political foresights of placing
these youngmen in strategic positions in virtually all of Nigeria’s public service bureaucracies.

THE KADUNA MAFIA AND ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY

The inner core of the Kaduna Mafia primarily see themselves as legatees of Usman Dan Fodio. Their political outlook take bearings from his thoughts as reflected by the writings of Dr. Mahmud Tukur, a former Director of A.B.U.’s Institute of Administration, Zaria and a one-time Vice-Chancellor of Bayero University, Kano. Tukur also served as the Minister of Commerce under the Muhammadu Buhari Administration (1984-86). Their current religious outlook and philosophy, on the other hand, appear to be those portrayed in the thoughts and activities of Sheikh Mahmud Gumi. Gumi was religious adviser to the Premier of the North. He was also the Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria. Sheikh Gumi later founded the Izalutul Bidi’s Wa’lkamatual Sunnah Islamic purification movement which started activities in 1977.

It is noteworthy that both the political outlook, as captured in Dr. Mahmud Tukur’s thesis, *The philosophy, Goals and Institutions of the Sokoto Caliphal Administration, their Relevance to Nigeria* (1976) and Sheikh Mahmud Gumi’s thoughts,, teachings and public pronouncements paint a common ideological perspective and urge the same action commitment: the rebirth and expansion of the Usmania (the Sokoto Caliphal Empire) on a more puritanical, Islamic state, model in Nigeria.

Islamic thought is not united on the concept and principles of the *Islamic State*. As such, there are two competing perspectives on it. The emerging modern view which, unfortunately, is still a minority opinion, conceives of an Islamic state as an international community i.e. as an association to which all believers of the world belong and around which there should be no artificial or natural boundaries (geographical, political, ethnic) whatever. To this school of thought, the temporal affairs of muslims should be subjected to and governed by the laws and dictates of rulers in charge of national states and it is every muslim’s duty to obey and co-operate with such authorities to the extent of their consistency with natural justice and freedom of worship. They also urge muslims to show interest and be involved in their local community politics in partnership with peoples of other faiths for the betterment of life in the world and in the nation-state system to which they belong, notwithstanding the fact that they are members of the universal Islamic Community of believers.
In practice, the authorities of the Nigerian _Darikia_ (establishment Islam) denomination appears to be of this persuasion, so are the Saudi authorities and those of the other Arab emirates. Unfortunately, even though Qur'anic and Hadisal authorities can be cited to lend support to this stance, muslim fundamentalists attack it as being an unacceptable modernisation of the faith and as tending towards apostasy.

At the forefront of this opposition is what may be regarded as the Hanbali-Wahabi school of thought. Dr. (Revd. Fr.) J. Kenny made an excellent, though brief, summary of the background to the development of this school of thought as being established by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), though itself originating out of _Kharijism_ (a radical revolutionary Islamic movement) before it. It was further developed into an Islamic political theory by succeeding scholars and reformists. This greatly influenced, and continues to influence, events in North Africa and Pakistan. Kenny further observed, correctly, that it is to this class of extremism that the thoughts, work and activities of some modern day revolutionary reformists like Sayyid Qutb of Egypt (imprisoned and later executed in 1966), Abdul-Mawdudi of Pakistan and Mahmud Gumi of Nigeria belong. Thus it is to this school of thought and tradition that the inner core of the Kaduna-centred faction of the Hausa-Fulani formation belong.

According to this (Hanbali-Wahabi) school, Islam is a religion of political power and glory, even on earth, in as much as the founder of Islam, Prophet Mohammed, was himself, the first head of an Islamic state. As such, the first obligation of every Muslim is to work towards the establishment of a political _dar al islam_ (Islamic state). They do not believe, that it is possible to practice true Islam (as a total way of life) without Muslims possessing political supremacy. Any other arrangement is only second best. Because of this, therefore, the conditions under which Muslims should obey a secular leadership must be such that either the numerical size and strength of Muslims in that community is too weak for them to bring about the establishment of an Islamic state or the social, political and economic situations make it inadvisable to attempt to do so at a given time.

The Nigerian situation is, however, not as helpless as it would appear. The Hanbali-Wahabi fundamentalism dominates Islamic scholarship but they are, as of now, a small minority of the Nigerian Muslim population. Besides, the "Hausa-Fulani" is a small class in numerical terms being the product of the political marriage between the triumphant leadership of the Sokoto jihad and aspiring native Muslims. The majority of the NEPU/PRP traditional strongholds are
not Hausa-Fulani by definition. Neither are those of the Kanuri, Nupe, Yoruba and other ethnic groupings. Moreover, even among the hybrid Hausa-Fulani power elite, the business and political class of less western education — including some traditional rulers — are integrationists even if their sincerity as such is questionable. More significantly still, the socialist radicals among them are anti-religious manipulation and anti-mafia.

THE KADUNA MAFIA AND THE CHURCH:

Thus if the ultimate goal of the Kaduna Mafia is the rebirth and expansion of the Usmania in Nigeria, what forms would the process take? Better still, in what form is the process already being manifested? At the end of the process, what would be the status of non-muslims in general, and the Church in particular?

Even if I had all the answers to these questions, I do not see the possibility of dealing with them in so short a paper. They are questions that must be answered from the point of reflective experience as well as futuristic projections of mind to explore the vast possibilities and, perhaps, surprises ahead. Suffice it here, therefore, to just redirect our minds to a few well-known historical facts and developments in muslim nonmuslim relations at home and abroad, if only to guide our thoughts in appreciating the magnitude and the complexity of the dimensions of the problem posed by the Kaduna Mafia.

(a) Manipulation of Social Forces:

Firstly, and before anybody becomes skeptical about the ability of the Kaduna-oriented elite to recreate the Fulani empire, given the numerical inferiority of those involved, the historical fact needs be appreciated that the old Fulani empire was itself not brought about through the efforts of any Fulani fighting forces. The fact is that Dan Fodio, and his cohorts, only manipulated the social forces of the day. All they provided was leadership, guided by an islamic ideology

(b) The New Concept of Jihad:

Jihad (islamic holy war) has today taken on a whole new range of meanings and strategies. In particular, advocates of
“resurgent Islam” urge believers to plan and co-ordinate the use of any social advantage they have (political power, bureaucratic control, economic power or even cultural advantages) to increase the fortunes of fellow muslims and to consider doing so as Jihad because it leads to the ultimate advancement of the cause of Islam. As such, we should not expect that today’s Hausa-Fulani elite necessarily envisage the attainment of their goals of empire rebirth only through physical combats.

(c) **Controlling the Growth and Expansion of other Faiths**

The Hanbali-Wahabi school of thought is a very jealous Islamic sect. But this is the sect to which the Kaduna Mafia belongs. As the experiences of Egypt and other North African countries show, the existence, growth and expansion of other religious faiths including christianity get checked officially, once such fanatics predominate and control the policy making process of any country. This may be brought about by the combined effects of policies like those involving:

i. Nationalisation (government take-over) of Church welfare services: schools, hospitals, vocational centres, homes;

ii. Restriction of access to land and other property rights, to Churches and Church-related institutions;

iii. Promulgation of restrictive rules to control worship activities;

iv. Prohibition of local or foreign missionary (proselytisation) projects;

v. Restriction of access to political/public service offices to non-muslims.

(d) **The Usman dan Fodio Model:**

The ultimate goal of the Kaduna-centred elite it to revive the dan Fodio tradition. Has it ever occurred to non-muslims that the ideological under-pinnings of Fodio’s thoughts derived from the Hanbali-Wahabi school of thought? That Usman dan Fodio was an ardent adherent of this ideological faction of Islam is clear in his book, *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra*, which served as the ideological guide book for the Fulani-led jihad. What should interest non-muslims, especially christians, in this book is dan
Fodio’s instruction to apply the principle of *Dhimma* — a pact or covenant giving minimum conditions on which non-muslims could be “tolerated” in an Islamic territorial state. The pact is claimed to have been drawn up during the reign of Caliph Umar Ibn Abdal Azeez (717-720) and allegedly “agreed to” by the Christians of Syria. Attached as an appendix is the 26-point text of the pact. 

(b) **Bureaucratic Control:**

The concept of the *Kaduna Mafia* itself derived from the observed pattern and extent of manipulation of Nigerian public service institutions by the Kaduna-centric group of elite who, before the collapse of the First Republic, had already been strategically placed in Nigeria’s most sensitive government institutions during the dispensation of the Kaduna-controlled NPC Federal Government of that era. Using this headstart advantage, this group is now bent on translating bureaucratic power into economic power so that, like the Jews in the USA, they will also ultimately guarantee to themselves the power to determine and control the direction of politics in this country. Towards this end, the following three sectors of the nation’s public life have been targeted for total control in the meantime:

— the financial sector (banks etc)
— the petroleum sector
— the security and intelligence agencies.

**CONCLUSION:**

As a conclusion, meanwhile, I believe my guess is correct that the Kaduna Mafia will succeed in attaining their goals and objectives so long as non-muslims, especially Christians, remain individualistic, materialistic and therefore easy targets for manipulations because they are vulnerable due to fear and greed.
APPENDIX

THE DHIMMA COVENANT

When you took holy possession of us, we asked you for a guarantee of safety (aman) for ourselves, our children, our property, and the people of our community (milla). We agreed to the following conditions:

1. We will not build in our cities or in their neighbourhood any new monastery, Church, monk’s cell, or hermitage.

2. We will not restore any such buildings which fall into ruin, neither by night or by day, especially when the building is surrounded by Muslim compounds.

3. We will keep our doors open to people passing by and to travellers; moreover we will give food and lodging for three days to Muslims who stop at our places.

4. We will not harbor a spy in our Churches or houses.

5. We will not hide from the Muslims any plot to hurt them.

6. We will not teach our children the Qur’an.

7. We will not display our religion, or invite anyone to join it.

8. We will not prevent any of our relatives from joining Islam if he wishes.

9. We will respect Muslims, and give them our seats if they wish to sit down.

10. We will not in any way imitate their way of dressing, such as wearing a cap, a turban, or sandals, or parting the hair.

11. We will not speak as they do, or use their surnames.

12. We will not use saddles in riding.

13. We will not wear swords, or posses or carry any arms.

14. We will not use Arabic letters on our signet rings.

15. We will not sell alcoholic drinks.

16. We will clip our hair from covering our foreheads.

17. We will keep to the same dress wherever we are, and will wear a belt.

18. We will not display our crosses or books in any way in the roadways or markets of the Muslims.
19. We will play the *nagus* only very lightly in our Churches.
20. We will in no way read the lessons loudly in our Churches, when Muslims are about.
21. We will not have processions on Palm Sunday and Easter.
22. We will not pray loudly while bringing our dead to the grave.
23. We will not at all display processional lights in the roadways or markets of the Muslims.
24. We will not bury our dead near the Muslims.
25. We will take not possession of any slave who belongs to a Muslim through the division of war booty.
26. We will not have places where we can look down into Muslim houses.

**NOTE:** At-Turtushi goes on at length to list further shocking illustrations of the humiliated status that should be the lot of Christians and Jews under Islam. For example they may not ride normally but must sit sideways. They were not to be employed by Muslims. If any cross is displayed outside the Church it should be broken over the head of the owner.

**NOTES**

3. This pamphlet which is undated is said to issue from a Panorama Books Publishing House at 19 Egerton Street Calabar.
4. See the *Nigerian Standard*, June 17, 1988; see also other national dailies published around the same date.
5. See *Newswatch* Vol. 9 (n.22, May 29, 1988).
7. As in Kenny, *ibid*; quoting from At-Turtushi’s Syraj Al-Muluk, 1935.
THE STRATEGIES FOR ISLAMIC EXPANSION IN NIGERIA
AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSE
NOTES AND RELECTIONS

John Onaiyekan (Bishop of Ilorin Diocese)

INTRODUCTION:

Because of a whole set of events in the recent past, there is a growing sense of awareness among Christians in our country of *Islam as a force* with clear objectives of or at least tending towards domination. These events include the Shari’ah Debate, the Pro-Islamic policies of Shagari’s National Party of Nigeria (NPN) government, the sudden rise of Islamic missionary activities all over the country, the sporadic outburst of Muslim Fundamentalist violence (e.g. the Maitatsine group) and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) imbroglio. Most people now agree that a dangerous religious tension is building up in our national society and few people, if any, are sure how to handle the situation. There are those who believe that the tension should be allowed to grow to explosion point, so that the long awaited “revolution” (religious or political or socio-economic), may find an opportunity to take off. But there are those who still believe that with proper handling, the tension can and ought to be carefully defused so that a peaceful environment of religious harmony may be restored or developed.

As far as in him lies, a Christian has the injunction to seek a peaceful solution to crisis situations. So I believe most of us here would hope that it is still possible to draw back from the brink of the precipice. But whatever position one decides to take must be based on a realistic and true appraisal of the events and trends around us. What is actually happening in the Nigerian Islamic Community? What objectives are being pursued and by what means? How do these affect Christianity and Christians in Nigeria? And what lines of action and response are available for us?

We shall propose some answers to these important questions in the following notes and observations.

First, let us briefly look at the past history of Islamic expansion in Nigeria. Then we shall examine the new era which started during the
The Strategies for Islamic Expansion in Nigeria

Civil war, coinciding with and certainly drawing inspiration from the World Islamic Revival. Finally, we shall propose lines or "response" to the challenges which the present Islamic realities constitute to Nigerian Christians.

A. THE PAST PATTERN OF EXPANSION

1. The *history of Islamic expansion* in what is now Nigeria dates back to over a thousand years². In many parts of Nigeria Christianity is celebrating just its centenary! This deep historical root of Islam in Nigeria in comparison with Christianity, is of great significance in the present tension in the country. Among other things, it explains why many Muslims especially in the far North, cannot see that Islam is as much a "foreign" religion as Christianity in Nigeria; while they see Christianity as a late intruder, they claim that Islam is a "traditional religion" in Nigeria. Many of them therefore find it difficult to see why Christianity should be demanding equal rights with Islam!

2. This long history of Islamic expansion had many phases. I am not sure if one can actually talk of a "strategy" in that expansion. One perhaps should talk of a "pattern" — *woven into the political, social and economic history* of those parts of Nigeria affected by Islam. This pattern was generally as follows:

- Contact through trade and commerce
- Conversion of ruling classes
- Gradual Islamisation of the society.

At each point is the subtle but effective action of the *Islamic-scholar*, who also spread literacy in Arabic and taught the principles of Islamic law. The target is to establish an Islamic community.

3. The element of direct conquest, — *jihad* — is no doubt a method of Islamic expansion. However, military conquests are a fact of human history. More often than not, it seems *conquerors ride on Islam* to achieve their political objectives. At times, a foreign ruler presents himself to a subjected people in the name of Islamic brotherhood — and is accepted as God's regent where he might have been resisted as a tyrant. On the other hand, subjects of a Muslim ruler soon discover the social advantages of proclaiming the Islamic faith, which in turn enhances the security of the ruler. In such circumstances the ruler has good political reasons for pro-
moting Islam, which becomes the strongest basis for his authority. This is independently of whether the ruler is a devout Muslim or not: the important thing is to at least appear to be one.

4. The *Organic co-ordination* between the political, commercial and religious dimensions of a traditional Islamic community is demonstrated graphically in the lay-out of a typical Muslim town in Nigeria, where the centre of the city is occupied by the Palace, the Market and the Mosque, all three in close proximity.

5. Just as the ruler and the ruled each has good reasons to profess Islam, so also in the commercial field, it is *often a good business policy to be a Muslim*: credit facilities are easier, contacts are expanded, perhaps even taxes are less. Although these may not be reasons for conversion, they certainly are good incentives, especially where there are not alternative channels for those outside the Islamic brotherhood. We were treated to this type of argument by some defenders of Nigeria’s membership of the O.I.C. 

6. *In Yorubaland*, although Islam has been embraced by many for a long time, there was no real Islamic society established like in the northern emirates. Apart from the geographical barrier of the forest which hindered military conquest, we must also reckon with the cultural barrier of the Yoruba tradition which to a large extent resisted being absorbed into Islam. Even when Yoruba rulers became Muslim — as many of them now are — they still maintain the traditional cults and rituals of their ancestors, a situation which many of their royal colleagues in the North cannot understand.

The only significant exception to this general pattern in Yorubaland is Ilorin. But here, we are dealing with a situation of conquest and colonial rule by a foreign non-Yoruba power with roots in and constant links with Sokoto.

7. The politico-religious movement which is often referred to as the “*Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio*” in the early 19th century is perhaps the most important single factor responsible for the spread of Islam in most of the North. Before then, there were Muslims and Muslim rulers in some parts of Northern Nigeria. But what existed was a rather mild form of Islam — more or less like what we now have in Yoruba and some other parts of Africa, eg. Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone, etc. The Jihad set out precisely to purify Islam in the North, and ended up with a huge empire, the Sokoto
Caliphate spreading from Northern Benin Republic, through Southern Niger Republic into Nigeria as far as Northern Cameroun. Dan Fodio elaborated a careful programme for the establishment and administration of the Islamic communities which arose under the emirs. The emir was above all the defender and protector of the Islamic community. This raises the question today of what would happen if an Emir were to become a Christian. In the present state of affairs, he would have to vacate his throne, since he would no longer be able to be a defender of Islam. Southerners ought to note well this major difference between the emirs and their own "traditional rulers".

8. It is often said that British colonialism halted the expansion of Islam south-wards and promoted the evangelizing activities of Christian missionaries from the coast. The presumption is that if the British had not arrived, the whole of Nigeria would today have become as Muslim as Sokoto and Katsina. This is a pure hypothesis which may or may not have been verified. It is true that British intervention "halted" Fulani expansion in some places, eg. in Kabba where the arrival of the British in 1898 was welcomed by the local community as a liberation from the regular harassment and looting of Nupe-Fulani raiders. But it is also true that the British maintained the status quo and by upholding and supporting the authority of the emirs, prevented the emergence of liberation movements against the Sokoto caliphate in places like Nupeland, Ilorin, Southern Zaria, or even Kano. If British rule favoured the establishment of Christianity in many places, it also encouraged the entrenchment of Islam in other areas by recognising a special status for Islam in the emirates. It is well-known that the colonial powers had a working agreement with the emirs not to allow christian missionary activities where-ever the emirs decided should be considered muslim communities. It is clear that in an independent Nigeria, there could be no room for such an understanding. But many Muslim rulers still cannot reconcile themselves to the situation where Christians claim the right to preach and establish local Churches everywhere.

9. Here is one of the ambiguities of the present situation in many parts of Northern Nigeria: freedom of religion for some does not include freedom to convert Muslims or freedom of presumed Muslims to embrace Christianity. Some people have clearly told us that they do not accept what our constitution says on this matter, because it is, according to them, un-Islamic. We must somehow arrive at an agreement on this issue if we are to live in peace
B. THE NEW ERA

We are now witnessing a new era of Islamic consciousness and expansion. This can be traced back to the period of the Nigerian civil war, in the mid-sixties. What happened in Nigeria was only part of world-wide movement of Islamic revival.

1. In the world at large, there was growing sense of identity among Islamic nations, most of which had only recently shaken off the colonial yoke of Western powers. The liberation from Western political domination was seen also from a religious angle as the rescue of Islam from the threats of Christian influences. All along, it was an embarrassing anomaly for the world Islamic community which considered itself the best race in the world to find itself everywhere subjugated by non-believers. God just had to indicate his declarations about his followers. With political liberation, it was again possible to start dreaming of a march towards Islamic domination over the whole world. ¹¹

2. At the same time, the growth of Arab oil power was seen as Allah’s providential tool for the accomplishment of his divine purposes ¹². For many, it was no coincidence that a huge chunk of the earth’s oil reserves is under the soil of Muslim Arab nations. Oil wealth and power was therefore to be used to ensure the final triumph of Islam. The generous contribution of countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya towards the spread of Islam all over the world is to be seen at least partly in this light.

3. Inspite of the copious blessing of oil, the Muslim world still had serious problems in at least two areas. First, whatever may be said in recent times about the past glories of the golden age of Arab-Islamic scientific culture, they are largely today technologically back-ward, in comparison with the Western World. It was decided to take every step possible to bridge this scientific gap. Like other projects of technology-transfer, this too is proving more difficult than envisaged. Not least of the obstacles is, ironically, the Arab-Islamic mentality itself and its preoccupation with maintaining certain hallowed traditions not easily reconcilable with modern technology.

4. The other major problem is that of disunity within the world Muslim community. It was acknowledged that Islam could not conquer the world if it remained divided within itself. Much effort was
therefore made to establish *world organisations*, to affirm Islamic identity, fight for Muslim rights, and promote the expansion of the Islamic faith all over the world. These organisations often set up their agencies to handle specific areas of Islamic interest in the world. They convene regular international conferences at which problems are discussed and resolutions passed.

Here we are dealing with carefully worked out strategies, with an in-built system for controlling and assessing follow-up action. These organisations have done a lot to intensify Islamic solidarity all over the world.

5. For the purpose of our discussion, it is important to note that Nigeria has featured prominently in the origin, establishment, and development of these organisations. Information about these organisations and their impact on Nigeria tend to circulate only among those involved within the Muslim elite or activists. From this point of view, the cloud of secrecy which surrounded our purported application and admission to the OIC is quite normal for those concerned.

6. Much has been said about the O.I.C. and there is no need to repeat them here. Suffice it to say that the OIC raised such a serious controversy because it was an "intergovernmental organisation", which implicated Nigeria as a nation. Although the great legal luminary, Dr. Akinola Aguda, Director of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies insisted that the O.I.C. was indeed a legal impossibility, de facto, the matter is far from closed in the minds of many. There is so much illegality around us that one cannot rely only on a legal opinion, no matter how prestigious. In order to lay this matter completely to rest, we must insist, with the Nigerian Association of Christian Legal Practitioners that Nigeria either formally withdraws its membership or declares it never was a member.

Furthermore, even if we reverted to our former "observer status", we must all begin to demand accurate information about what we have been observing there since the past 17 years.

7. Apart from the OIC, which was established in 1969, there are other international Islamic organisations, of a non-governmental nature, with which Nigerian Muslims are involved, as an Islamic community. The following are among the most important.
(a) **World Muslim Conference**: founded in 1949, with headquarters in Karachi, Pakistan. Although it is the first of such organisations, its influence is not so great.

(b) **Muslim World League**, founded in 1962, with headquarters in Mecca. Nigeria is not only among the founding members, but has always been on the executive committee. It is a very influential organisation, especially as it is well financed by Arab oil money. It enjoys an observer status at the UNO. Among its many organs, it has a department specifically to fight against Christianisation in Islamic lands. During the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1982, it organised an important World Conference on the theme “Islam in Africa”. That conference laid out detailed strategies for the total Islamisation of African continent.

(c) **World Council for Islamic Da’wah**: This is Gadaffi’s brain-child, established in August 1982 for the propagation of Islam, but in opposition to the muslim Leaque considered too much dependent on Saudi Arabia. It throws money around all over the world, including Nigeria.

(d) **International Islamic Federation of Students’ Organisations** was founded in 1969, with Nigeria among the few co-founders. It has its head-quarters in Kuwait.

(e) **World Assembly of Muslim Youth**, founded in 1972, under the auspices of the OIC. It is heavily financed by Saudi Arabia and other Arab oil-rich states. It seems our local Moslem Student Society (MSS) is in close affiliation with this group.

Although all these organisations are not official government bodies, their activities have greatly influenced the form, tone, method and intensity of Islamic expansion in Nigeria. And since most of these organisations have official government support in the Islamic nations, the diplomatic missions of those nations can be expected to give support to the activities of these organisations in Nigeria. We have often heard of generous donations for Islamic projects by these foreign embassies. It is hard to assess exactly how much support goes towards the expansion of Islam in Nigeria through these channels. One lesson the OIC has taught us is to be vigilant.

8. Still on the impact of external influences, mention must be made of the annual *pilgrimages* to Mecca and Medina. Although pilgrims
go mainly to perform a religious duty, while there, they get exposed to different currents and trends in world Islamic revival. The greater the numbers that go on pilgrimage, the more they are influenced by different ideas, some integrist, others radical.

9. On the Home Front, we have all seen the emergence of many Islamic organisations, big and small. Hardly any day passes without one of them appearing on the pages of our newspapers, seeking registration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The main aim of most of them is to co-ordinate the efforts of Muslims for the promotion of Islam. The most important ones are:-

(a) The Jama'atu Nasril Islam (J.N.I.) 17 was founded in 1961 by the late Ahmadu Bello, to unite all Muslims of the North, irrespective of their different denominations or "brotherhoods". Its Arabic name is significant; it means "The Society for the Victory of Islam" — and it has been living up to its name. If the victory of Islam will mean the destruction of other religions, so be it! At its inauguration, the Sardauna declared.

"I will not agree to anything against our religion" 18 Its president is the Sultan of Sokoto. It has been very active in expanding Islamic missionary work and education, and in other social development projects. It has a prestigious headquarters in Kaduna. Judging from its occasional releases, it has a good crop of intellelegentia at its disposal.

Since after the civil war, it has expanded its activities beyond the North to include the whole country.

(b) Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs 19 was founded in 1973 at Kaduna, in order "to get Muslims in this country under one central organisation" 20. It's objectives were formulated as follows:

To cater for the interest of Islam throughout the Federation, to serve as a channel of contact with the governments of Nigeria on Islamic Affairs, where necessary, and to serve as the only channel of contact on Islamic matters 21.

Again the President is the Sultan of Sokoto; the present Sultan, Ibrahim Dasuki, had been the Secretary General since its origin.

The political weight of this body is tremendous. It has representatives from every state in the Federation. The Council had a lot to do with the O.I.C. affairs, through Dasuki its Secretary General.
(c) **The Muslim Students Society (MSS),** has been exerting a lot of influence in schools, at both secondary and tertiary levels. Founded as far back as 1954 among Yoruba Muslim students, it has now become a national organisation that has in the meantime become rather radicalised. They tend to be influenced by the intolerant trends of Gumi’s "Izala" movement.

Meanwhile, the various sects continue to flourish within Islam in Nigeria. Outsiders see little of the divisions, largely because they all manage to worship together in the same mosques — unlike Christians who remain divided in worship. But once in a while, the divisions break into the open; eg. between the Iyanyyan and the Qadiriya in Sokoto in late March 1987. The long-standing rift between the Ahamddiya and other muslims defies papering over. But there is a definite effort to work together as Muslims in Nigeria. The tragedy is that these unification projects seem to be always high-jacked by intolerant, integratist trends, thus ending up indoctrinating muslims who previously had a peaceful disposition. A typical example is the radicalization of the MSS.

10. We referred above to the *political weight* of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. Both the council and the JNI seek to work closely with Muslim office holders to ensure the progress of Islam, if need be, by using their influence and positions in office. Muslims in office would be expected to espouse the position of the Sardauna never to agree to anything against the Islamic religion — and they would probably be readily given information as to what are against Islam. Conversely, because of the influential weight of these Islamic bodies, they are actually in position to promote the political and professional career of those they consider good Muslims. Thus a situation of mutual benefit arises, almost like we described in the traditional Islamic community.

11. Christians have every cause to be alarmed at any suggestion of islamising our nation. It is a fact that in an "*Islamic State*" the non-Muslim is at a clear disadvantage in relation to a muslim fellow citizen. Second class citizen is a correct description of his status. By the same token, an Islamic state makes it so advantageous and attractive to be a muslim that only heroes would resist becoming a muslim. The call for an Islamic state, whether directly (like Gumi) or indirectly (like the Shari'ah Jihadists) is therefore a most effective strategy for the expansion — the "victory" — of Islam in Nigeria.
The threat touches not only christians, but all who are non-Muslims-
and indeed all who are not prepared to have every aspect of their
lives regulated by “Islamic law” as interpreted by a group of Kadis, 
immans and alfas.

12. At this point, we must also mention the economic/financial-
angle.
Even before the call for Islamic banking which would practically
give muslims the monopoly of control over the nation’s finances, 
there is already evidence of the unfair use of financial power to pro-
mote Islam at the expense of others. One wonders if it is by sheer co-
incidence that so many directors of our national financial institutions 
are Muslims. So also are quite a few sudden millionaires whose 
economic successes defy explanation. We hear that in many parts 
of the North, one’s business moves faster if one shows up at the 
mosque. A subtle but firm pressure is being applied on those who are 
not “fanatical” about their religious beliefs. Even if such “economic 
converts” are not serious, their children may indeed be.

C. CHRISTIAN RESPONSE:

We have seen that the strategies for Islamic expansion in Nigeria 
are multi-faceted. So also must our response be. But before we start 
panicking over what we shall do, I think we need to take note of at 
least 3 considerations to reduce the tension in our minds:

1. In the first place, there is nothing wrong or illegitimate about an 
Islamic strategy for expansion in Nigeria. Muslims have the right to 
work out ways and means of promoting their faith, retaining their 
members and if possible make converts from Christianity. Our Con-
stitution allows it, and their religion enjoins it. All that is necessary is 
that the same right be respected for Christian evangelisation, and 
that strategies be fair to all concerned. The big problem is that often 
we do not agree on what is fair. When does extending preference to a 
member of my faith become injustice to others? In any case, it is 
important to make sure that no one is denied his/her rights because 
of his/her religious affiliation.

2. Talking about strategies, we too have had our strategies for the 
expansion of the Christian faith in Nigeria. These strategies have 
worked so well that much of the strategies of muslims are in fact a 
counter-move to neutralise or halt our progress. I have sometimes 
heard muslims lamenting how many adherents they have lost to
Christianity through schools, hospitals and similar amenities. They looked on helplessly for a long time, as we wielded the economic influence which funds from mission supporters, abroad gave us. They are now using our methods: seeking and receiving foreign aid for propagating Islam, inviting missionaries, building schools and hospitals, forging links with World Islam and improving their national cohesion. They have even tried to invent leadership positions that previously did not exist, so as to have counterparts for our Bishops, prelates, and Church leaders.

3. Inspite of all this, all is not well with Islam in Nigeria. Much of the inner tensions and contradictions persist, between Northern and Southern muslims; between Fulani and Hausas in the North, between conservatives and radicals, and between the different sects. At times too even the call for Islamisation proceed from different considerations. While some integralists are seeking a return to the classical Islamic State, the fundamentalists are asking for a return to the egalitarian simplicity of the Koran. It is said that Gumi is a persona non grata in the circles of Dasuki and the Emirs. Similarly, on the international level, the world organisations are themselves grounds for fresh divisions within Islam. For example, Gadaffi’s World Council for Islamic Da’wah does not see eye to eye with the Saudi dominated Muslim League. Ironically, one of the objectives of Gadaffi’s Council is “to liberate the Holy Lands” — not Jerusalem from the Jewish “Zionists”, but Mecca and Medina from the Saudi dictators. There is also the important differences between the small group of loud fanatics who claim to be speaking and acting on behalf of “all true Muslims” and the vast silent majority who want nothing more than to worship Allah in peace. While the excesses of the fanatics are a source of embarrassment to this silent majority, it is unfortunate that they rarely raise their voice in protest, to dissociate themselves from such excesses.

The oil factor in international economics has suffered considerable deterioration. This means that the flow of oil money for widespread Islamic propagation is likely to be proportionately reduced. Already there are signs of this financial crunch.

Finally, Islam in Nigeria now has to cope with a vigorous and (perhaps) unexpected back-lash of Christian affirmation and resistance. The March 1987 events in Kaduna State have as it were set the stage for a critical verification of the basis of our mutual relationship. Having seen what some people have in mind for a future Islamic state, non-muslims have been forced to take a definite stand,
and resist firmly.

But having said all this, the situation is nevertheless quite serious. Islamic fanaticism constitutes at least a nuisance value in the society. It is a real threat to peace, harmony, security and unity in the country. It should be obvious by now to everyone that any attempt to formally declare Nigeria an Islamic state will provoke a major upheaval that will injure Muslims at least as much as it will injure Christians. But there are dreamers and visionaries who cannot see the obvious. They and their blind followers are dangerous. They must be restrained. In Nigeria, there is still a balance of power to discourage sensible adventurers. That balance must be maintained. There is no need to pretend that everything is fine. We have a task to ensure at least the survival of Christianity in our land.

Some summary suggestions on how to achieve this objective will now form the conclusion to this paper.

CONCLUSION: Survival Strategies: These include at least the following:

1. Keep ourselves informed about Islam and the Islamic reality in Nigeria, so as to have a realistic idea of its strengths and weaknesses, its common elements and complexities. This will enable us to recognise the aims, methods and objectives of the different trends of Islam, so that we do not condemn everyone for the crimes of a few ranks and fanatics.

2. Have an up-to date Christian theology of the religions in general, and of Islam in particular. Catholics and Protestants alike have official Church documents on dialogue with the Religions which could be used to good advantage. If our activities are guided by the principles laid down in these documents, we stand a good chance of winning the confidence and trust of the good willed Muslim.

3. At the same time, seek ways of increasing the zeal of the members of the Christian community for their faith. We should give no grounds for our Muslim brothers to continue to think that they alone have a religion that is a total way of life. Here comes the role of the different renewal movements in the Church.

4. The more serious and consistent the attacks against Christians are, the more aware we become of the need to close ranks and act in
unity as christians. Fear of a common opponent is, however, at best only a point of departure for, an incentive to, and a reminder of the basic need for promoting Christian unity. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) is a useful body which serves as a common forum for pursuing common objectives. But we need a more positive concept of ecumenism to recognise, expand and deepen all that we as Christians have in common. That is the only way for CAN to break through its present dead-end of immobilism and emerge as an Association with a serious commitment to christian unity in truth and love. The more the Church is divided, the weaker it is in coping with outside challenges. Serious commitment to unity means clearly discouraging any further fragmentation of the Christian fold, as well as taking serious steps to heal past divisions.

We must also add the need for unity across the nation. In particular, Southern Christians should stop looking at the North as a Muslim block. We must fight for the right of Christianity all over the country. To write off any part of Nigeria as lost to Islam is the worst that could happen to our gallant christians in those places.

5. Because of the close connection between all nations of the world, we should strengthen, rather than weaken our international links with the christian world. This can be done without necessarily re-colonising ourselves. Calls for a "moratorium" on foreign missionary involvement in our lands only play into the hands of those who would wish to see the Christian faith suffocate, wither and die.

6. It is necessary to maintain and intensify our involvement with social welfare projects: especially education and health. Now that the arrogant craze for government control of all institutions is wearing off, we should seize the opportunity to step in and offer our services. These projects are still a powerful means of evangelization. Now that Muslims too have built many schools, of their own, the feeling of jealousy ought to be less. To do this, we need funds from whatever legitimate sources.

7. Finally, we can no longer avoid the question of the relationship between our Christian faith and politics. We must evolve a suitable popular theology of political engagement in the country. Never again should good Christians run away from politics as a dirty job to be left for crooks and rogues. Political leadership as a form of Christian stewardship whose reward is great in heaven must now become a main feature of our Christian teaching and exhortation to the faithful.
We should even go further to identify and encourage good gifted
Christians to vie for public office, so as to ensure a good Christian
component in the leadership corps of our country. It is not just a
question of counting how many Christians are in leadership position.
We must be concerned about what type of Christians are in those
positions. The aim would NOT be to achieve a Christian domination
of the nation, but rather to ensure a valid Christian contribution
towards good and just government. If there is just government, no
one needs fear the domination of one over the other. Everyone
would have one objective, to build a strong, united and prosperous
nation where the rights of all are respected and promoted.

If we work along these lines, we need not fear expansion
strategies of anyone or group of people. The challenges are many,
but I have the conviction that they can be met effectively and ade­
quately.

NOTES

1. See Statement by a group of Ahmadu Bello University lecturers published in the New

2. The Christians of Rome living in similar circumstances were exhorted by Paul: “Do all
you can to live at peace with everyone. Never try to get revenge; leave that, my friends,
to God’s anger”. Rom. 12:18-19.

especially pp. 16-22, 56-61.

4. See the readiness with which many Hausa communities accepted Fulani rulers during
the 19th Century Jihad.

5. Some Muslims told us it would be in our national interest to join the O.I.C. since that
would qualify us for soft loans from the Islamic Banks. That O.I.C. nations still queue
up for I.M.F. loans is enough to debunk such arguments.

6. A standard work is G.O. Gbadimosi, The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 1841 —
1968; London, 1978. See also P.J. Ryan, Imale: Yoruba participation in the Muslim

7. On how a Fulani dynasty got installed in Yoruba Ilorin see S.J. Hogben, An Introduc­

8. See M. Last, The Sokoto Caliphate, London, 1977. For a more comprehensive and
joint study, see Y.B. Usman (Ed), Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate, Zaria
1979.


10. Ibid.

11. Khomeini of Iran has made this his declared objective.
12. On the use of oil power for Islam, see Ishak Ibrahim, *Black Gold and Holy War*, 1982. This book, however, needs to be read with caution.


18. Ibid. p. 48.


23. L. Sanneh, “The Call, the Promise and the Challenge” in Iadarous (ed) *op. cit* pp. 19 – 34; see especially p. 25.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IN NIGERIA:

Backgrounds for Understanding the maitatsine Phenomenon

By
Bala J. Takaya

1. Introduction:

Religious intolerance is a product of fundamentalist fanaticism where a dominant religious group or an emergent revolutionary sect refuses to accommodate the views, rights or practices of adherents to other religious faiths in the same community. In this write-up, we discuss the issue from the perspective of Nigeria’s experiences with the now familiar, but still mysterious, maitatsine uprisings in mind.

The maitatsine phenomenon is a very serious issue in Nigeria’s national life, particularly so now that religious intolerance in the country has become a veritable social, political and security problem that has so far defied the normal law and order solutions. Besides, it does not appear that Nigeria has seen the worst of maitatsine as yet. Hence, at the moment, there is an ongoing national effort in search of clues for understanding the problem as well as for the appropriate responses to the threats it poses to national peace and stability.

Though based on real life interviews and field work on the issue, the frame of discussion in this paper attempts to transcend the usual concern for, and limitations to, material details and evidences of the “man-event” and “time — place” tracings of the successive disturbances that rocked Kano, Maiduguri, Kaduna, Yola and Gombe between 1980 and 1985 to avoid limiting our perceptions to only the foliages of events or inhibit our ability to discover and focus on the substance. This paper, therefore, attempts to provide a theoretical framework based on the socio-historical foundations of such uprisings. Such an approach, we hope, would permit more productive and rewarding analyses and interpretations of the phenomenon. For to bury our attention only in the immediate socio-economic and political conditions is to focus on the “triggers” only.
II. Record of the Maitatsine Disturbances, 1980 — 1985

From the point of view of orthodox Islam, as practised by a majority of Muslims in Nigeria, it may be wise, indeed advisable, to disclaim and condemn the *maitatsine* uprisings as non-Islamic and irreligious if only for the purpose of stemming the tide. In reality, however, the *maitatsine* unrest is a religious phenomenon; Islamic in nature, both from the points of view of its participants and of historical trends. Like all other major religious uprisings, however, *it is basically a power struggle, employing the mass mobilization potential of Islam in Nigeria for the purpose. The sooner it was seen as such, the better for the understanding of the issue.*

*The following table portrays, at a glance, the record of the maitatsine uprisings in Nigeria so far:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Disturbance</th>
<th>Date Occurred</th>
<th>Official Death Toll</th>
<th>Arrests Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yan-Awaki Ward</td>
<td>18-20 December, 1980</td>
<td>4,177</td>
<td>1,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano, Kano State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bulumkutu Ward</td>
<td>26-29 October, 1982</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maiduguri, Borno State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rigassa/Tudun-Wada, Kaduna, Kaduna State</td>
<td>29 Sept — 3 October, 1982</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dobeli Ward</td>
<td>27 Feb — 5th March, 1984</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimeta-Yola, Gongola State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pantami Ward, Gombe, Bauchi State</td>
<td>26-28 April, 1985</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources = Codes KPCD, KIPD (compiled from sundry classified and restricted Documents)*
Characteristically, the Maitatsine uprising is an urban phenomenon, at least in origin. The location of each spark-point is also noteworthy. Anybody familiar enough with the cities of Kano, Maiduguri, Kaduna, Jimeta — Yola and Gombe will immediately recognise the fact that the wards of Yan — Awaki, Bulumkutu, Rigassa, Dobeli and Pantami respectively, from which each of the crises sparked off are the most depressed parts of those cities. As is the case with the similarly depressed parts of most Nigerian cities, governmental attention and, therefore, security surveillance, is minimal in these areas. Such wards thus serve as the “republics of the neglected”; they harbour mostly the unemployed, unskilled rural migrants or, most significant in relation to the maitatsine issue, migrant Islamic scholars from far away parts of the country. In fact such scholars are even known to come from neighbouring countries like Chad, Cameroon and Niger. These ghetto settlers not only envy but also detest the conspicuous opulence of “modern” life around them as it is kind of life into which they cannot be absorbed due to their basic economic and skill disabilities in addition to their being “strangers” in political terms. They are the alienated who only manage to survive precariously through unsecured and unpredictable earnings from menial labour like truck-pushing, orange vending, manicure services (finger-nail trimming), etc. They thus constitute part of the reservoir of thugs ready for the employ of any social or political miscreant.

In the context of the Maitatsine uprising, the Muslim elements of these settlements stand out prominently as the first cannon fodders of the revolution. But who employs and/or sponsors them for the purpose?

Discreet field interviews and interpersonal discussions so far tend to suggest that basically, two analytic groups of persons were, and are still involved. Firstly, a powerful but still faceless political elite group with a design to topple the political system and shift the locus of power for its own benefit through a major revolutionary social upheaval in a form that will appear as an Islamic jihad (holy war), is suspected to be behind it. Some foreign financial, ideological and tactical backings for this group cannot be ruled out but, because the group itself is still faceless, there is no direct proof as yet.

The second group can be identified as opportunist mallams (Islamic teachers), of the Mohammed Marwa type, who are readily employed by the first group as preachers of revolutionary ideas and mobilisers. They are teachers with deep and specialised knowledge of the Qur’an. But because they are not patronised by the Muslim
traditional leadership orthodoxy of Nigeria (now loosely referred to as the \textit{darika} class) and are therefore not as publicly prominent as they think they should be, they deeply resent the values of the present "modern" society. They are, instead, very critical of it; adopting puritanical fundamentalism as they do. But it is in search of the tutorship of these kinds of mallams that most of the advanced \textit{almajiris} (young islamic pupils) migrate into the urban areas in the first place.

Thus because of the inclination of such mallams to puritanical radicalism and the readily mobilisable human materials available as students and adherents under their control, they are patronised and sponsored by the first group of persons as recruitment agents for the planned social upheavals under the guise of religion.

III. \textbf{Philosophy}:

Pertaining to the historical foundations of such uprisings it appears that the practice of causing revolutionary changes of leadership is inbuilt into the religion of islam. Although Sure 4:59 of the \textit{Qu’ran} enjoins believers to "obey God, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you", Mohammed Ali explains that universal though this injunction is and irrespective of whether the authority is secular or religious, the condition for obedience is the issue of the prevailing of "righteousness".\footnote{1}

There is, however, always bound to be difficulties in the interpretation of the concept of \textit{righteousness} as to be acceptable to muslims in any other arrangement short of an islamic state. The difficulties faced by the prophet (Muhammed) on the inception of the religion of islam with the then existing powers in Makkah are instructive in this respect; the experiences of revolutionary leaders like Usman B. Fudi in Nigeria, likewise. For this reason, explains Ahmad Usman\footnote{2}, history tends to impress it on muslims that true islamic religion cannot be established without political supremacy.

Indeed the conditions under which muslims obey a secular (non-muslim) leadership appear to be addressed more to the community of muslims themselves than to those in authority in a non-islamic state.

These include:

(a) that there is no possibility of establishing an islamic state;

(b) that there is freedom of worship and unhindered observances of the pillars of islam;
(c) that, in any case, Muslims should at all times strive towards the ultimate establishment of an Islamic state when changes permit, as any other arrangement is only temporary and second-best.

Moreover, even under an Islamic state, obedience to leaders must derive from the latter’s adherence to the Shari’ah in its broadest sense. In its narrowest sense, the Shari’ah is an Islamic code of laws, while it is the total way of life in its broadest connotation. Historically, at least, good Muslims are encouraged to rebel against what, according to the shari’ah, is “unlawful” or “immoral” and must strive to correct it. Liman explains that this (Fala al aini) is one of the first obligations of a good Muslim.

An Islam-inspired uprising in a peaceful situation, characteristic of the maitatsine eruptions, may thus easily be justified to believers on one or a combination of three main grounds:

(a) the need to rebel against injustice and oppression;
(b) an effort to establish an Islamic state at an opportune time;
(c) the replacement or purification of a corrupt Muslim leadership.

History again shows that all the successful and unsuccessful religious uprisings in the West African sub-region, particularly in Nigeria, were inspired along these lines. Notably, Shehu Usman B. Fudi’s rebellion against the Hausa Habe Kings in 1804 was considered primarily as an uprising against injustice when government attempted to restrain him. However, to the architects of the revolution, the mujahiddun, it was the final process of consolidating the revived and purified umma (community of believers) and establishing an Islamic state, Dar as Islam. Hence Abdullahi’s declaration that “time had come when the faithful should have their own prince, i.e. an Amir al muminum.”

On the other hand, it was also seen as the purification of the leadership in an Islamic community. For at the time, the Hausa Habe Kings had embraced Islam as a court religion. The kings however still practised traditional “Pagan” rites. The syncretic situation, where paganism was allowed to pollute Islam and vice versa, was decried by Muslim scholars.
IV. Parallels in Strategy

The salient elements of a typical Islamic rebellion can be summarised as follows:

1. The strategy of extensive proselytisation to convert, reconvert, or revive the faithful. This is aimed at creating a ready umma.

2. The sensitisation strategy by which the awareness and sentiments of believers are mobilised against policies and activities that appear "unjust" or "oppressive" to the shari'a (broadest sense) no matter the justifications and necessity for such policies.

3. The confrontation strategy, usually the ultimate stage as it represents the point of direct open conflict even with the law enforcement agencies, especially when provoked.

In all cases it is noteworthy that the struggle is always a power struggle aimed at circulation of elite or change of government. But the struggle must essentially appear a religious affair.

How do our conceptualisations stand in the context of the Maitatsine phenomenon in Nigeria?

Before attempting this applied analysis, however, we recall the point earlier made that the Maitatsine phenomenon should, for emphasis, be considered an Islamic phenomenon. This is necessary to guard against any policy that may consider the maitatsine disturbance as affairs of just a handful of lunatics who can easily be crushed and disbanded at once. Of course it may not be easy to defend this assertion from an orthodox Islamic point of view, even for the very fact that in history, no religious orthodoxy even justified and validated a destabilising radicalism. The following therefore need be borne in mind on the issue:

(a) Any religious protest that is reformist or ultra-revivalist capable of overthrowing the status quo is always condemned and, where possible, forcefully opposed by orthodoxy. Jesus Christ had to suffer a humiliating death at the hands of both the Jewish religious orthodoxy and the Roman state for His radicalism. Even after His death, His followers were driven into hiding — more like have the maitatsine today. Martin Luther's protestant movement in the early 16th century suffered the
same fate.

(b) The game of power is often a dangerous one. More so when it entails a bid to induce a revolutionary circulation of elite. The architects of such revolutions must design fool-proof tests of loyalty, no matter how eccentric such tests may be; thus the alleged mixing and drinking of human blood, the tatooing of members, etc. may be such security measures in the case of the Maitatsine rather than just a display of eccentricity. Again it is worth while to note the parallel here in the history of christianity when the early believers were castigated as spirit-possessed people who drank human blood and ate human flesh (the eucharist?).

(c) There must be an element of "religious" faith involved in the Maitatsine. It is certainly not very plausible to argue that the whole followership of the Maitatsine movement have been acting under the power of mere hypnotism or spiritual possession and continuing even after Mohammed Marwa had long been proven dead. Even if he were still alive, it couldn’t have been possible for him to inspire up-risings in Kano, Bulumkutu, Kaduna, Yola and Gombe all by mere hypnotism. The Maitatsine followers must therefore have been fighting a sort of jihad (holy war) in the cause of which they must deeply believe.

In such a Jihad situation, all that die or suffer in it are committing a shabada (a total submission to Allah and his messenger and dying to defend the cause of one’s faith and liberty).

V. The Explanatory Postulates

The Maitatsine phenomenon has so far remained a near mystery, the cause and motives for which are not yet clear to the general public. As such, three unelaborated theoretical explanations seem to emerge from the field. One school of thought merely believes that it is just the continuation of the shari’a controversy and tensions of the late 1970s. As such, it is considered to be a manifestation of lack of faith by some muslim leaders in the ability of Western type democracy to bring about the establishment of an islamic state in Nigeria by a peaceful process.

A second school of thought however feels that it is just a spontaneous uprising led by unenlightened muslim scholars to bring about an islamic state in the tradition of a jihad. This, particularly
when statistics tend to over-state the actual number of Muslims in Nigeria may have given rise to the thought that an Islamic umma should be governed as an Islamic state.

Reflections on discussions with (security) observers of the activities of some members, probably hiding under the cover of a ten-year-old popular Islamic movement, the Izatual Bidi' a Waikamatul Sunnah, however, inspires a third school of thought which also happens to be more elaborate. Presented in form of a plausible dialectic, this observation sees the unfolding of the inevitable “action stage” in the existing thesis — anti-thesis ferment within the extant Nigerian Islamic community, the final result of which is expected to produce the SYNTHESIS. Interestingly enough, this contradiction is also seen as being basically a power struggle in the garb of a religious reform movement with the following arguments as its primary justifications:

(a) that the orthodox Darika leadership in the country (the emirate traditional rulership) has failed Islam in Nigeria. They must be replaced. These traditional rulers, according to this view, are more consistent in political prostitution than in their call as the defenders of the faith because since colonialism, they seem to have adopted the policy of compromise (with any ruling group no matter the religion of the ruler) for the purpose of retaining their privileged power positions. Hence they compromised and cooperated with the British colonialists through the “Indirect Rule” policy; with the politicians of the First Republic, when the emirs all became patrons of the ruling party (NPC); with the various succeeding military regimes; and with all the civilian leaderships that came to power at both the Federal and State levels, irrespective of the party and religious affiliations of the leaders during the Second Republic. All these to merely retain their privileged family positions on the seats of power, whereas Islam does not permit succession by heritage, in reality.

(b) to change the system, several strategies are necessary. These, according to this school of thought, should follow the normal tradition, viz:-

i. revive the Umma by reconverting believers away from the darika philosophy right from the grassroots;

ii. Sensitize the Umma against current religious aberrations
caused by attempts at modernisation and adaptations to contemporary political developments;

iii. Recruit militants and build the army wing from the new faithfuls at the grassroots. These should then be trained for modern arts of combat and warfare,

iv. once ready, provoke the *dariba* and the State, at the time the latter are most unready, and carry out speedy and simultaneous uprisings at many fronts to divide the attention and strengths of the State.

The result should be:

(a) a new reformed islamic *umma* with a new set of leadership;

(b) possibly, the establishment of an islamic state (hence Maitatsine’s total attacks on both muslim and non-muslim males at the same time?).

This third theoretical reconstruction therefore views the Maitatsine phenomenon as a premature eruption of a more elaborate design; possibly, pre-emptively precipitated by the deranged leader, Mohammed Marwa (who might have been privy to a grand design), for his own personal power calculations should the revolution be successful. Could it be in a bid for him to emerge as a Nigerian kind of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini? Could such a double-crossing calculus of his be the reason for the refusal by any other leader to identify with the uprisings even though some might have been privy to the grand design?

More fundamentally, however, it should be a matter of great concern that religious tension is now increasing on a wider inter-religious dimension in Nigeria as it seems to have rapidly escalated into muslim — christian clashes barely seven years after Mohammed Marwa’s uprisings started in Kano; suggesting that the issue is more deep-seated than the apparently premature intra-islam clashes. Hence a more comprehensive research/study of the phenomenon is necessary.

VI. Implications for the Future

Why should the Nigerian State be concerned about such religious uprisings like the *Maitatsine* or any other? Being a plural society
with multiple religious faiths and ethnic groupings, it is obvious that a prolonged religious discrimination and confrontations here must be avoided at any cost for the following reasons:

1. Once set in motion, it is impossible to cure discriminations and quell conflicts based on religious fundamentalism;

2. No group ever won a religious war within the same system, at least not within a few generations, when it involves the universalist religions. Hence any design to impose a religious theocracy on Nigeria should be crushed at any cost in the interest of muslim — christian family peace;

3. Religious intolerance could lead to internecine confusions or mutual destructions capable of eventually spelling disintegration for Nigeria as a country;

4. The effects of religious intolerance are likely to be felt more perpetually by such mixed faith ethnic groups like
   
   — the Middle-Beltans
   — the Yorubas
   — the Bendelites.

in which members of the same family unit may be found to belong to different major religious faiths. A religious conflict will either divide such families for ever or alternatively will, in the long run, be transformed into an ethno-political show-down when muslims from these areas uncover the veiled political design to incite them against their own (non-muslim) relations in the guise of an islamic jihad; the ultimate end of the Maitat-sine uprisings being to convert the final stage of the confrontations into a muslim versus non-muslim conflict with the imposition of an islamic state as the major goal. The latter possibility (degeneration into ethnic conflicts) is a high probability as it is clear that only Nigerians of purely muslim community backgrounds will reap the benefits of an islamic state brought about by force.

5. In any case, the success of one group over the other in a religious or ethnic confrontation may lead to the institutionalization of INTOLERANCE and active discrimination against the
others — a form of ideological apartheid — which would in turn heighten the state of instability.

VII. Suggestions

The foregoing unavoidably paints a gloomy future for the Nigerian nation if the warning hints are not sufficiently heeded. But where do we go from here? What conclusions and policy recommendations should we proffer? We propose the following, among others:

1. The *Maitatsine* movement should be seen primarily as a power struggle in the name of Islam. The movement sees Islam primarily as a political force to be tapped. It is therefore dependent on Islam only for its mass mobilization potentials.

2. The state should deal with the *Maitatsine* phenomenon as a purely subversive and insurrectionist group rather than as a religious revivalist movement; religion being employed only as a vehicle by its sponsors.

3. Even though no respectable and enlightened persons have so far identified themselves with it, the probability that the basic ideological persuasion which gave rise to the *Maitatsine* uprising has the sympathy of well-educated and well-placed Nigerians should not be discarded. Who, for instance, financed the manufacture and purchases of the weapons used? Who financed the recruitment project as revealed by one of the arrested Gombe participants who claimed to be fighting for a pay?

4. By design, the Northern part of the country may have been selected as training grounds by the *Maitatsine* for several strategic reasons:

   (a) the relatively higher rate of unemployment found among Northern Muslim youths; *almajirai, gardawa, yan-dako, yan-amalanke*, etc.,

   (b) the relatively low income distribution in the North, the consequence of which is the relatively wider income differentials among Northerners, such that a few super-rich persons (the business alhajis) live conspicuously in palatial mansions and travel by private jets and expensive cars
amidst most abjectly poor, though able-bodied, people who depend on the few rich for alms, Friday gifts and meagre earnings from unpredictable menial labour jobs for a living;

(c) the established tradition of islamic uprising against system injustices among Northern muslims;

(d) the relatively lower level of Western education among Northern muslims and, therefore, their general aversion to modernization;

(e) the higher visibility of state power seen as the oppressive attributes of Northern traditional rulership aristocracy. Government policy should therefore address itself to these.

5. The observed aberrations in the teachings and practices of the Maitatsine muslims, decried by the orthodoxy, must be seen as deliberately designed radical marks of the revolution most probably designed to enchance sharper identity for both mobilisational and security purposes e.g.

(a) the unorthodox modes of prayers and observances;

(b) the derogatory doctrines regarding personalities and authorities in islam;

(c) the condemnation of modern social and material objects of culture;

(d) the display of built-in eccentricities like the alleged mixing/drinking of human blood and tatooing of members. These must be seen and interpreted as the movement’s security measures, marks of loyalty or the signs of the shahada.

It is noteworthy, as a parallel, that Jesus Christ and his followers were rejected and persecuted by the authorities of his time for radical departures from orthodox doctrines and practices: for eccentricities like Jesus’ mingling and dining with publicans and tax collectors; his coming close to, and healing lepers and the lame; and the occasional violations of the sacredness of the Sabbath. These irked the orthodoxy while they appeared as the symbols of liberty and new lights to the Jesus masses. The major difference between these being that though largely misunderstood by His converts who were actually
looking for an earthly Messiah, Jesus was preaching about God’s kingdom on earth with no design on the *State House*. The contrary is the case of the Maitatsine movement. This should be borne in mind.

In conclusion, we wish to advise that the Nigerian government should, at any time, deal very decisively with the *Maitatsine* or any other religious uprising in the country. Government has a responsibility to protect not only the right to life for every citizen but also the continuity and progress of the country. A few individuals should not be allowed to burn it down just to enable them rule over the ashes.

Finally, it may also be necessary to end with a solemn reminder: it is not impossible that highly placed personalities are part of the *Maitatsine* insurrection plan. Such persons may indeed be in a position to exercise decisive influence on the country’s policy implementation process. A standing marching order should therefore be granted to all police and army commands to crush any uprisings without reference to any local or central authority if only to avoid the possibility of deliberate indecision at crucial moments while situations get out of control.

NOTES


3. Quoted by Usman, Ibid.


PEACE AND STABILITY IN NIGERIA
THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

BY IBRAHIM MUSA AHMADU

"The most pious person cannot live in peace if his bad neighbour does not like it" — Schiller.

Like all other nations in Africa, Nigeria became a country in its present geographical delimitation at the drawing table of the Berlin Conference in 1885. At that assembly, European powers, with pencil and ruler, without consultation with the inhabitants, demarcated the continent of Africa and laid claims over its sub-regions and peoples.

Before that exercise the various principates that would constitute Nigeria were scattered kingdoms that maintained their independence while recognizing at the same time the sovereignty of adjacent kingdoms. The northern territory, for instance, had empires like Kanem-Bornu which shared boundaries with the Hausa States stretching from Zaria through Kano, Katsina, Sokoto into Nupe in the present Niger State. Below this lay the Kwararafa kingdom which at its peak, took off from the Benue valleys cutting across Bauchi, Bornu, Zaria, Kano and terminating in the south of Katsina.

These territories formed more than half of the then Northern region. The other half, the Savannah Zone, was occupied by assorted linguo-cultural groups who by virtue of their mode of survival were quite distinct and isolated from one another. Though co-existing, these clusters of people could be identified by their peculiar patronyms, credal and linguistic traits.

To the West of the Niger were the ancient empires of Oyo and Benin. While on the surface the area appeared culturally homogenous, the diversities were similar to those of the Savannah. This was particularly true of Benin where ethnic differences were more conspicuous than Oyo which was predominantly Yoruba and related groups.

The East was inhabited by groups who formed the Old Riverain and Coastal Kingdoms of Calabar and Bonny. Living slightly above them were the loose principalities of the Igbo whose flair for freedom had earned them the erroneous tag of an acephalous people. Their domain extended from the eastern tip of the Benin empire, west of
the Niger, through the Delta region where the Niger forked into the ocean to the Nigeria-Cameroon borders and carving north via Idah in the present Benue State.

Bounded together by tight kinship relationship, the various nationalities that would later constitute Nigeria survived with little desires for proselytization or assimilation into any other brood except when so compelled by external predators. This internal cohesion within the tribal confederates gave birth to a high degree of stability which in turn was responsible for their levels of development and civilization. What brought about the rapid disintegration of the Southern states like Oyo, Benin, Bonny and Calabar were due more to the disruptive influence of European merchants which introduced new socio-economic orders in the area than anything else1.

The increased interest of Europe in Africa first as source of slaves, and, later, for raw materials and markets for their industrial products had an inevitable bearing on the political history of the continent and Nigeria in particular. Records indicate that even before western powers laid formal claims over Africa, portions of it had already been annexed. By 1861 Lagos was already under British control. In 1885 the Oil Rivers also fell to Britian. With the formal granting of the Nigerian territory to Britain at Berlin, swift moves were made to bring it under control. So by 1893 the Niger Delta also became a British protectorate2.

Already the activities of George H. Goldie along the Niger and Benue rivers had paved the way for British interests in the hinterland. So in a series of punitive expeditions up the country the North slumped to the British in 1900. The next natural step was a harmonization of the separate regions into one administration unit.

The unification of the southern and northern protectorates in 1914 was the exercise that brought into co-existence peoples of diverse customs, aspirations and potentials under one compulsive government. That notwithstanding, the three component regions still maintained their structural autonomies. It was not until half a century later, that is, in 1954 that the Richard Constitution envisaged a Federal form of government for Nigeria. Even so, the constitutional reforms of 1957 again turned the clock in favour of self government for the three regions. This was an opportunity which the East and West immediately grabbed while the North assented two years later in 19593.

About a century before the British colonial presence in Nigeria the Sokoto Caliphate emerged at the instance of the Fulani assault on the North and the concomitant islamization of the area. What started
off as a minute Islamic puritanism under the leadership of Usman Dan Fadio in 1804 soon graduated into a systematic war that nearly engulfed the whole of the North. So traumatic were these events that by the time the ripples died down, a very large empire swallowing much of the sahel, the Savannah and parts of the forest belt had come to stay. What remained untouched of the North was the lower Savannah which was naturally protected by its terrain of hills, rivers and forests which made penetration rather difficult.

This change of command from the Habe rulers to Fulbe emirs saw the introduction of Arabic culture and religion into the administrative machinery of the North. Henceforth, Islam which had been the faith of a few bedouin Arabs and nomadic Fulanis came to replace the traditional religion of the Hausas, not so much for its appeal but because those who took the blast of the sword had no other option. As we shall see momentarily these events of the nineteenth century would have more implications on the instability of this country since independence than all other factors.

Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria:

Certain injudicious decisions of the colonial government on the political structure of Nigeria have contributed in no smallway to the problem of instability in this country. First and foremost was the adoption of Islamic feudalism in Northern Nigeria as model government not only for Nigeria but the entire British West Africa. Being so deluded about the apparent effectiveness of the hierarchical set-up in the North, the British felt the same could be applied elsewhere within their protectorate.

Between 1915 and 1930, Sir Herbert R. Palmer insisted that an accommodation of Islamic education was necessary for preserving the political arrangement in Nigeria. To him, the former Fulani States and Bornu drew their culture from the "civilized" East rather than the barbarous West African Coasts.

This culture of which Arabic and Islamic learning were vital parts enabled the Emirs to rule effectively. If the next generation of Emirs were to be equally efficient collaborators, the British had to preserve this cultural heritage.

This idolization of the Fulani Islamic bureaucracy was the germ of the superiority complex which would later become a dominant factor in the Nigeria body politic. For, as the colonial government made overt efforts to apply that system throughout the country in guise of
indirect rule, the Muslim North came to see itself as holding the salvific key to the political future of Nigeria. Around it also grew the myth that the Muslim Hausa-Fulanis have the innate dynamism and endowments to govern — an idea which the Northern oligarchy has manipulated for their own aggrandizement and self perpetuation in power.

Correlative to this was the refusal of the colonial administration to split the bogus north into smaller units to create a balance of power and favourable atmosphere for competition among the regions that made up Nigeria, knowing fully well that by virtue of population and size the North was more than twice the East and West put together. Had this been done in 1958 when the agitation for a Middle Belt State came up, the fear of domination which has beset the Nigerian political scene would have long been allayed.

Besides, the undue patronage and overprotection of Fulani Islamic feudal system later proved the undoing of the North in its march towards progress. For by dint of the mutual antagonism between Islam and Christianity Emirs in the North could not allow the penetration of western education and civilization which were regarded essentially as christian in influence.

Thus while the two southern regions were competing with each other in acquiring western education as a gateway to modern civilization, the Islamic north appeared complacent with its Koranic Schools. As Governor of the North, Lord Lugard could not allow christian missionaries to establish in areas of Islamic influence. They could only operate in the Savannah belt which was predominantly traditional in worship.

The differences in the levels of development in the regions have also been a sore spot in the political life of Nigeria. Though favoured with all the instruments that could place her at the helm of affairs in the Federal government, the North discovered at the eve of Independence that its Islamic orientation was no longer relevant for administration in modern Nigeria. So the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, found himself suing for a delay of Independence since his region was educationally ill-prepared for the exercise.

As Nigeria advanced towards independence in 1960, the three regions were pre-occupied with their mutual fears of domination by the other sections. The North was conscious of her educational and technical ineptitude vis-a-vis the challenges of Federal services.

The educationally advantaged south on the other hand was irked by the arrangement that placed them in control of the civil work force because of their technical skills while the power of decision-making
was totally out of their influence. Going by population, the north alone was allotted 174 seats out of the 312 of the Federal House of Representatives. This meant that an alliance between the East and the West would give them only 138 seats in the same House.

Their dissatisfaction was heightened by the realization that whichever way the alliances were struck, East-West, East-North or North-West, they would still remain dices on the political chessboard. Moreover the low level of integration between the regions made it impossible to float a party that would be truly national in outlook. Attention was, therefore, diverted towards consolidating ethnic and regional power bases on which to survive.

The Northern People’s Congress (NPC) as organized in the North was largely an attempt to maintain the traditional Hausa-Fulani hegemony with leadership residing in the upper strata of Muslim hierarchy. While in principle Sir Ahmadu Bello kept announcing that the North belonged to all irrespective of tribe, status or creed, what obtained in practice was at variance with the pronouncements.

Being the dominant party the NPC adopted a very hostile, repressive and intolerant attitude towards the Northern Elements Progressive Union and the United Middle Belt Congress. Elections were not only conducted in the most unethical manner to portray the NPC as the only legitimate and popularly accepted party in the North, but cases abounded of candidates who ended up in prison after winning their tickets on the platforms of other political parties, instead of taking their seats in the Northern House of Assembly. In some instances, the mere association with these other parties was enough ground for disfranchisement and victimization.

In the East, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) was a mass party of the Igbo majority. What Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe envisaged in launching the NCNC was self determination for the Igbo people, “so they could take their place side by side with other linguistic and ethnic groups which made up Nigeria and Cameroon”.

Forming more than sixty per cent of the population of the East at that time, the control of the political leadership of the region through election was easy. For the remaining forty per cent of the non-Igbo population, the regional government appeared to be a system of allocating all benefits to the Igbo and using the machinery of government — courts and the police — to suppress the aspirations of the minority.

In the West, the Action Group of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, was more national in principles and outlook. According to Anthony
Enahoro, the purpose of the Action Group was "to create an atmosphere in which the best available men, whatever the colour of their politics, could take an active part in sharing the nation's future. To work for the introduction of a true Federal system of government in Nigeria. To use the new constitution to develop and modernise our educational and social services".

Laudable as these objectives were, when the party took off, it became a rallying point of the Yoruba. Eventually the party composition appeared as an attempt to reclaim the lost glory of the Oduduwa Kingdom. It was soon clear from Awolowo's disposition that the Yoruba needed just the cooperation of a few disgruntled elements from the North and the East to have a comfortable sway over the country. Overtures were, therefore, made to J.S. Tarka and Aminu Kano in the North and Michael Okpara in the East to form the United Progressive Grand Alliance. Back in the West, however, any dissenting voice was viewed with great consternation.

With or without alliances the question of power sharing at the centre has often played in favour of the Northern Muslim oligarchy. While the south sees the North as monolithic in its domineering and power grabbing tendencies, Northern dissenters find it difficult to understand why the south has persistently failed to notice the difference between the north and the super-north, the latter being the real power brokers in the Nigerian political system and the backbone of the much publicised Kaduna Mafia.

Social Discordance:

That Nigeria was already a stratified society before the advent of colonialism is indisputable. The emirate system in the north placed the Sultan at the apex of the hierarchy. Answerable to him were the Emirs, supported by a retinue of chiefs, District, Village and Ward heads. Being an exploitative system the powers of these rulers were enormous and absolute. Except where a strong man forced his way to the throne, leadership was hereditary; making the bureaucracy a closely knit unit that limited people to the caste into which they were born.

A similar arrangement could be found in the West where the Oba, Ooni or Alafin occupied the top of the hierarchy. The Yoruba political set-up had an inbuilt system of checks and balances centering around four powerful figures — the Alafin, the Bashorun, the Olowo and the Kakanfo. Ultimate power however rested with the Alafin who was considered semi-divine. Under the Alafin were three other
lieutenants: the Ona Efa — Chief Judge, the Otun Efa — the administrative head, and the Osi efa, the Controller of palace finances. To these belonged the power structure of the Yoruba society. At the base were other minor title holders and the common people.  

A more democratic and egalitarian set-up obtained in the East among the Igbo, since no monarchical system could be found. Here everyone considered himself as good as the other and had equal say in the society. Stability was achieved by balancing each equal group against the others. That, notwithstanding, in each village, power resided in the hands of Ama-ala — the Council of Elders — who were however answerable to the people. The Ama-ala could not push a decision against the will of the assembly. They could in fact be bypassed when their actions proved ultravires. Respect for elders was primarily for age. Individuals could, however, be recognized on their own merits with titles of Ozo, Eze, Mazi, and the like. Kingship among the Igbo — Obi — is said to have developed as a result of their contacts with the neighbouring Benin in the West or Igala in the North.

The Igbo social system is more akin to many societies in the Savannah region where kingship was a recent innovation. Since African societies were mostly agrarian, the wealth of the people was from the land. In the absence of money economy a man’s worth and self-esteem depended on how much food he could produce or what contribution he could make towards the welfare of the society. To achieve this, trans-survival values like mutual help, generosity, hospitality, honesty, gallantry, brotherliness, love, diligence and harmonious human relationship were inculcated.

But the interaction of western civilization and traditional societies introduced new patterns of life based on material culture and egocentric social values. The type of education introduced into this country was such that made one dependent on the society rather than contributing to it. Having been displaced from the soil and forced to subsist on white collar jobs modern elites and other city dwellers could only consume without producing. People’s tastes for material goods have been sharpened without the reciprocal creation of the source of income to acquire the needed goods. Social vices like graft, embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds and property abound.

Associated with this is the general corruption, which manifests itself in greed and individualistic propensity for exclusive accumulation of wealth to the detriment of others. Those who have been
deprived of access to this wealth fall back on the society as armed robbers, burglars, smugglers, or do violence to themselves through prostitution and drug addiction.

This country must find a socio-political and ethical formula to stem the present social discordance. The wealth accruing to the nation needs to be equally shared under an effective social welfare scheme to cater for those who are threatened by hunger and starvation, ignorance and disease, exploitation and oppression; job opportunities must be created to harness the energies of the Youth who are unemployed or under-employed. Unless this is done the country will continue to witness social insurrections.

Economic Inequalities:

Julius Caesar was the first person to establish the correlation between economic and political powers. According to him, "men are needed to get money and money is needed to control men". In Nigeria, when the political power was in the hands of foreign imperialists, the economic sector was similarly monopolised by them. Foreign entrepreneurs in partnership with the government exploited the economic resources of the country for the benefit of their home governments.

At independence what changed hands in the country was the replacement of alien control with domestic bourgeoisie who now took over power, the economic base, its process of derivation and disbursement. The western capitalist economy into which Nigeria was incorporated is a system which places the wealth of any given society and its mode of production in the hands of a few. This privileged few who controlled the economy would naturally be the property owning class since their wealth could afford them whatever they fancied.

Like in all capitalist oriented societies wealth is synonymous with power. The few Nigerians who had access to wealth therefore became the ruling class, the accumulating class and at the same time the exploiting class. In order to consolidate its economic and power base the ruling class had to work assiduously towards guaranteeing the perpetual poverty and underdevelopment of the majority. So as the rich became richer through theft or embezzlement of public funds, over invoicing of contracts or direct taking of bribes, the larger population of the country lived in abject poverty.

The wealthiest Nigerians today are those who generally have acquired wealth through State power, either by political corruption, ac-
cess to state contracts, agency rates, import licence, bank loans or other government patronage. Civilian or military we see around us millionaire retired or serving generals, directors general, ministers, court judges, police I. Gs, Vice-Chancellors who have both domestic and foreign reserves while the rest of their countrymen struggle to survive.

Successive governments in this country have not shown the will power to overcome the seduction of wealth. Under the civilian regimes political stalwarts were the profiteers and swindlers. Under the military it was the governors and military administrators who were guilty of gross financial recklessness.

With so much money in the hands of a few persons while the majority has been consigned to poverty, malnutrition, starvation, ill-health and frustration the country will continue to struggle with acts of vandalism, street riots, campus ferments, ritual mutilations, coups, and other forms of violence.

**Religious Insurrections:**

Until the inception of Islam and Christianity, the Nigerian religious scene has been peaceful and tranquil. Religion was an integral part of societal life and each ethnic group practised its own faith as handed down by its ancestors.

Deeply religious as Africans were, they would not carry their faith to the detriment of their physical life, much less that of the community in which they lived. To them religion was a means to an end and not an end in itself.

So much was tied up to the physical life and corporate survival that members of any religious group could not afford to antagonise each other to the extent of being in no talking terms. To stem such a situation, myths, proverbs, jokes and riddles were used to teach respect for others rights, dignity and pride.

That apart, African cultural humanism provided for tolerance towards other people’s faith and cultural values. Africans believed that while they lived others must also live and if possible join them to live. This was evident in the reciprocal borrowing of religious artifacts and participation in each others religious festivities.

The presence of oriental religions in Nigeria thrust a discordant note into this serene religious atmosphere. Throughout the history of their developments Islam and Christianity have co-existed in mutual hostility. Though emerging from the same roots with almost identical literature and tenets, their strides for proselytization have often been
marked by violence and intolerance. Usually people who come under their spell would develop an unjustifiable antagonism towards one another even if their ontological circumstances could not warrant such temperament.

Their methods of winning converts range from peaceful negotiation with stronger powers to violent assaults on weaker ones. The way and manner Islam swept across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, Asia Minor and West Africa is a case in point. Here in Nigeria, within three and a half decades of intermittent military actions, much of the country found itself nodding to Allah.

Islam was about three centuries old when Christianity arrived Nigeria. What forestalled initial confrontation between the two faiths was the pacifying presence of colonial powers. Even so, the smouldering embers of animosity were only suppressed for a while. Events of the past one decade in Nigeria have shown that given the appropriate chances Islam and Christianity could still do it all over.

From 1980 to date Islamic revivalism has taken a very militant stance in Nigeria. Within the said period ten major unprovoked attacks have been directed against Christianity in which several worship places, business premises, lives and property have been lost.

Following the Kafanchan conflagration in 1987 and the subsequent destruction in other parts of the North, President Ibrahim Babangida was quoted as saying:

Although the origin of the riots in Kaduna State was religious, the destruction of lives and property in six other towns in the state was carefully planned, and masterminded by evil men with sinister motives.14

Rhetorics aside, no decisive measure was taken by the Federal Government to check these acts of vandalism and religious intolerance. Infact, Major General Peter Ademokhai who did all he could to bring the situation under control was targetted. It is even alleged that his premature retirement from the army was not unconnected with his efforts to restore peace during that crisis.

One other major issue that has brought bad blood between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria was the Sharia. The first step towards incorporating the Sharia into Nigeria's legal system was in 1960 following the Abu Rannat Panel report on Northern Nigerian judiciary. In that year Sharia Courts were established and the first judges to be paid by the government were appointed to them. Its jurisdiction was restricted to Islamic law in recognition of the plurality of the then Northern Nigerian society.

In 1979, the Sharia Court of Appeal found its way for the first time
into the Federal Constitution. Nevertheless the 1979 Constitution made the establishment of the court in the States voluntary, though the demand of the Muslims was for its compulsory establishment in all the States of the Federation.

1988 witnessed sharp altercations at the Constituent Assembly over the Sharia. Whereas the 1979 Constitution restricted its adjudication to questions involving "Islamic personal law" that of 1988 sought for wider dispensation over land, business transactions and other areas which could easily bring Christians and Muslims into conflict.

Granted that Sharia was a matter involving Islamic personal law, namely, marriage, divorce, inheritance, gifts and guardianship of children, one does not see the justification in committing the resources of a secular government towards its maintenance. Moreso when the same privilege is not extended to the other religions in the federation.

Next was the membership of Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) which started as a secret deal between Petroleum Minister, Rilwanu Lukman, and the Arab nations. What the nation did not know at the time was the interest of President Ibrahim Babagida on the issue. When the French Radio reported the entry of Nigeria into the Organization as full fledged member, Nigerian Christians had to react since the OIC constitution made it mandatory that the Heads of State of member countries must be Muslims. Moreover contributions to the Organization would be used to further Islamic interests.

At the peak of the controversy Rear Admiral Ebitu Ukiwe had to lose his post in the Navy for saying the matter was never discussed at the AFRC. Two years later Nigeria's membership in the Organization was ratified. According to New York *International Herald* of Friday February 2, 1990,

> The Federal Republic of Nigeria became a full fledged member of the OIC on Tuesday February 14, 1989. By this, Nigeria has automatically become signatory to the Arab League Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation, which makes it imperative that Nigeria should be prepared to attack Israel whenever the OIC and the Arab League want her to do so.

The undue patronage of Islam over and against other religions in Nigeria has been responsible to a large extent for the religious conflicts in this country. For example, this year alone the Federal Government has approved 30,000 as the number of pilgrims that would go on hajj to Mecca. Each pilgrim is also granted an allowance of ₦12,000.00. This adds up to ₦360,000.00, excluding the
allowances of agents, medical team, on-loaders and off-loaders charges etc. With our dwindling economy this is a very substantial chunk that would go a long way in solving many social problems in the country that would enhance the much needed peace and stability.

No one can deny that pilgrimage is an important tenet in Islamic faith. While the Qu’ran enjoins every Muslim to go on hajj, it is nowhere indicated that the sponsorship of such a trip should be the duty of a secular government.

The Peace Question

Peace can best be defined in relation to war. Peace is a state of tranquillity or freedom from hostility. It is a cessation of war, the absence of strife, disturbance or quarrel. The peaceful life is that which is marked by serenity and harmony, one that is averse to conflict and violence.

Ontologically, peace is the harmonious relationship between temporal and divine orders, an equilibrium between the physical and spiritual realms. The maintenance of such a balance brings about concord and euphoria.

From a Christian theological perspective peace is a condition of inward wholeness or well-being, a blessing vouchsafed to one’s soul, granting one freedom from contemporary cares, personal anxiety and foreboding in respect of the future. It is the inward bliss, serenity and self composure one attains due to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Peace is, therefore, an all embracing experience covering the contingent and transcendent relationship.

The right to peaceful existence, that is, a life free from threats of war and anarchy is fundamental to the human race. Part of the blessings God bestowed upon humanity from creation was the capacity to co-exist in fellowship and harmony. This was contained in God’s subjection of the whole creation under man’s dominion. By that injunction, all cosmic forces, physical and metaphysical, were brought under man’s control.

The peace that prevailed after the artifice of the world arising from the teleological arrangement of the universe was what filled God’s heart with satisfaction.

And when God saw all that he had created, behold, it was very good (Gen 1:31).

But from the point man rebelled against God, peace became very elusive. The solace and security man enjoyed in the presence of God was replaced with restlessness and propensity to violence.
Thenceforth, cosmic forces which were meant for man’s good turned against him. Peace and order were replaced with war, chaos and confusion.

Immediately man was ejected from God’s presence his constitution was overwhelmed with hate, anger, bitterness and antagonism. Motivated by morbid hatred Cain slew his brother Abel. Lamech followed suit by killing a man for striking him.

As mankind multiplied on the surface of the earth, the genetic factor of sin took the better of men. Passions that make for conflict—arrogance, presumption, self assertion, greed, avarice and jealousy—all colluded to effect holocaust and mutual self destruction on the human species. All efforts to stem the tide of hostility and secure peace have proved futile.

Most of the hostilities between nations or groups within a nation leading people to war have arisen from political, social and economic motivations. But their stimuli have often been sought from religious precincts because of human gullibility to esoteric imperatives, be they genuine or concocted. On this count, religious conflicts are more devastating and heinous than those motivated by other factors because participants are under the impression that theirs is barbarism sanctioned from above.

**Church Response to Conflict Situation in Nigeria:**

The central message of the Christian gospel and, indeed, the ultimate reality which every religion promises is peace. As God presented His Son to the World He was offering a new dimension into our disrupted cosmic order. God was out, in Christ Jesus, to reclaim the peace that was lost at the instance of Adam’s rebellion (Gen. 3:1-24).

This goal was to be achieved through the incarnate man — Jesus — the Prince of Peace. *Shalom* (Peace) was the message of the hosts of heaven to the shepherds in the field at the birth of Jesus.

Glory be to God in the highest. And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased (Lk. 2:14).

Peace was therefore the focal point of Christ’s campaign throughout his life-span on earth. To him peace was not just the content of his gospel but a new life style he came to demonstrate. His struggle against esoteric powers, viz, the healing of the sick, casting out of demons, feeding the hungry and raising the dead, was to rescue men from the clutches of sin and grant them peace (Isa. 61:1—3).
That peace offer was the theme of Christian missionary propaganda throughout the world and especially here in Africa. Coming out soon after the slave trade which had ravished the continent of Africa, the early missionaries were very conscious of the message of peace for their parishioners. Such a message would not only be placating to the Africans but psychologically manumitting to the missionaries so that Africans would not one day rise up in reprisal for what had been done to them by the west.

Thus in the early days of their evangelism in Africa undue emphasis was placed on the ideas of peace, love for one’s neighbours and Christian tolerance not only as central to but as the only Christian way of life. God was only depicted as the author of love. Other essential attributes of his like justice, jealousy, vengeance, and wrath hardly came in for mention. In the process, Christians in Africa were overdosed with devotional theology to the neglect of philosophical theology.

That onesided perception of the Christian faith became the legacy of Christian orientation in Africa and here in Nigeria. In their efforts to tame their native converts Christian missionaries succeeded in producing a docile flock who could not see the Bible as a guide to life but as life itself. The word of God was so mystified that many devout men could hardly distinguish between what was progressive or static, what was spiritual or temporal, and that which was extinct or extant.

Thus Nigerian Christians like their counterparts in the ancient church to the period of Islamic ascendancy have not been sufficiently prepared for life in their contemporary societies in which violence, hostility and irrationality are ways of life. Like the Apostolic Christians and the Coptic Christians under the Abbasids and Fatimids in North Africa, Nigerian Christians seem to glory in persecution as a necessary package of the Christian life-style. Nigerian Christians have been made to see life on earth as transient and themselves as pilgrims bound for the heavenly city; whatever would happen to this mortal body that would quicken its reunion with the Lord should be preferred to life preservation on earth.

The acceptance of persecution with equanimity by the early Christians emboldened pagan Rome to torment and make sport of Christianity for over three centuries of the Christian era. The same posture of passive submission to persecution was responsible for the genocidal extermination of Coptic Christians by Muslims in Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Mali, Algeria, Morocco and Chad.
The same mentality of passive resistance to religious conflict has been adopted by Nigerian christians to crises situations in the country today. The multiple attacks on christians in the past ten years have been taken as a normal pattern of what should be anticipated in christianity. Each time it happened, christians would be called upon to lick their wounds and pray for peace in the country, that God should forgive those who molest them because "they do not know what they are doing". As they bury their dead and repair worship places preachers would remind them, "Vengeance is mine," says the Lord, "I will repay" (Rom 12:19). Or "if you are slapped on one cheek, turn the other also" (Mtt. 5:39).

Going through the same scriptures we are confronted with the other side of God's dealing with men that has often been underplayed by theologians. Devout men of God like Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, Jephtha, Samson, Saul, David and others are presented as crusaders of Yahweh who at times had recourse to the sword in defence of Israel or themselves against unprovoked assaults. David in particular is portrayed as a man of blood! yet one after God's heart. Certainly in the face of aggression their examples cannot be lightly taken as anachronistic.

Notice should be taken also of the Lord's injunction to his disciples to purchase each for themselves a sword, apparently in preparation for the rough days that awaited them (Lk 22:33 ff). Neither should christians overlook the implication of Christ's pronouncement that he did not come to bring peace on earth but a sword. What Jesus had in mind was that by virtue of its moral standards christianity would not be easily accepted in a world where corruption was the order of things. The reactions that would arise from such confrontations must indeed be faced with the sword.

It was not for fun that for over a century, medieval christians in Europe had to do battle with muslim Turks in Palestine to secure their sacred shrines for their pilgrims. As far as christian Europe was concerned if christianity was a religion worth keeping it was equally worth defending.

The Islamic revolutions in Iran and Pakistan have set muslims the world over on edge. Everywhere today the call is for a jihad. In Nigeria the idea of a national jihad complementary to Usman Dan Fodio's has been nursed by muslims for long. Already the strategy has been set in motion as could be seen in the firm grip muslims have on the political machinery, the military, the banking industry and other sectors of the economy that matter. The Maitatsine upheavals were merely litmus tests of the effectiveness of their civil militia.
Peace and Stability in Nigeria: The Role of The Church

The mounting pressure in this country, therefore calls for a complete re-orientation of Christian world-view and attitude to life on earth. That Christ came into the world to save life and re-enact the peace that was lost by Adam signified the importance God attached to life on earth. Christians cannot therefore afford to subscribe to any religious sect's claim that it is under divine mandate to destroy and desecrate the peace Jesus paid with his blood to redeem.

Therefore, while the Christian church must maintain its language of love and peace, bequeathed to it by the master, Nigerian Christians must appropriate their right to confront the violent in the society. This involves political training, mobilization of all sectors of the populace to use power for structural change, arousal of public opinion inside and outside Nigeria to resist the use of violence as a means of domination. If Christians are ever pushed to resort to bloody confrontation as a response to the language of the violent their aim in such an ambiguous situation must be clear — peace. As Saint Augustine of Hippo counselled: "Even when they wage war, men are aiming at peace". ¹⁹

NOTES AND REFERENCES

5. Alhaji Musa Jen won the Karim Lamido constituency in 1962 on the ticket of the UMBC and was sent to prison, while his NPC counterpart who lost at the polls went to take his seat at the House of Assembly in Kaduna.
   — Mr. Philip Mackeen also won at Ganye constituency on the platform of the UMBC but was replaced by his NPC contender at the House of Assembly.
   — Late Mr. Nuhu Giwa in Takum had his hair set ablaze on his head for his inclination towards Action Group.


The basic aim of this paper is commitment to a faith that does justice. Following the opening of the windows of the Vatican through Pope John XXIII via the Second Vatican Council in 1961, we in the Church have come to understand more fully and to appreciate more deeply that a "living faith" leads directly to a "loving action" in the transformation of the world.

This paper must be considered primarily as a participation in the world wide call for the knowledge and spread of the Church’s Social Teachings as Pope John XXIII has declared:

"But today more than ever, it is essential that this doctrine be known, assimilated, and put into effect in the form and manner that the different situations allow and demand. It is a difficult task indeed, yet a most noble one. To the performance of it we call, not only our own sons and daughters scattered throughout the world, but also men and women of goodwill everywhere" (Mater et Magistra).

Concluding, the Pope calls for the unity of thought and action.

"It is not enough merely to formulate a social doctrine. It must be translated into reality. And this is particularly true of the Church’s Social Doctrine, the light of which is truth, justice its objective, and love its driving force". (Mater et Magistra).

The general topic I have been assigned is to present the social teachings of the Church — past and present and to enunciate relevant theological principles from them acceptable and adaptable within the context of Africa. This general topic falls in line happily with the broad theme of this year’s seminar by the Nigerian Association of Ecumenical Theologians in Jos aimed at creating awareness
on the relationship between THE CHURCH and CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY.

The organisers and members of this association owe themselves, the African continent and the Church the duty of being animators of numerous Christian communities whose mission is to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We cannot convert others unless we ourselves are converted. We cannot lead others rightly if we do not know the way. We cannot find the way if we have no faith. We cannot work for the unity of all christians, if we are arrogantly fanatic about our private affiliations or confessions and intolerant of other groups. We must open up to learn, to live and to love. I pray that the set goals of this seminar be translated into reality for the good of God’s children on earth, the liberation of Africa, the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

II

The Problems:

Somehow, one is forced to believe that we have reached the end of time. Under present day events, hunger, industrial pollution, injustices of unimaginable extents, wars, moral distintegration, plagues of various sorts including AIDS, genetic manipulation and of course, an era that lacks belief in God, in man and in any meaning in human life, theologians are at the cross-roads. There are many questions and little answers. In earlier times (Old Testament, New Testament times) the theologian arrogated to himself the monopoly of ultimate answers to complicated questions since he was the "analytic student of the mind of God". Today, the theologian has joined the questioners to such an extent that instead of throwing more light to issues of faith and life, he has decided to accept the original human condition of ignorance and to join in a new search.

The situation is worsened when we discover the ‘Sophisticated’ in-fighting among theologians as to who has the best and lasting answer to our problems, who is the heretic and the orthodox, etc? There is thus an attendant crisis of a lack of orientation. Many are confused, and those who previously pretended to be strong have been forced, dragged or misled to join the faceless mob.

Faced with an embarrassing and unacceptable situation where equality of all mankind is only "Pep talk", where justice is considered an illusion, where human rights have no place and the rule of law only a matter for the elite, one cannot but question the credibility and
condition of our secular and spiritual leaders, who lay claim and authority, not only over bodies of men, but also over their consciences. The promises that things might be better and that the future is brighter has been considered historically fallacious and misleading. Hopelessness and absurdity seem to have taken the upper hand. The promised land is, alas, ‘a doom’ land.

Look around you, here in Nigeria and in most countries of the developing world and you will discover the brutal realities confronting many of God’s children. They are hungry, they are poor, they are exploited and they die young. The phenomenon is incomprehensible, especially in a world where food, medicaments and clothing are burnt off in alarming proportions. 40,000 children die each day for lack of water, medicine and food; 90% of the Nigerian population live on “oil doom” while a marginal 10% enjoy “oil boom”. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) is practised by people who do not preach it, while those who talk about SAP live in “earthly heaven”.

It is in this context dear friends that I write this paper assigned to me. It is an unpalatable topic, taking into cognisance that the situation is not changing for any better. In the context of Nigeria, for example, corruption has come to stay with us as a “registered institution”. Believe it or not, the practice of giving and taking bribes has been accepted by many of our citizens as a “survival strategy” and a way of life, with the little exception of a “little rest” who might either follow the majority or be brutalised by the tragic human element of “join them when you cannot beat them”. Military dictatorship in Nigeria as elsewhere has replaced the God-given gift of self-rule and the value of democracy. The economic sphere leaves much to be desired as over 80% of the population of Nigeria live in poverty and squalor, without good drinking water, no light, no decent housing, no food to eat, no good jobs, no acceptable relevant and adaptable education and no reasonable content of a certain acceptable ‘quality of life’.

Many false steps have been taken by the responsible authorities in government and the consequences will be felt for generations to come. Religious bigotry and double morality have not made the people of our generation any better than the apostates and harlots of old who sought for God where there was immediate material result. Authentic and true religiosity seem to have been sacrificed at the altar of clever psychologists, dupes, charlatans and non-performers. At last, the saying of Jesus Christ in the Bible “woe to this generation... she seeks constantly for a sign ”... appears to have come to
As far as ecumenism is concerned, many christians have been grossly divided over cosmetics, but not over the substance of HE who called us to HIS service.

Ecumenism has been marginalised as an affair for the "talkative", keeping in mind that for ever 300 years, we have been talking. The results of over 300 years of talking have not led to the unity of christians; for further divisions, even within confessions and polarisations into progressive, conservative, orthodox, etc. have taken place.

Inspite of many single and group efforts by very sincere and honest people, the christian search for unity cannot to said to be considerably positive. We have still a long way to go.

III

Introducing the Social Teachings of Catholic Church:

Many christians are not aware of the fact that the Church has some Social Teachings. Some are baffled and the direct question often is: "What has the Church to do with human society"? Even today, it is a rare theology department or seminary which provides a course dealing specifically with the Church’s Social Teaching.

That the Church has developed a body of teachings on social, economic, political and cultural matters seems to have been forgotten, or never known.

There are diverse reasons as to why ignorance exists.

(a) The documents are long and the language too academic and theological. Oftentimes, the documents seem to be rather abstract, dry in content, and not very attractive to pick up and read for simple folk.

(b) They are not often preached about from the pulpit or taught in catechism classes.

(c) Most annoyedly is the fact that many christians cannot get hold of this teaching. Where do you buy an encyclical? Thank God if our rural parishes have medals, crosses, rosary, pieta, bibles and ‘child of Mary’ to sell.

(d) The topics frequently are a challenge, dealing as they do, with controversial social issues, and therefore they make some readers uncomfortable. Many readers think of ‘Humanae Vitae’ (on Human Life, 1968) which forbade the use of contraceptive
pills, and pre-marital sexual behaviour which led to much
debate over the Church’s unchallenged authority over sex-life in
Europe and America.

Finally, authoritative statements, whether from government or
Church do not have as much attraction as acts of authentic
christian witness and life.

Sign of Hope:

Inspite of the above, however, there has been a small resurgence
of interest in the Social Teachings. New attention is paid to what the
Church has to say on the political and economic issues of the day.
The serious crises facing mankind on national and international
fronts concerning the Social Order and the right order of values have
challenged priests, politicians, teachers, workers, businessmen and
professional people. Many are in search of answers and the Church’s
position seems to still weigh on people’s consciences.

In the face of injustice, poverty, international debt, falling standard
of living and economic and political disparities, accompanied by the
threats of a world war and complicated by contemporary social
events and issues, many honest citizens are now searching for ex-
planations, guidelines and directives based on a christian vision of
the world. Catholic Social Teachings have been challenged to offer
an answer from a theological perspective to some of these ques-
tions. What is the Church’s position on war and peace, missiles and
the arms race? What of economic justice for all, international
development, racism and sexism? Have we any words to offer on
human rights, apartheid, military dictatorships, the dignity and worth
of all persons, the sacredness of human life? What of labour, trade
unions, work, the poor, women etc?

There is a growing interest for christian responses to such ques-
tions. More and more people are discovering or rediscovering for the
first time, the rich heritage of the social Teachings of Christianity.

Some respond with surprise, enthusiasm and astonishment. Others with utter suspicion and rejection. Especially guilty are politi-
cians of the left or of the right who feel challenged by these
Teachings and make noise if the views in a Teaching do not favour
their political lineage.

This way or that way, there are no easy answers to hard problems
that would be found in these social Teachings. What can be found,
according to M. Schultheis and P. Henriot is “Social Wisdom” bas-
— biblical insights
— the tradition of the Fathers of the Church
— scholastic philosophy
— theological reflection
— and contemporary experience of the people of God struggling to live out faith and justice

We can do no better here than quote Pope John XXIII from his Social encyclical to the universal Church (1961):

"The Church has formulated particularly over the past hundred years, and through the efforts of a very well-informed body of priests and laymen, a social doctrine which points out with clarity the sure way to social reconstruction. The Principles she gives are of universal application, for they take human nature into account, and the varying conditions in which man's life is lived. They also take into account the principal characteristics of contemporary society and are acceptable to all" (Mater et Magistra).

IV
Towards a contextual theological approach:

From the foregoing, are we not challenged as Africans and theologians to look inwards and to develop a contextual social ethics relevant to us? Are we not challenged to place our findings at the disposal of the universal Church?

Today, in our search for a new theological attitude, our africanity must influence our christianity in the sense that morality becomes a liberating event, a morality of the beatitudes in a political context, as the spirit of justice, love of neighbours, reconciliation. This is where marriage, child birth, work, trade and economics, social organisations, war, love and various dimensions of life make their impact on theology from the African traditional perspective. Theology talking to Africa must attempt to adapt, inculturate and fit into the situation of the African. In times past, various documents were completely taken over into the African world without seeking for the relevant points which concerned the human person of Africa.

Today, as African theologians, we must be faced with challenges of unity and diversity. How can we in the unity of catholicity seek for elements which are relevant for our context from the bible and the social encyclicals without disrupting the unity of catholicity? It is time for Africans to say what is and what is not ourselves. To redefine and
reverse the frames of reference. To establish original African values
and place them in the context of our behavioural patterns without
denying the basic truths that guide man.

This new movement must make changes in the entire process of
assimilating teachings from outside by giving definitions which arise
from an African framework. The voice of Christ talking to man in
Africa has to be truly heard without the risk of alienation or over-
watering. The ultimate essence of theology is of a mystical order —
the encounter with God. In the context of Africa, this must involve
the God of liberation, the God of the poor, the lonely and oppressed.
One can assert that African spirituality has produced its most valid
and useful reflection which involves, like the Boff brothers, Clodovis
and Leonardo have written on liberation theology:

— "Conversion to the poor and to evangelical poverty”.
— A communion of sisters and brothers in a committed com-
munity.
— Hope in a kingdom of God in history in the form of a new
society.
— Service to and with the oppressed.
— Incarnation among and solidarity with the outcast.
— "Parrhesia” — the prophetic courage and freedom of pro-
clamation and denunciation.
— Patience along the historical byways of a people in the
wilderness of the world.
— The cross of persecution and martyrdom, in the footsteps
and discipleship of Jesus Christ. 2

Enunciation of Relevant Theological Principles:

1. Religious and social dimensions of life are linked:

The “social” human construction of the world is not “secular” in
the sense of being outside of God’s plan, but is intimately involved
with the dynamic of the reign of God. Therefore faith and Justice are
closely linked together 3.
2. **Dignity of the Human Person:**

   Made in the image of God, women and men have a pre-eminent place in the social order, with inalienable political, social, legal and economic rights. The fundamental question to ask about social development is: what is happening to people?  

3. A preferential love should be shown to the poor, whose needs and rights are given special attention in God’s eyes. “Poor” is understood to refer to the socially and economically disadvantaged who as a consequence of their status, suffer oppression and powerlessness.

4. **Love and Justice are Linked:**

   Love of neighbour is an absolute demand for justice, because charity manifests itself in actions and structures which respect human dignity, protect human rights, and facilitate human development. To promote justice is to transform structures which block love.

5. **Promotion of the Common Good:**

   The common good is the sum total of all those conditions of social living — economic, political, cultural — which make it possible for women and men to readily and fully achieve the perfection of their humanity. Individual rights are always experienced within the context of promotion of the common good.

6. **Political Participation:**

   The economy is for the people and the resources of the earth are to be equitably shared by all. Human work is the key to contemporary social questions. Labour takes precedence over both capital and technology in the production process. Just wages and the rights of workers to form trade unions are to be respected. Women and disabled people, migrants and unemployed people share fully in the profits of the production process in solidarity.

8. **Stewardship:**

   All property has a “social mortgage”. All people are to respect and share the resources of the earth. By our work we are co-creators in
the continuing development of the earth\textsuperscript{10}.

9. **Global Solidarity:**

We belong to one human family and as such have mutual obligations to promote the development of all people across the world. In particular, the rich nations have responsibilities toward the poor nations and the structures of the inter-national order must reflect justice\textsuperscript{11}.

10. **Promotion of Peace:**

Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among humans and among nations. The arms race must cease and progressive disarmament take place if the future is to be secure. In order to promote peace and the conditions of peace, an effective international authority is necessary\textsuperscript{12}.

The Church and Politics:

Paragraph 76 of the Church in the Modern World States that it is highly important, especially in pluralist societies, that a proper view exists of the relation between the political community and the Church. The role of the Church being what it is, she must in no way be confused with the political community, not bound to any political system. In their proper spheres, the political community and the Church are mutually independent and autonomous. Yet by different titles, each serves the personal and social vocation of the same human beings. The more they co-operate reasonably, the more effectively they will perform this service to everybody’s advantage. Man is not confined to the temporal order. The Church, rooted in the Redeemer’s love, helps to make justice and charity flourish more vigorously within nations and between nations. She preaches the gospel truth and brings the light of her teaching to bear on every province of human affairs with the witness of her faithful. Thus she respects and promotes political liberty and responsibility. Always and everywhere the Church must be allowed to preach the faith with true freedom, teach her social doctrine, carry out her task among men unhampered and pass moral judgements even on matters concerning politics when fundamental rights or the salvation of souls require it.
The Church has also been urged by the great sons of Africa to fulfil this role, to keep the state faithful to the law of God. The late Jomo Kenyatta, speaking to the Catholic Bishops of East Africa, said:

“One of the services you give to others is to help them keep going in the right direction. We have many distractions and can wander off the path. We need constantly to be put back on it again; we may not even know that we are going astray, that we are taking the wrong direction. That is why we need the Church in our midst to tell us when we are making a mistake. The Church is the conscience of society, and today society needs a conscience. Do not be afraid to speak. If we go wrong and you keep quiet, one day you may have to answer for our mistakes”.

Recently the bishops of Africa at their general assembly reviewed the situation on our continent.

We have good reasons to be glad and hopeful in considering the many efforts made by the sons and daughters of this continent in general and by our leaders in particular to promote and rehabilitate fundamental African values. We are particularly happy about the recognition given to various countries. It must, however, be admitted, alas, that it is for other reasons that Africa finds herself at the centre of the world scene. We would be betraying our mission, we would be seriously failing in our love and duty which we owe to the men of this land, if we were to remain silent. We denounce all that which constitute a violation of human integrity and everything that offends human dignity, such as sub-human conditions of life, arbitrary imprisonments and deportations. We condemn all crimes committed in the name of the security of the state, as if the state were absolute and not at the service of the citizen, that is to say the human person.

In this statement the bishops of Africa are re-echoing and applying to the present situation the social teaching of the Church. The option for human rights and its defence by the African bishops continue in the direction taken by the second Vatican Council which insists that:

“a keener sense of human dignity has aroused in various parts of the world an eagerness to build a juridical — political order in which personal rights affecting public life are better protected. Such are the rights of free assembly, free association, freedom of expression. Many are voicing disapproval of any kind of government which blocks civil or religious liberty, multiplies the victims of ambition and political crimes, wrenches the exercise of authority from pursuing the common good to serving the advantage of a certain faction or of the rulers themselves. The exercise of political authority, whether in a community as such or in representative institutions, must always be carried out within the framework of the moral order, in pursuit of the common good dynamically understood and according to a lawfully established juridical system. The citizens are then bound in conscience to obedience. Where citizens are oppressed by a public authority which exceeds its competence, they should not on that account refuse what is objectively required of them for the common good, but it is allowable for them within the limits of the law of nature and the Gospel, to defend their rights and those of their fellow citizens against this abuse of authority.

When the exercise of rights is temporarily curtailed on behalf of the common good, it should be restored as quickly as possible after the emergency passes. (The Church in the Modern World, paras 73, 74, 75).
Pope John XXIII in “peace on Earth” had formulated a strong position on human rights. In that encyclical letter the Pope enumerated and explained the rights and duties of individuals and the state. The state must realise that the rights of man are inalienable. “Thus any government which refused to recognise human rights or acted in violation of them would not only fail in its duty; its decrees would be wholly lacking in binding force”. (Peace on Earth, par. 61)

These and other formulations of the rights of the individual echo the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, to which Nigeria is a signatory (in particular articles 3, 9, 11, 18, 29 and 30).

The Church’s pursuit of justice in Nigeria is the only way of realising contextually the mission of the Church to proclaim Justice in the World. Paul VI’s document produced after the 1971 synod of bishops bears the title “Justice in the World”. We conclude by insisting with Paul VI that justice is a way of living the gospel message:

The Church has received from Christ the mission of preaching the gospel message which contains a call to man to turn away from sin to the love of the Father, universal brotherhood, and a consequent demand for justice in the world. This is the reason why the Church has the right indeed the duty to proclaim justice on the social, national, and international level and to denounce instances of injustice when the fundamental rights of man and his very salvation demand it. (Justice in the World)

NOTES

8. Pius XII, Christmas Message, 1944.
10. Ibid
11. Paul VI, Populorum Progressio.
12. Ibid.
THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY

By
Fr. Anthony O. Erhueh

1. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the growing present "austerity", of a lack of hope for the future, and of a feeling of insecurity in Nigeria in this last decade of the twentieth century, it is necessary to discuss the role that the Church can play to help reverse the pessimistic trend. There is no doubt that some of the present problems that confront Nigeria in this turn of the century are related to a failure to recognise the God-given dignity of Nigerians as human persons either as individuals or as a nation. A failure to promote human dignity in the country has often resulted in the loss of lives, decadence and corruption in the fabric of a once virile and sound society.

Our task in this paper will be to give a few theoretical foundations of human dignity. These will include certain presuppositions of Theology and of other sciences, on human dignity from a Christian viewpoint. Christian Anthropology underscores human dignity from the perspective of man as a creature made in the image and likeness of God. This pregnant concept (imago Dei) will polarise our present discussion on human dignity in contemporary Nigerian society. Hopefully, it will enable us to apply some of those principles to the fostering of human dignity in Nigeria, and possibly to the solution of some of our national problems such as religious tension, corruption, tribalism and the quest for real autonomy for Nigeria as a nation either economically or politically.

This paper will be divided into three main parts. The first will consider Human Dignity with respect to the person seen as image of God. The second part will relate the findings of the preceding section to the concrete conditions in Nigeria at the present time, and the third part of this paper will apply some of the earlier findings to the solution of some of the problems that face Nigeria as a nation, and Nigerians as individuals who need to recognise their God-given human dignity and defend it assiduously.
2. **HUMAN DIGNITY**

What is human dignity? The Bible tells us that God created man in His own image and likeness:

God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth'.

God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:26-27).

That means that man is compared by the inspired author to God. Von Rad has elaborate explanations on the above text from the book of Genesis. He tells us that the whole man is created in God’s image. Von Rad further explains that:

The various works of Creation stand on a completely different footing in respect of their relationship to the Creator — they are far from having a like immediacy to God. At farthest remove from him, in a relationship which scarcely admits of theological definition, is the formless, watery, darksome, abyssmal chaos.

But man has a direct immediacy to God. Man has a greater dignity than any other creatures in the universe. Von Rad emphasizes:

On the topmost step of this pyramid stands man, and there is nothing between him and God; indeed, the world, which was in fact made for him, has in him alone its most absolute immediacy to God. Also, unlike the rest of Creation, he was not created by the word; but in creating him God was actuated by a unique, solemn resolve in the depths of his heart. And in particular, God took the pattern for this, his last work of Creation, from the heavenly world above. In no other work of Creation is everything referred so very immediately to God himself as in this.

Human dignity arises from the fact that man was created in the image of God. On account of his nearness to God, man, or rather the human person is greater in dignity than any other creature in the world.

Another theological foundation of human dignity is man’s dominion over the rest of the universe. The book of Genesis again tells us:

God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth'. God said, 'See, I give you all the seed-bearing plants that are upon the whole earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this shall be your food (Gen. 1:27-29).
The whole world was created for the human person. Man is lord of the universe. Because of his dominion over the rest of Creation, man represents God's authority in the world. Von Rad explains:

God set man in the world as the sign of his own sovereign authority, in order that man should uphold and enforce his — God's — claims as lord.

Dominion over the vast universe is another theological foundation of human dignity. Because man is lord of the whole world, it goes without saying that man has higher dignity than all other creatures in it. In other words, compared to all other creatures in our mother earth, man is the lord of all; he has no equal.

Briefly, the consideration of man as image of God places man as a being in dialogue with God, and to a certain extent, man is a "co-creator" with God in developing the universe. Other qualities that flow from the consideration of man as image of God include man's social nature, his communion with God, the call of man to one family of mankind, man's spiritual nature, his rationality, his being a cultural and religious animal, his immortality, capacity for God, man's call to love, and so on. When we relate man to God, the dignity of the human person stands out since man is a being for God, a being open to God, a being in dialogue with God, etc. Man is the only creature who can relate directly with God as a person in the material universe. When we relate man to fellow human beings as image of God, we see that man is man only in community; he cannot be truly human in complete isolation. Man is a cultural and religious animal; to be human, he needs to develop his culture and religion. In respect to other creatures in the universe, man is lord of all. To a certain extent the whole of creation was made for him. (Note that Creation is first and foremost for the glorification of God; through man, all other creatures in the world give glory to God). Hence in respect to other creatures in the universe, man is lord of all. Compared to the rest of Creation man enjoys a dignity that is so lofty that Jesus Christ himself said: "What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life?" (Mt. 16:26).

Other theological grounds for the dignity of the human person arise from the Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery. "For, by his incarnation, he, the son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man. By so doing, Jesus Christ has elevated human beings (individually and collectively) to a dignity beyond compare."
son of God died for man and rose again from the dead to redeem him. In that way, Jesus Christ raised man to the dignity of the sons and daughters of God and heirs to the kingdom of heaven. Man is thus set aside for God. God respects him and dwells in him. He is thus justified and becomes the temple of God. As God’s family by creation as image of God, man becomes a people of God called together to give honour and praise to God in the Church through the Incarnation, Redemption or the Paschal Mystery. There are other sources of human dignity viewed from a theological perspective. What is said so far is enough for our present discussion.

Beside theology, other sciences dedicate themselves to the promotion of human dignity. Medicine, Education, Law, Social Sciences, etc. variously study man with the intent of promoting human dignity in different ways. Contemporary Secular Humanisms all dedicate themselves in one way or the other to making man the centre of the world. Marxism, various forms of Existentialism, etc., all defend man and his legitimate rights, sometimes even to the point of denying God. But as Vatican II tells us, belief in God and his worship do not go against human dignity; in fact they enhance it and promote it. Modern technology, industries and different means of production are all geared in different ways to make life easy and more worthwhile for man. The list is endless!

African Traditional Religion and culture promotes and defends human dignity in divergent ways. For instance our naming ceremonies, burial rites, initiation rites, etc. are centred on human dignity. As Nwabuisi observes.

Even though a child is a helpless weak individual when he arrives at Ebe, he is treated as a benevolent visitor. Not only that he was welcomed with food, he is introduced to things he is to a work with. In this he is being prepared for a life of work, the life of his community.

The feast and pageantry of burial ceremonies and memorials for the dead in Nigeria proclaim the dignity of the human person in Nigeria (as well as other African countries).

What, therefore is human dignity?

In everyday speech, the word dignity sometimes refers to “rank”, “worth”, “excellence”, “greatness” and such. Human Dignity could therefore be described as the elevated rank, the intrinsic worth, the high position or the greatness of the human person in the universe in respect to God, fellowmen, and other creatures or realities in the world.

God respects human dignity. He created man free. God does not
force man to do anything; rather, God appeals to man through dialogue. Man can say "No" even to God although God would want man to be obedient to God himself. Since God respects human freedom, all human institutions and individuals should respect human freedom as well. As image of God, man has many prerogatives which should not be violated. Since God respects those human qualities, both the state and the Church should do the same. The same holds for international or national organisations, societies, companies, etc.

In respect to the society, man has many inalienable rights, obligations and responsibilities. The person enjoys fundamental human rights which are universally acclaimed; he or she has civil rights and duties to the nation. To be truly human, the state helps the person to attain what he or she cannot achieve as an individual. The person enjoys religious freedom, to worship God as he or she pleases.

In respect to the universe, the human person is superior to all created realities. Hence nations and institutions are for the use of the human person to enhance his or her dignity as a person and not as a robot. Man is superior to money or riches of any kind. That is why the nation is there for the good of the individual human person. The state also exists for the promotion of the common good of social groups within it.

The individual on the other hand has duties, responsibilities, and obligations to the state. He or she has to be patriotic. All too often, the patriotism of the individual is poisoned by governments that are not really interested in the welfare of the citizens. Such governments are sometimes externally motivated to embark on policies that are counter-productive to national independence, integrity, the happiness of its citizens and the peace and stability of that nation. In that way some governments are unpatriotic and betray the very purpose of their existence as rulers.

3. HUMAN DIGNITY IN NIGERIAN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

It seems to me that lip-service is paid to fundamental human rights in Nigeria now more than ever before. Human life seems to be blatantly ignored, disrespected, and even hindered. All through history, Africa has got to grapple with insecurity arising from the slave trade, colonialism, neocolonialism, unstable military governments which have usurped power, economic enslavement to in-
dustrialised nations, debtorship and dependency on begging from rich nations, unrest, corruption, family instability brought about by inhuman high cost of living. The gruesome list can be multiplied indefinitely. Much of these evils is due to a lack of recognition of the dignity of the Nigerian as a human being.

The seriousness of the ignorance is recognised when one acknowledges the fact that most individual Nigerians are helpless in the face of serious social evils that are brought about by the very persons or authorities who were supposed to protect individual and civil liberties. No need to mention anyone in particular. The facts are obvious.

In Nigeria, religious intolerance is becoming more and more rampant. Part of this is due to those who want to continue raping the nation through the pretext of being devout devotees of Islam. All Nigerians are citizens and should not be aliens in their own country; paradoxically foreigners feel more at home than Nigerians in Nigeria itself. This is due to failures arising from ignorance of the dignity of the Nigerian person.

Tribalism is a thing that has been exploited to worsen the sad situation in our beloved country. As image of God, all men are equal, and are brothers and sisters. As diverse as the people and the cultures in the Nigerian nation may be, I submit that we, the Nigerians, have much more in common among ourselves than with foreigners. To me, the different religions and cultures of our people are an enrichment to the nation.

Part of the handicap of our not recognising our dignity as human beings is the attendant problem of looking for answers to our problems from outside Nigeria. This is well known. Nigeria has sufficient fertile land for agriculture to feed herself, and I dare say, the whole of Africa. How long should it take for us to stand on our own feet and find solutions to our own problems ourselves? As long as we search for rat’s survival by cats’ solutions, the success of our efforts will be dismal.

Failure to recognise our dignity as human beings gifted and equal to Europeans and Americans in all that is truly human, has made us despise ourselves and fail to realise our own abilities to harness our energies and develop our own God — given human resources to the full.

Can one add two plus two in any language other than English? Does one have to speak English to understand basic health necessities? Must one speak English to understand Politics, Economics, Government, Mathematics, etc.? These questions do
not require any answer since it is obvious that anybody can learn any subject in any language.

Failure to recognise our dignity as human beings equal to all other human beings makes us sell our God-given human dignities for a pot of porridge! Otherwise, how could one explain the shameful cooperation of some of our citizens with foreigners to destroy and impoverish the nation?

How can a people be clean without circumstances that promote sanitation? How could one be clean without water? Why make boreholes when those means are inadequate, unmaintenable, and too expensive? In some parts of the world such as New York, the main reservoirs for storing water adequately for the whole year are man-made artificial lakes. Can artificial lakes not be built to store water in various strategic locations in Nigerian cities, towns and villages? We have sufficient rainfall throughout the whole year. Of course, lakes would be more permanent solutions to our water problems than boreholes which require spare parts, electricity, and are expensive to maintain for any considerable length of time. Once lakes are made, they become permanent storages for water; they can even become recreation grounds for countless people, fishing facilities; lakes do not break down as bore-holes! We have many solutions to our problems. But failure to recognise our dignity as human beings equal to the rest of humans in the world blinds us to the fact that we can find solutions to our problems ourselves without borrowing money from abroad. It is demeaning to beg, especially when one has what one is begging for more than the benefactor.

Failure to make human dignity our policy has blinded our rich Nigerians. People are insensitive to the plight of the populace. Selfishness is opposed to man as image of God. It debases human dignity since it destroys the family of mankind. A conscientisation of all Nigerians to the dignity of fellow Nigerians could be a right step to eradicate wasteful spending in parties (spraying of naira notes). Nigerian money could be used to start Foundations and Fellowships as has been done in the U.S.A. by Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, etc. Failure to recognise their human dignities has made some traditional elders to betray their people by entering into land agreements with corporate bodies without due legal consultation. Similar ignorance has led also politicians, traders, soldiers, etc to sell their nation without even knowing it! Ignorance of one’s dignity as a human being substantially equal to all other human beings makes Nigerians look down on themselves. “We Nigerians” is a derogatory expression that one hears everyday.
Our greatness as a Nigerian nation and as individual Nigerians is known to non-Nigerians abroad and at home. Until we recognise that greatness (dignity!) and defend it, we are wasting our time shouting new and different slogans and cliches: WAI; GREEN REVOLUTION: SANITATION DAY (without water and sanitation trucks!), SAP. etc. are, to say the least, mockery. Other considerations in this regard must be left.

4. CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY FOR THE SOLUTION OF SOME OF OUR PROBLEMS.

On account of various factors, human life is made cheap in Nigeria. Frequently, armed robbers, convicted of that crime, are executed. The newspapers no longer fancy reporting such executions as news (except of course if the executed armed robber is a notorious one such as Anini). Recently (March 1990) to the surprise of the civilised world and of many Nigerians, two state Governors in this country made very embarrassing statements: one called for the lynching of armed robbers by the public, another called for the execution of politicians who would be caught rigging elections during the third republic. The sad thing is that the two gentlemen are paid salaries from the sweat of the citizens whose lives those governors swore to defend when they took the oath of office. Is Nigeria governed by law with law courts at various levels? Not so long ago a Governor (state) was supposed to have commanded his men (police and soldiers) to open gun fire on innocent unarmed citizens whose lives the leader was supposed to defend, and shot several (including children) to death. On a certain Sunday, the writer of this paper was preaching in a Church and was speaking about the sacredness and dignity of human life. At one point, he asked the children in the audience what they would do to a thief (not armed robber!) if they caught one in their school. To a man, the children echoed: “Kill him!” Is it not true that in Nigeria and other civilised countries the system of justice is based on the fact that no one is guilty until proven guilty?

Perhaps, the above reactions of Governors and school children are due to a failure to appreciate human dignity and the sacred value of human life. The attitude of the Catholic Church to abortion and other related issues is due to the fact that human life is sacred and that only the author of human life, namely God, alone can take it. The same people who would want a thief who stole ten naira or even much more to have a tyre put around his neck and set on fire and lynched
to death, these same people would not call to justice pen and gun thieves who build the million naira mansions for themselves with whatever salaries they could never have earned in ten lives!

Human life is sacred. But in Nigeria today, it is possible to see a dead human being decomposing at the side of the road. Road accidents are numerous. Drivers sometimes endanger innocent lives. Knowingly or unknowingly, they deprive children of their parents, and vice versa. Often times in our cities there are death-traps that parade themselves as mini buses or taxis. The government that ought to protect the citizens cannot be said to be unaware of the sad situation. In most countries those who use the road have the duty to guarantee the safety of the life of other road users. All vehicles undergo road safety tests. Each vehicle is given a road worthy certificate or tag for a few months at a time as traffic regulations stipulate. Such vehicles are tested by reputable car repair workshops, and not by a vehicle investigation officer who may not even be equipped to judge the road worthiness of a vehicle by merely checking the externals of the carriage. Saving the lives of its subjects is the basic duty of any government. Law enforcement agents are there to guarantee that safety. Such is also within the reach of our nation Nigeria.

As image of God, man is respected by God in his entirety. All governments, the Church, and other human organisations should respect human life in its entirety. Man is more important than things. The government exists to foster the dignity of its citizens. Any government that does not protect the lives of its citizens is not worthy of the name.

Similar considerations could readily be applied to other problems in our beloved country. Tribalism, nepotism, religious fanaticism, to mention a few, could go a long way to finding solutions from the point of view of human dignity.

The Church has helped to bring education, health, social developments to Nigeria and other African countries. It is how to make the people aware of their collective and individual dignities as human beings. In the past, the Church was largely under foreign missionaries some of whom might have viewed the quest for freedom as a rebellion against colonial masters. Now it is time for us to unite our nation; to face our economic and political programmes with man as a centre of focus. If Nigerians know their rights and are taught to fight for them, they would be able to face hostile elements be they government functionaries or armed vandals with dignity and purpose. One person who is ready to defend his or her dignity as a human being
with his or her life could change the face of the nation. Rosa Parks\(^{21}\) ignited the civil rights movement in the U.S.A. by refusing to give up her seat in a Montgomery Alabama bus in 1955. Nelson Mandela spent the greater part of his life in South African prisons to defend human dignity against apartheid. We need Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela in Nigeria. But before we can get such figures, we need to educate our people about their dignity as human beings. The Church is a fertile ground for such education “For she is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person”\(^{22}\).

Nigeria has much to offer the world. We are a most friendly nation with no racial tensions. The Nigerian smile which radiates from the heart is well known in some parts of the world. We are not worse off than other countries in human problems. Like a growing child, we are facing problems of growth. With God as our help we can become the really great country that we are called to be in actual fact and in every respect. Anything that threatens the dignity of the Nigerian, whether from within the country or from overseas, must be viewed as our greatest enemy.

NOTES

1. For instance, the present economic hardships in Nigeria affect the dignity of undernourished children (kwashokor); the lack of drugs in hospitals, and of other necessities for health, deprives citizens of their right to healthy living; so also the lack of jobs, good education opportunities, etc.


10. Ibid.


15. See Erhueh, *op. cit.*, pp. 189ff; 198ff; 207ff; 158ff; see G.S. arts, 26, 29, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 74, 76.


17. This is manifested by increased abortions in the country, decaying dead human bodies on the sides of roads, increased execution of persons condemned to death, etc.

18. The joining of the O.I.C. (Organisation of Islamic conference) by Nigeria as a member in a sneaky manner is a flagrant violation of Nigeria as a secular state; the way parts of the present Nigerian Constitution were channelled in favour of Islam by Government functionaries; the Islamisation of key positions in the Federal Government; the involvement of the nation with the Islamic Bank (which is reserved for members of the O.I.C. only); the present composition of the A.F.R.C. (Armed Forces Ruling Council) in favour of Moslems, etc., all these jeopardise religious freedom in Nigeria because they ally the Government with Islam against other religions in Nigeria, such as Christianity and African Traditional Religion. Such moves by the present military government and other governments threaten the religious freedom of the Nigerian, and his basic human dignity.


20. The Federal Minister for Education, Prof. B. Fafunwa’s call for the use of vernacular languages in Primary Schools in the future is a move in the right direction despite foreseeable problems.

21. Upholding her human dignity, Rosa Parks chose to go to prison rather than submit to an unjust law. Nigerians must be trained to recognise their rights and dignities and be ready to defend these against injustices of any kind.

A RESPONSE TO THE BOOK: “THE KADUNA MAFIA” FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF POLITICAL THEOLOGY

By
Rev. Dr. Simon O. Anyanwu

INTRODUCTION:

The Kaduna Mafia (KM), what is it? What gave rise to it? Who are its patrons? Who are its core members? How did it consolidate? What are its workings? How does it hold Nigeria as a nation and Nigerians as a people captive through its organized manipulative strategies? What are its implications for the country? And what is to be done to put its threats under effective control? These are some of the questions that the collective Work: “The Kaduna Mafia. A Study of the Rise, Development and Consolidation of a Nigerian Power Elite”, *went out to answer.

The five contributors to this 146 page intensively researched work come from the Middle Belt which is rumoured to have its own mafia — Langtang Mafia. The sincere aim of their book which is transparent throughout the pages is to present the KM in its reality, unmasked and sort of demythologized.

It is intended to educate the Nigerian public and rouse the citizens to the dangers constituted by the KM in its bid “to remain and wax stronger as the invisible hand that manipulates public policies, the levers of economy, the structures of power and the apparatus of governance” of the country.

In terms of method the study is expositional rather than prescriptive in mode.

A Word on the Concept of the Work

I take the liberty to say a word at this point, before proceeding, on the global concept of the work. In my appraisal, the work is a huge success from the point of view of its overall aim, namely, public

education with reference to the KM. This symposium speaks for the said success, as prompted by the work, the Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theologians (EANT) took up “The KM and the Christian Church in Nigeria” as a topic of study and rumination in this symposium on “Church and Contemporary Nigerian Society”. One can say that the goal of “sensitizing a broad and multiple readership” which the authors declared as one of their aims is being realized. Also in terms of the aim of umasking the more or less secret phenomenon of the KM, the work is successful as can be seen from its laborious and painstaking exposition of the ethnic and religious roots, as well as the socio-political currents and manipulative strategies that were instrumental to the emergence and consolidation of the KM.

The expositional method of approach and the rationale behind it are commendable. The authors preferred an expositional to a prescriptive approach following their conviction that “adequate knowledge is a better guide to action than more prescription”. This idea is in keeping with the scholastic principle of “agere sequitur esse” — a thing acts as it is, in free translation. However, it has to be remarked that it would not have been going against that conviction if the authors, especially as experts in the social sciences had done more than they did as regards “what it to be done?” to put the KM in check, A mere 3/4 page in this connection in a book of 146 pages is too scanty.

The Main Points of the Work:

All the authors are agreed in viewing a Kaduna-based, exclusivist power elite as a mafia group with vested personal interests, which they camouflage as “Northern interests”. Its basic concern is “capturing political power with which it would further its own group interests”.

The group interests to be enhanced for which the KM craves for a monopoly of political power include social, economic, military, and religious powers. It is in view of this fact that B.J. Takaya describes it as a mafia in the sense that it is considered “as an enigmatic but invisible force manipulating the destinies of the political system by virtue of its deliberate and strategic placement of its operatives in control of sensitive positions in the nation’s key institutions like the military, parastatals, government limited liability companies and ministerial organisations. It is a bureaucratic and political force acting as invisible vanguard to protect and advance the social, political and
economic interests of a ruling class, which since the end of the Second World War, has been constantly threatened by the possibility of losing a longstanding claim to political leadership and hegemonic legitimacy in a fast changing modernizing polity”. 

For many reasons the authors insist that the Kaduna group is a mafia despite denials to the contrary. Among such reasons are the fact that its “existence, aims, membership and operation styles” are known only to the core members and their patrons: utilization of talented personnel/professionals to enhance the goals; the lack of scrupules in using clandestinely instigated violence to achieve its goals — even if its recourse to violence is not to the same degree as the Italian and US mafia which employ “‘lone-ranger under-world ‘hitmen’ to physically eliminate marked opponents or enemies”; the use of “dividing the Camp of the enemy” strategies to attain its goals.

The authors are also unanimous in their agreement that the KM has mentors or “godfathers” in the Islamic ruling families of Northern Nigeria whose roots go back to be 19th century Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio. The Emirs of Fulani origin who displaced the Hausa non-Moslem rulers after Usman Dan Fodio’s Islamic revolution systematically worked to entrench themselves all over the far North and, as far as their political wit and their henchmen could advance their cause, in the rest of the North, as God-given rulers. While they strove by oppressive means to enhance their vested interests and those of their class they and their successors like the late Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, pretended to be working for “Northern values and interests”.

The members of the KM are the “heirs and legatees” of the said rulers and their class. Their grandpatron was the Sardauna of Sokoto. Unlike their mentors who were exclusively of blue-blood, the KM oligarchs are drawn from aristocrats of different classes: from the emirate families, the professionals of various kinds like top military men, business tycoons, multi-millionaire bankers, politicians, technocrats, etc. This expansion is a strategy of survival adopted by the blue-blood godfathers of the KM to hold to their own in a post-independence more pluralistic Nigerian society. As before they are pursuing their own class interests while purporting to be Northern public benefactors and defenders of the Islamic religion.

A conspicuous characteristic of the KM is the exploitation and manipulation of the Islamic religion for their selfish ends. The Islamic religion legitimizes their rule. To cash on that they strive to see that “State institutions and policies must take an Islamic outlook”. They
have, therefore, as a goal the Islamization of Nigeria, a favourite programme of the late Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello. They are devoted to promoting Islam since it offers them a means of gaining control. Examples of the ways they get about promoting it include giving public institutions Islamic features and symbols like the attempt to make public buildings at both the federal and state levels to have Islamic/Eastern architectural designs. It extends into educational policies and prohibitions of the sale of alcohol in certain places. Of course the repeated attempts to enshrine the Sharia in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the clandestine entry of Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) are the classic examples.

The pursuit of their interests and the accompanying philosophy of state spell doom for Nigeria as a secular state and a multi-religious society. It has such implications as: the fact that seeking to make Nigeria an Islamic state means that there can be no unity in the country until all Nigerians become Muslim; suppression of the rights and oppression of non-Muslim citizens who in the light of the Islamic law are 'dhimni' or non-believers who are merely to be tolerated as second class citizens who are not entitled to the same rights as Muslims are until they become Islamic converts; making it impossible for non-Muslims to become rulers of the country; creating a sense of frustration among non-Muslims who cannot be rulers in their own country; or, should they become rulers, hijacking them except they agree to promote Islamic interests; making room for an economic imbalance which puts economic benefits in the hands of Muslims alone.

To conclude the summary of their main points one can say with them that "a situation such as the above cannot take any country forward in terms of meeting the basic needs of a majority of Nigerians who are exploited and oppressed. Instead, the country will continue to face all manner of crises politically, economically and socially. The goal of building a strong developed and egalitarian nation will continue to elude us unless the rule of such hegemonic groups are stopped" (p. 123).

By way of combating the KM menace, the work admits that no coherent response has been made by any regime to that effect: Gowon's regime enhanced their growth "from being simply an intellectual force into establishing economic linkages". Under Obasanjo they used the good connections in the bureaucracy and the army to accumulate wealth for themselves. Shagari, in his turn, sought accommodation with them. They played a dominant role under Buhari,
became stronger and asserted themselves in their fascist disposition. Under Babangida no systematic and sustained effort has been made to oust them other than changing some of their members as chairmen of one strategic parastatal or another. Some observers say that this regime is more inclined to accommodation than confrontation (cf p. 114).

What one of the authors recommends as the line of action to follow is "the conscious and active promotion of people’s power". I.D. Ayu who suggests this approach is prompt to say that the method has shown its effectiveness under the administration of Balarabe Musa. Not the replacement of one mafia group with another (Langtang, Bida mafia) but rather "a fundamental resolution of Nigeria’s class polarities and class contradictions".

"Peoples Power", which Ayu recommends, can be attained through "popular education and organised people’s institutions". So armed, the people will become conscious of their class interest and will rise to defend themselves against Mafia exploitation. This is to say that according to Ayu, returning economic and political power to the people as a group without discrimination as to religion and ethnicity but rather as sharers of a common destiny "is the correct line towards a comprehensive and permanent resolution of the Mafia and class problem of Nigeria”

Theological Reflections

I have already talked about the painstaking efforts of the work to illuminate the enigmatic KM. We have also noted the success of the work in awakening us to the problems the KM raises. It is, however, to be noted that the work in no way expressly mentions the Church — Christianity — as having any contributions to make towards the eradication of the KM menace. I find this an omission because Christianity can play an important role in educating the people.

The KM should cause the Christian Church in Nigeria no small concern. This is not only because of the mafia’s Islamization threats to the existence of Nigeria as a nation and to Nigerians as a people. The Church being a part and parcel of the nation, the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of Nigeria and Nigerians should be the concern of Nigerian followers of Christ.

Again the KM should be a cause of concern to the Christian Church in Nigeria because in so far as it is a mafia it is exploiting the people. Like all mafia it "thrive upon and perpetuates under-development". The Christian Church of Christ whose vocation is people-centred: to
illuminate the way of man in society, to season human society, to prevent it from decay (cf Mt. 5:13-16), is obliged to help Nigerians to identify the darkness and the shadows as well as the fermenting effects of the KM. The Church should be a part of the process of conscientizing the people to unmask the KM by asking the right questions like: "Why should one narrow group interest hold the rest of the nation to ransom? ... Do other elites and leaders understand the character, modus operandi and finite goals of this mafia group?"

Educating the people to the necessity of asking and answering these and similar questions in a positive and active way is one of the challenges that the KM poses to the Church.

However, the Church should not rest content with merely educating the people but also it ought to be a party to the people’s practical struggle to free themselves from the manipulative claws of the KM.

For an effective control or eradication of the KM the Christian churches have to insist on Nigeria being in reality, that is, both on the theoretical and practical levels, a secular state as foreseen by the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chapter I, Section 10. While the Christians have accepted and are operating on the idea of a Nigerian sovereign state that is secular and democratic in character many Muslims, it seems to me, are still opposed to the idea or at most are giving lip service to it. It is to be recalled that the 1977/78 draft Constitution’s provision that "Nigeria is one and indivisible sovereign Republic, secular, democratic and social" was an issue of a hot controversy at the constituent assembly of 1978. While Muslims contended for the elimination of the term ‘secular’ as opposed to their notion of the relationship between state and religion, Christians insisted on clarifications only in favour of a properly understood secularity of state as opposed to godless secularism.

A secular state sponsoring a healthy separation of religion and politics is obliged to expose dubious institutions like KM which thrive on mixing up religion and politics for selfish purposes. Hinting at the point in question here Zabadi says:

"For the KM both past and present, there is no distinction between religious and other roles. They could be seen as defenders of the faith from their various secular positions as bureaucrats, businessmen or even traditional rulers. Indeed the concept of secularity is vehemently opposed because it does not fit into their general design. The state must take the features of religion. This had been part of their strategy to keep up the impression that they are fighting for an Islamic state, Islamic values etc, which are projected as Northern interests, Northern character, Northern unity., etc".
Firm insistence on the security of the state will take care of the Sharia issue which is undoubtedly one of the gateways of islamizing the country.

The Church has also got to work towards getting Christian ideas of a state into the theory and practice of politics in Nigeria. Presently neither Roman Catholic social teaching nor Protestant social ethics has been able to influence decisively the Nigerian political arena. This is unfortunately the case in spite of the many Christians in politics in the country, as well as the high population of Christians. Why this lethargy among Christians?

It seems to me that the cause is to be sought in the fact that the Christian religion is being privatized by Christians. Nigerian Christians must begin to deprivatize it and strive hard towards enhancing the social dimension of the Gospel. The Gospel message has got to be injected into the national life if we care to neutralize the odious effects of menaces like the KM 10.

Working towards having a Christian as president has been suggested. The idea if achieved can help to reverse the frustration the Christians are experiencing as a result of being, so to say, excluded from the rulership of this country. But whether such can be effective to put a check to the activities of the KM is another question in view of the fact that as it has been argued "even when no-Moslems were in power the KM always have been in control except perhaps during the Ironsi regime".

Above all, the challenge of the KM to Christianity is a call to concerted action. This entails, among other things, working out and embarking on an imaginative programme of ecumenical witness and collaboration among the Christian Churches. What I have usually called ecumenism of convenience, which brings Nigerian Christian leaders together from time to time, more or less on ad hoc basis, to seek a solution to one external threat or another, will not do. A constructive ecumenism is a categorical imperative demanded at this hour by the logic of Christian survival in Nigeria. This is very necessary both for the checking of new concepts of the Jihad that the KM oligarchs are currently propagating and, above all, for an effective Christian witness which if cultivated will help us Christians to appreciate our faith better and hence be in a stronger position to defend it in the face of all odds. In a meaningful ecumenical collaboration more interaction between Christians in the Northern states and those in the South is desirable.

To Nigerian theologians, on whom lies the onus to prepare the
ground for the advocated imaginative ecumenism, the threats of the KM on the Nigerian people and the Christian religion pose an additional challenge. There needs to be a recourse to what political theology describes as ‘positive task’, namely: “to attempt to formulate the eschatological message under the conditions of our present society” 11. What this entails is “to determine anew the relation between religion and society, between Church and societal ‘publicness’, between eschatological faith and societal life” 12. In our Nigerian situation one can hardly speak of determining it anew since Christianity has yet to evangelize our cultural and socio-political usages.

To work towards facilitating this process is a theological sine qua non which Nigerian theologians must begin in earnest to grapple with. The menace of the KM makes the assignment all the more urgent.

Another necessary theological line of action which the phenomenon of the Kaduna Mafia underlines as urgent is the necessity of dialogue between Christians and Moslems. The adherents of these two religions constitute an overwhelming majority of the Nigerian populace. The tension between the two giant religions has long reached its boiling-point. The KM, the Sharia controversy, and the OIC conflict are only but some of its more prominent manifestations. To continue with one controversy of the kind after the other is surely an ill-wind that blows no one good. The viable alternative is dialogue. The ground for a fertile and fruitful dialogue is available in the common acknowledgement by Christianity and Islam of the One Creator God, whose plan of salvation includes all who call upon His Name. Pope John Paul II, talking to a newly appointed ambassador of Nigeria to the Vatican City, drew attention to the readiness of Christians to work together with Muslims for the common good as a result of the shared belief in the one Creator God:

“As you know, the Church has a deep respect for Muslims, since she believes that the plan of salvation encompasses all who acknowledge the Creator. This respect includes a readiness to cooperate with them for the betterment of humanity, and a commitment to search together for true peace and justice” 13. Dialogue is the gateway to such cooperation.

There is also hope for such a fruitful dialogue given the modern Islamic school of thought that conceives the Islamic state in terms of a non-territorial international community of faith. Good enough this school of thought has representatives among Nigerian Muslims. But also it is advantageous that among those other Muslims who favour
the Hanbali-Wahabi view, that is, those who interpret the Islamic state in territorial terms, there are not a few elements—mainly intellectuals—who are opposed to religious manipulation and to the mafia.

Christian and Islamic scholars have, therefore, to come together, put heads together and work out a *modus vivendi* in peaceful co-existence and mutual respect. On such co-existence depends the future of Nigeria which must be common concern for Christians and Muslims.

**CONCLUSION:**

Given the phenomenon of the Kaduna Mafia and its threats and challenges to the Christian churches which we have identified in this response to the book "The Kaduna Mafia...", one cannot but appreciate the need for Christian ecumenical associations like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theologians (EANT), to mention but a few. There is no gainsaying the fact that to effectively counteract threats like those of the KM, Nigerian Christians need such bodies as rallying points; precisely as executive and intellectual organs respectively. It is, therefore, worthwhile to conclude this response on the note that all Christians should support and encourage the activities of the said associations and their like. In the same spirit, it is in order to insist on the urgency of the associations being aware to the signs of the times; on the necessity of their working hand in hand; and on their carrying the Christian believers along with them in all their activities.

**NOTES**

2. I. S. Zabadi, "The Kaduna Mafia's Philosophy of the State and Its Implications for Nigeria", in *The KM*, p. 113
3. B. J. Takaya, "Socio-Political Forces in the Evolution and Consolidation of the Kaduna Mafia", in *The KM*, p. 29
4. Ibid., p. 30.
7. B. J. Takaya and S. G. Tyoden, "preface" in *The KM*, p. vii
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran pastor and theologian, from an upper-class German family, was a young man of twenty-eight when Adolph Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933. Hitler and his party put themselves forward as the defenders of all the values that were most prized in German culture: order, authority, loyalty, national renewal after the bitter defeat in the war of 1914-18. In a much more sinister way, Hitler identified the Nazi programme of National Socialism as a movement for the renewal of Christianity in Germany.

In this setting, the Nazis introduced gradually a series of legal measures against the Jews. The anti-Jewish laws of the early 1930’s led in due course to the ‘Crystal Night’ of November 1938, which prepared the population for the increasing use of State terrorism against the Jews. This was followed in turn by the concentration camps, and the carefully-planned State policy of mass-extermination.

This was the context of Bonhoeffer’s short life. Against this background, the young pastor in the Evangelical Church matured as a theologian. It is possible to follow his journey from constitutional, nonviolent acts of resistance against the regime, to the point when Bonhoeffer decided firmly that it was not possible to combat the appalling evil of the Nazi State in a pacifist way. It was then, in 1939, that he joined the elite conspiracy to assassinate Adolph Hitler.

The following lines, written from his prison cell at the end of 1942, give us a point of entry into Bonhoeffer’s way of thinking. In this passage, he was sharing with friends what he had discovered after he decided to commit himself to active resistance for the sake of the Jewish victims:

There remains an experience of incomparable value. We have for once learnt to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled,
— in short, from the perspective of those who suffer..... We have to learn that personal suffering is a more effective key, a more rewarding principle for exploring the world in thought and action than personal good fortune.

From this perspective, the perspective of those who suffer, Bonhoeffer developed his account of Christian ethics. He was convinced that the definition of what is good and responsible in action is intimately related to one's position in history. Initially, he was fully involved in the life of the Evangelical Church. His own radical decision to join the conspiracy against Hitler grew out of his deep disappointment at the failure of the Christian Churches to resist, or even to see clearly, the numbing evil of the Nazi tyranny. Bonhoeffer was appalled by the failure of "reasonable" people to see what was happening to the victims.

Out of his own sharp awareness of tyrannical evil, Bonhoeffer explored the nature of the Christian's responsibility for the victims of injustice in a rigorously theological way. The task was "to replace rusty swords with sharp ones". From his new "experience of incomparable value", he presented a theological critique of the State, firmly rooted in his Christology. This critique is closely related to his account of the structure of the responsible life; this in turn, is built around the theme that Christology is the very centre of ethics.

When major Christian theologians and scholars were giving active support to National Socialism, Bonhoeffer observed the failure of conventional moral thinking, both within and outside the Churches. The negative argument in *Ethics* centres on the inadequacy of duties, obligations, and principles as sources of moral knowledge. These belonged to moral systems generally accepted by the humane, educated classes, but they failed to engage at all with history. For example, the man of conscience is overwhelmed by the forces of evil; by the pressures imposed by unavoidable circumstances in which he must make choices. Unfortunately, he depends on his own inner resources for counsel:

> Evil comes upon him in countless respectable and seductive disguises so that his conscience becomes timid and unsure of itself, till in the end he is satisfied if instead of a clear conscience he has a salved one, and lies to his own conscience in order to avoid despair. A man whose only support is his conscience can never understand that a bad conscience may be healthier and stronger than a conscience which is deceived.

What about the path of duty? It seems that this is the Way out of the maze of difficult choices. What is commanded is seized on as right and surest. Responsibility rests on the man who gives the command and not on the one who carries it out. Thus confined,
however, there can never come the action which is done on one's own free responsibility, "the only kind of deed which can strike at the heart of the evil and overcome it". Reason, moral fanaticism, conscience, duty, and silent virtue — these do not come near to the heart of the evil.

In Bonhoeffer's view, all of these failed moral positions derived their truth, value and motivating power, from the inner resources of the self. The centre of gravity was the individual private conscience, equipped with principles or with fanatical zeal for a cause. In different ways, they all encouraged "private virtuousness". This was an attitude of anxious clinging to principle, personal integrity, retreat into private virtue.

All of this was a direct contradiction of the essence of Christ — "being for others". Such a withdrawal from the contradictions of life ruled out the very heart of the moral life, serious engagement with history. The centre of gravity in Bonhoeffer's thought is his affirmation of God's act of reconciliation with the world, the finality of the deed done in Christ. The heart of the ethical enterprise must be the transformation of the moral agent. This is not achieved through dint of efforts "to become like Jesus". "It is achieved only when the form of Jesus Christ itself works upon us in such a manner that it moulds our form in its own likeness (Gal. 4:9)."

In the moral life, this translates into choosing that form of action which, in the light of limited knowledge and opportunity, is most likely to realise the form of Christ in the world, or which most nearly respects his sovereignty. In the Ethics, Bonhoeffer argues that Jesus Christ is the "responsible man" par excellence. Jesus Christ took upon himself the guilt of all men, and for that very reason, the man who acts responsibly becomes guilty.

In the late 1930's, Bonhoeffer had to struggle with the question: in what circumstances must the responsible man incur guilt in the taking of life itself, if his action is to correspond with reality? The following passage enables us to see the essential link between his understanding of Christ and his ethics of responsible action:

Jesus, life, our life, lived in deputyship for us as the incarnate Son of God, and that is why through him all human life is in essence a life of deputyship. Jesus was not the individual, desiring to achieve a perfection of his own, but he lived only as the one who had taken up into himself and who bears within himself, the selves of all men. All his living, his action, and his dying was deputyship. In him, there is fulfilled what the living, the action and the suffering of men ought to be. In this real deputyship which constitutes his human existence, he is the responsible person par excellence. Because he is life, all life is determined by him to be deputyship.
So, Bonhoeffer concluded, responsible action, action in conformity with reality, does not seek \emph{a priori} to follow a sober middle course between extremes. The responsible person cannot rule out any form of action, including extreme action, which may in some circumstances be needed, in order to correspond with reality. The responsible man rules out extremes as normative and normal patterns. He cannot exclude them on principle, as exceptional instances of Christian action required by necessity.

Here, the notion of "necessity" which ushers in the exceptional action, makes room for the sovereign freedom of Christ. How is one to distinguish intolerable tyranny, carrying the need for exceptional action outside the laws of God and man, as distinct from other unjust states of affairs, which cannot be described as tyrannical or intolerably oppressive? Bonhoeffer remains elusive on this question. Nor does he provide criteria for judging if and when the moment of necessity has arrived.

This is not the place to discuss the problems raised by some aspects of Bonhoeffer's method. He has little time to develop his positions. In April 1945, he was executed by the Gestapo. His basic affirmation was that one knows with certainty what one ought to do in relation with Christ and with others. This "conformation" to Christ leads to the total freedom to be responsible for others, even to the limit of incurring guilt in relation to life itself, if this is what God commands.

In his radical, contextual ethics, Bonhoeffer has left a rich legacy of thought and further questions. In a precise and eloquent way, he speaks to Christian Churches and individuals who are caught up in social, political and inter-faith conflicts:

Some who seek to escape from taking a stand publicly find a place of refuge in a \emph{private virtuousness}. Such a man does not steal. He does not commit murder. He does not commit adultery. Within the limits of his powers he does good. But in his voluntary renunciation of publicity he knows how to remain within the permitted bounds which preserve him from involvement in conflict. He must be blind and deaf to the wrongs which surround him. It is only at the price of an act of self deception that he can safeguard his private blamelessness against contamination through responsible action in the world\textsuperscript{10}.

He confronts all the Christian Churches with the fact that our ethical thinking is logically dependent on a particular story, the richness and complexity of the life of Jesus. Against the strident claims of cultural sources of value, Bonhoeffer affirmed the independence of theological judgement. He was aware of the demonic energies which followed the deification of such values as na-
tionalism, father-land, racial purity. He insisted on the theological critique which was needed to safeguard the humanity of genuinely human values.

More important still, if the form of Jesus Christ is to be realised in the Church, because this is the way in which Christ realises his form in the midst of the world, then the Church must begin with a confession of its own guilt. For the Churches in Germany, Bonhoeffer put forward a form of confession as follows:

The Church confesses that she has witnessed the lawless application of brutal force, the physical and spiritual suffering of countless innocent people, oppression, hatred and murder, and that she has not raised her voice on behalf of the victims and has not found ways to hasten to their aid. She is guilty of the deaths of the weakest and most defenceless brothers of Jesus Christ.  

Rubem Alves, the Brazilian Protestant theologian, has written recently of the ascendancy of “Right-Doctrine Protestantism”, with its stress on agreement with a series of doctrinal statements, as the precondition for sharing in the community. According to RDP, doing good is much less important than thinking correctly. Conversion means understanding oneself as a sinner and accepting salvation in Christ. As Alves puts it, “A Protestant believer could say everything that needed to be said without once alluding to the necessity of transforming the world”.  

The same phenomenon will be recognised in other Christian Churches. “Right-Doctrine Catholicism” must surely enjoy the right of full membership in the Christian family!  

Dietrich Bonhoeffer confronts all such deviant forms of Christian life with his theological argument about responsibility for the victims of injustice, along with the commentary of his own life. His theological ethics provide a permanent place in which to explore the Christian’s responsibility for the processes of history.
NOTES

3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* Engl. ed. London, 1955. This is not the book which Bonhoeffer intended to publish. It is a compilation of sections of his writings which were preserved by his friends and put together after his death.
7. Ibid. p. 48.
8. Ibid. p. 61.
10. Ibid. p. 49.
11. Ibid. p. 93.