APPENDIX 1:

THE SHARIA IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

Presentation at the Meeting of NIREC[1], June 21, 2000
by
John Onaiyekan
Catholic Archbishop of Abuja
pp. 3-6

The famous Biblical statement: "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" (Luke 20:25), is addressing a totally different issue. Both Caesar and his coins belong to God. And so within the Christian community in its different forms in Nigeria, we are guided by our religious norms. In the church to which I belong, we have a body of Catholic moral norms, as well as the Code of Canon Law, which guide everything that we do. We do our best to follow these rules and ideals. We may not always succeed but at least we know where we are going. Therefore from the point of view of desire to follow God's will, there is no need whatsoever for any quarrel between Christians and Muslims on this matter. We both agree and I think we should thank God that we live in a nation where all the citizens want to be ruled by God's will.

The problem arises of course when it comes to determining in the concrete in what exactly consists God's will. We know for a fact that we do have some differences in this regard. But even then the basic norms of morality are common to all; you shall not kill, you shall not be wicked to your neighbour, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not bear false witness, etc: all these are equally condemned by all the religions of Nigeria. Probably, if we concentrate on these basic elements of moral behaviour, the

[1]NIREC: Nigeria Inter-Religious Council.

nation would certainly be a much better place. From the point of view therefore of the issues under discussion, the major question is not whether Muslims should be guided by the sharia; they certainly must be. Nor is it whether Christians should be guided by their religious norms; they have the duty to do so. The question rather is whether these religious norms must be implemented and enforced by legal instruments of government, precisely as religious laws. This is where we must focus our attention. This brings us then to the famous debate on the "secularity" of the Nigerian state, within which the debate of the sharia must be located.

THE SECULARITY DEBATE: It is often said especially in Christian circles but also in the circles of those who claim to be more of the non-religious persuasion that Nigeria is a secular state. This statement is problematic. We need to explain what we mean by a secular state. Precisely because of the ambiguity of the concept of secularity, the debate on this issue during the 1978 constitutional conference was very prolonged. It will be recalled that the draft of the constitution did specifically state that Nigeria shall be a secular state. This particular position of the draft was subjected to serious argument because of the equivocacy in the terminology "secular." Those who wrote this statement in the draft constitution explained what they meant namely that Nigeria shall not be ruled in its government in terms of any particular religion. But many of the members of the constitutional conference objected to the expression secular because in their opinion it can be interpreted to mean that the government of Nigeria will be godless. They also pointed to the example of many countries which describe themselves as secular and on that basis deny religion. It is as a matter of compromise that that sentence was eventually espounged from the constitution. In its place,

we have the famous statement in paragraph 10 of the 1979 constitution which says that:

> **"The government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt religion as State Religion."**

This formulation contains the spirit of what was meant by a secular state although by presenting it that way it excludes any interpretation of secularity in any godless direction. However it also leaves open the issue of when does a particular action of government constitute adopting a religion as a "state religion." I believe this is the debate presently raging on the actions taken by the state governments who claim to install the Sharia. Let us look a little bit more carefully again at this concept of secularity as used in regard to the state.

This is an expression that is very much linked with the English Language and it comes ultimately from its Latin root *saeculum* meaning "this world." Therefore "secular" simply means "of this world," as distinct from something of the world to come. When looked at from this rather neutral fashion it says nothing whatsoever about whether God is involved or denied. In actual fact, right now in the world, there are many kinds of secular states. These can be divided into two; there are secular states without God and secular states with God. Among secular states without God there are states which actually deny God in the way that the state is run and therefore persecute religions. Then there are states which simply decide that God does not come into the art of governance and should be kept out of all official public affairs. Countries that are of these two types are rather few in the world of today. There were cases, especially in the old communist regimes where it was a basic item on the national constitution that the nation was atheistic. Since the last ten years, this has changed considerably.

More relevant to our discussion are the nations that declare that they are secular but recognise God. They either simply tolerate religion or they indeed encourage religion. In all these cases, the important point being made is that there is no state religion. The example of a secular state that is often quoted is precisely the United States of America where the constitution clearly makes a distinction between religion and government life. Yet in the United States of America, religion is highly promoted not only among the people but also with government support. We know that the United States Armed Forces has huge well-organised chaplaincies for Protestants, Catholics, Jews and of recent we hear also of the Islamic. And this is a nation which claims to be secular. On the American dollar, the motto of the nation is "In God we trust."

Forms of Secular States

Without God:
- God denied
- God ignored

With God:
- God merely acknowledged
- God and religion positively promoted

Thus, there are many ways of being a secular state. If we decide not to use the word "secular," so be it. But the main point being stressed is that a Nigerian will always enjoy his full right no matter his religion or indeed his non-religion, on every square inch of our national territory.

Incidentally, in the French-speaking countries the expression used is not "secular" but *"laique"* or "lay." The French have had a history of

church and clerical predomination over public life. But since the French Revolution, the direction has been to keep the clergy out of public life so that the running of public affairs is in the hands of "lay people." That is why the expression *"l'etat laique"* has become the normal way of expressing what in English is called "secular state." I have just returned from Guinea Conakry and the president of Guinea used precisely that expression to describe the nation of Guinea. He was talking to a group of Catholic Bishops who paid him a courtesy call in the presidential villa. He took the occasion to once again confirm or reiterate the fact that in Guinea government operates on the basis of *"l'etat laique,"* of a state where no religion is official and where every Guinean can practice his religion and hold any post provided he is working for the good of the people. You will understand that the statement drew applause from his audience.

Coming back home, it seems to me that the debate on secularity has to continue until better clarity is achieved in this matter. What exactly does paragraph 10 of our constitution mean? We know for sure that the government is in many ways involved with religion. Our leaders often call on the name of God and religious services are held on many state occasions. We also have chaplaincies not only within the Armed Forces but also in our government institutions of higher learning. For sometime government had massively supported pilgrimages to holy places, an issue that became a bone of contention. Similarly, government has been financing a national mosque and a national ecumenical centre. All these are issues where government has become, justifiably in my opinion, involved in religion. The question is how far can government go? And when the Zamfara state government declared that Sharia is now the law of their state, has it gone against the provisions of

paragraph 10 of our constitution? Is this tantamount to declaring an Islamic State? This is a legal and constitutional issue that must be resolved, and done quickly by those whose duty it is to do so. It is my candid opinion that government has not taken its responsibility in this matter seriously enough. It should go beyond the present attitude of "Let us wait and see how far they will go."

There are those who are suggesting that paragraph 10 should no longer be there, and that we should insist that Nigeria is a multi-religious state. In my opinion that would only compound the problem. The example and the experience of other nations that have tried to practice the multi-religious model is not encouraging at all. You would have to determine which religions are to be given official status and what amount of support would each have to enjoy. Within the Nigerian context you can imagine what a great confusion and controversy that will lead to. It is my strong conviction that the formulation of paragraph 10 is still the right one even thought we may need to specify a bit more what it exactly entails.

APPENDIX 2:

THE 1987 KADUNA STATE RELIGIOUS DISTURBANCE

A Release by the

Christian Association of Nigeria, 1987.

RECOMMENDATIONS[1]

1. In conconance with Nigeria's…..

Note: Regrettably the text of this document has somehow disappeared. Attempts to retrieve it are too difficult and would delay publication of this file too long.

[1]P. 11.

APPENDIX 3:

NIGERIA: THE WAY AHEAD

By Jacob Tsado[1]

About 12 months before the ink in his pen was forced dry by an assassin's letter bomb, Dele Giwa, the courageous Nigerian journalist, wrote to celebrate what he perceived then to be the "Dawn of New Hope." In a contribution to the *Newswatch* Special Publication of October 1985, commemorating Nigeria's 25th Anniversary, Giwa said:

> **Just a little over four weeks ago, many Nigerians believed that the end of their nation had come, that they might not be around, either dead or alive in jail, when the country marks its 25th anniversary. And if they should be around, free and alive, nobody could have said for certain that the nation would have cause to celebrate. Then something happened, as such things do to fortunate nations and peoples, to give fresh hopes to Nigerians that after all, they should have cause to celebrate. For want of something better to call what happened, let's call it The event. The event of August 27, 1985, and without saying it, you know it changed everything in the country: from how Nigerians perceived their country now, in the past, and more importantly, how they view the future.**

The event about which Dele Giwa wrote so feelingly and based his optimistic assertion was of course the military coup that overthrew Buhari and Idiagbon's dictatorship, and ushered in the government of Ibrahim Babangida.

Whether Giwa would still hold the same opinion if he were alive and writing in 1987, is a matter for debate. What is certain is that at 27, Nigeria is still in search of identity as fundamental questions remain unanswered. While we many be familiar with our past, the future seems very hazy.

[1] *Today's Challenge,* 5/87.

The big question then is **where are we going?** When this question was put to Chinua Achebe by *This Week* magazine recently, he said, "That's not very clear to me. When people can start saying: 'This is my country, I can even die for it," then part of our problems are solved."

So where are we going? Or rather where should we be going? This is the question that bugs the minds of most Nigerians about their country at 27. And we thought the best way to answer this question was to put it to some Nigerians, Christians, who know, who have experience and who can talk.

Their views are most revealing. A lot of the responses are tough and blunt to the point. But their positions are very honest, very clear, very practicable.

We asked pointed questions on the urgent question of religion for example. None of the people we spoke to shied away from opening up on that and speaking up on the obvious.

As the nation begins its slow march into the Third Republic, we believe that the views contained here are **indispensably** crucial to the establishment of solid foundations for The Way Ahead.

What are the challenges before Nigeria in the 1990s in view of the path we have been treading since independence?

Ishaya Audu (Professor, Ex-Minister of External Affairs, Former Vice Chancellor, ABU, Ordained Minister of the Gospel, Private Medical Practitioner):

> The single most important challenge that is going to face Nigeria in the 90s is the unity of the country. So many things have happened which have really tended to destroy even the basic threads that we have sewn before. In particular perhaps one might mention the recent religious riots in Kaduna State. I have been

in Zaria throughout the period and having seen what I have seen and having felt with the people as to what those rampages have done, I know that the basis of unity, particularly between Christians and Muslims has really been hit very badly. The basis of trust has also been very badly damaged and it would take a long time before this problem of unity can really be restored.

The second challenge is to manage the economy. We may never again hit at fabulous oil revenues, but Nigeria is richly endowed with human, land, water, animal and mineral resources. In spite of the current austerity, what is needed more than anything else is really to manage these resources properly to ensure minimum adequate material benefit for the people. And for that reason integrity in the management is the single most important factor. If there is no integrity, well I think we are just beating about the bush. Associated with this, Nigerians should learn to look far ahead into the future, beyond current difficulties, beyond thoughts of immediate benefits.

Alex Fom (Ex-National Secretary of proscribed NPP, President of National Catholic Laity of Nigeria, Private Medical Practitioner):

The greatest challenge which I see today is that of religious intolerance and I think if something is not done quickly the situation might get out of hand. I have been reading a book recently titled *The Sign of the Sword*. The entire book is against Christians and stresses the importance of Jihad. It said in some parts that jihad is incumbent on all Muslims - that it is absolutely necessary. That it is an obligation on Muslims to carry on with the "Holy War" in order to eliminate Jews and Christians.

Now that is a dangerous statement to make. You see, if a book like this is in circulation and is sold in Muslim bookshops, I wonder the intention of the publishers. Are they concerned about peace? I think we are heading for disaster unless we sit down and sort this problem now once and for all. Except we want to divide Nigeria into two. Let's be honest with ourselves and ask, are we really making progress? We have to be frank with ourselves. We cannot afford to be looking at the truth and sweeping it under the carpet. If we want peace, let us all

forget about our religious differences and think of the national interest, first and foremost. If we love our country Nigeria as we should, let's back up the government and forget about this issue of religion. But if the Muslims think they have a right to talk and say provocative things, we are prepared for them.

Christopher Abashiya (Retired University Administrator, Ex-Commissioner Kaduna State, Ex-Special Adviser Plateau State, Ex-Chairman Health Management Board Kaduna State, Farmer):

The main challenge to this country is, what type of government are we going to have that will lead us to greatness? A government which will reduce bribery and corruption, amassing of wealth and ensure peaceful transition of power such that people don't sit tight forever in positions?

Economically there is not doubt that our economy has been sick. The rate of inflation has been very frightening.

Educationally we have made some blunders in a bid to marry the British and American systems. We have also certainly made some progress. The 6-3-3-4 policy is noble, but the major challenge ahead is what shall we make of it? Shall we actualise the aspirations in this regard? I am of the view that it will take a miracle to achieve this, because of inadequate human and financial resources.

On the religious front, the challenge is, can we unite this country, so there would be no quarrels and inter-religious and intra-religious squabbles? This is one of the most explosive factors in the history of this country. It is an area of challenge that Nigerians have to face. Already we are terribly divided on religious basis and the question as we approach the 90s is, are we going to sink our religious differences and go back to the previous status we had, that we are all Nigerians. That our politics should be based on ideology, not religion?

Ezekiel Isuogu (Engineer, manufacturer and President, Youth Wing Christian Association of Nigeria):

Looking back since independence, I think we have had several wasted years. The average Nigerian's standard of living is not better today than what it was in 1960. And I think the problem is basically that of leadership. Nigeria is in search of identity. Over the years we have been plagued with leaders who are just out to line their pockets. It may be right to say we have come backwards because you do not measure progress by roads network, but the way the average Nigerian thinks, by the way he is committed to his country as a citizen and by the way the common man is taken care of. We haven't talked anything about developing our indigenous technology. The challenges are enormous and to handle them effectively, we need men and women who know where they are going, who know God and fear Him.

Tunji Braithwaite (Lawyer, Presidential Candidate of banned Nigeria Advance Party (NAP):

The economic difficulties of this country will reach a climax because of the corruption and mismanagement of successive governments, not least military governments because even the military perpetuates high scale havoc and stealing perhaps on a larger scale than civilian rulers. The consequences of the corruption and mismanagement are going to reach a breaking point. The solution can only be found in social mobilisation of the young generation. But social mobilisation cannot be, unless we have a dynamic, purposeful, dedicated, honest corps of leadership, which up till now the country has not been fortunate to have.

Obadiah Tebu (University Administrator, Ex-Secretary to Benue State Government):

I want to look at the issue of the challenges in the 90s very broadly in terms of the leadership and the followership. For the leadership, I want to emphasise, that we have no alternative to having persons who are honest, transparently honest, persons who are thoroughly convinced in their hearts that first and foremost they are accountable, not only to Nigerians, but to a greater

being, God and in the context of Christians, to the Lord Jesus Christ. In this regard the leader's private life should be an important aspect in measuring his sense of responsibility. In my opinion, the true worth or quality of a leader should be mirrored through his private life because what he says officially may not carry weight if what he does privately contradicts it.

Relating that to the followership, I think Nigerians need to go back to the beginning of things, to the family life. The importance of family life needs to be stressed because what you eventually have from the followership is going to emanate from the family unit. And I think many of us are losing sight of this. It's a big challenge for families in this nation, especially Christians.

Helen Gomwalk (Ex-Chairperson, Plateau Publishing Company, Business Woman, President Zonta International [A Women's Association]):

There are several challenges. We have economic problems, how Nigeria will survive the present economic crunch resulting from oil glut and the consequent low performance in the industrial and commercial sectors.

Also, social problems like armed robbery, corruption, drug trafficking, smuggling, tribalism and nepotism have eaten deep into the life of this nation. There are also religious differences which have recently been magnified through the machinations of selfish individuals who use poor and less informed members of the public to achieve their ends. My advice is that Nigerians as individuals and as members of the two main religions learn to live together, since it pleases the Almighty God to place them in the same land.

Olubunmi Okogie (Catholic Archbishop of Lagos):

I will identify three main areas of challenges: Spiritual development, curbing of unemployment and maximum use of our natural resources. On the spiritual plane, one can see that the nation is drifting farther and farther away from God, and irrespective of this fact God has kept reminding us that He is still alive. And unless the nation can come back to God, to put Him first, then the

future will be bleak come 1992 or whatever year they (the military) may like to go, because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and if that fear is not built in us we are bound to perish.

On unemployment, I think the way to tackle the problem is not so much by providing jobs, because there are many people with jobs today and are still not satisfied so they keep hopping from one place to the other while the jobless are prepared to commit any atrocity just to secure one. This is because the basic fear of God is lacking. So the first way to curb unemployment is to instill the fear of God in people's mind to be satisfied with what they have. Thereafter you can begin urging those with money to establish industries, etc.

On the management of the country's resources, take an example of oil. There are some people making fantastic sums of money from oil by acting as middlemen and they end up being richer than the country. We also have a situation in which our wealth is plunged into nonsense things. Take education for example. Recently, they earmarked billions into education. What's the meaning of that? They too want to eat. They know that sooner or later they will be out of power so they want to get something. Then look at 6-3-3-4. No implements, nothing. You can keep going. Wastage, no proper planning. So unless we face up with the challenge of managing our nation's wealth properly, we are just wasting our time.

S.L.S. Salifu (Engineer, Lecturer, Kaduna Polytechnic, Secretary CAN (Ten Northern States) Chairman Northern Zone of Youth Wing CAN):

It appears like we do not have a goal and a sense of direction as a nation. That's why even military governments that come as corrective regimes easily lose public confidence. And those who have definite goals either do not stay long or if they do, get mixed up with ideas from so-called advisers. My own personal assessment as a teacher is that the educational system is in shambles. Just look around you and you will find collapsing roofs, no seats for children, nothing. That tells you the type of nation we are running. And what about the products of these institutions? So many graduates go about the streets. What do you do with

such people? We are a victim of several divisive forces, religious, tribal and class. I hope that in the 90s, we will instead be able to harness these things that now divide us. I'm so happy that many people now are expressing the opinion that they are tired of religious and tribal politics. This means we can forge ahead.

What are the challenges before Christians as a community and how can they cope with these challenges?

Dr. Christopher Abashiya:

I think the first challenge before Christians is the challenge of survival. Over the past thirty years or so Christianity has begun to have it rough. Islam has developed such an aggressiveness to the extent that it will like to obliterate Christianity from Nigeria as a whole. And certainly the religious crisis that took place this year in Kaduna State is a testimony to this fact. Also various meetings and write-ups of the Muslims that have come into the limelight have shown that the Muslims, or rather some of the militant ones, are certainly out for nothing less than the complete obliteration of Christianity in Nigeria. They want to make Nigeria an Islamic republic. So the first major challenge is, will Christianity survive in this country? I am of the opinion and conviction that it will survive because the God of Christianity, the Lord Jesus Christ, has stated categorically that even the very gates of hell shall never prevail against His church. So come wind, come sunshine, Christianity will survive. But it is necessary for Christians to know that there is this challenge of survival.

The second challenge facing the Christian community especially as the 1990s approach is, what will be the attitude of Christians to politics? The bible does not teach that we should run away from politics; otherwise it would not have called us the salt and light of the world. The events of recent years have shown us that it is a big mistake for Christians to stand aloof and allow only non-believers to participate in politics. Christians have to be interested in politics to the extent that keen and committed Christians will be involved directly.

The third challenge is the challenge of materialism. Materialism which is worldliness: the love of power, wealth, clothes, etc. is creeping into the church and destroying it. The church must therefore address itself to this major monster.

The fourth challenge is the challenge of standing for the truth. People can no longer stand for the truth, for what they are convinced of, even within the church. They are worshipping leaders and following them, not the Bible. This is destroying the church.

Ezekiel Izuogu:

The challenge ahead for the Christian community is that Christians must come out of their little shells and be involved in social issues. There has been this attitude of non-involvement, we want to leave things to non-believers and stay in our little corners. But our Lord Jesus Christ was a revolutionary. He changed the society. It's true He went about preaching the Gospel, but He affected the civil life of His community. So come the 90s, Christians have to get involved directly and face the challenges of living a public life and still being able to maintain their Christianity and commitment to the Lord.

Tunji Braithwaite:

Personally, religion to my mind is a private affair. But where people of the same religious persuasion live together, they deserve to engage in fellowship and communal worship. Of course members of the other religions are equally entitled to congregate for their religious activities. But where one or the other of the religions in the land is going to constitute itself into a provocative group, the other religions will have no alternative than to thwart or ward off such aggression or provocation. I hope it does not get to that stage in this country. Christianity as far as I know, is a peace loving religion. It does not coerce people to her fold. In fact Christianity treats those who are in opposition to it with deference because Christianity as a religion, when practiced according to Christ's teaching, is so confident of its purity, that it needs not coerce anybody. People will voluntarily see Jesus as the truth, the way and the life. I do not know much about Islam, although in a book I've written and which is due for publication soon, I absolutely

made it clear that I do not support religious bigotry. This is why I said religion is a private affair and the state should not declare any particular religion as official.

Obadiah Tebu:

The Christian certainly has a lot of challenges because not only is he a citizen of heaven, but a national of Nigeria. So he ought to be conversant and be up to date with what happens in his country. The time of being indifferent as Christians has passed. We cannot afford to be indifferent to the issues current or future or past of our nation. While we go ahead with the primary commission the Lord has given us to win souls and make disciples of men, we would just have to note that we have a role to play this side of the globe and we cannot afford to just fold our hands and watch.

Helen Gomwalk:

The challenges are tremendous in the sense that people are introducing religion into politics. The Christian community must see itself as Christ does and be faithful to His teachings. They must protect their faith by guarding their interests in the sense of knowing their rights as citizens and seeing to it that they are not discriminated against because of their religion. But this does not mean that Christians should become militant. Also, even though our faith is not negotiable, it does not mean Christians should start forming a purely Christian political party.

Ishaya Audu:

The challenge to Christians as a community as I see it is to realise that the persecution the scriptures have talked about have come, and things are going to get worse and not better, and Christians must realise that, be ready for it and must keep their cool and balance and must be ready to bear it with fortitude. I have noticed a bit of approaching impatience particularly on the part of Christian youth. But I would sincerely hope and pray that we continue to follow the Christian injunctions of turning the other cheek and forgiving and praying for our enemies rather than any form of active retaliation. I am not of course saying that Christians should just sit down like dead ducks and be slaughtered. They should arrange to protect themselves within reason. But having said that they should be

careful particularly with regards to responding with aggression to provocations. I think Christians should be very careful and wary about that.

The second challenge for Christians is that it is essential that they themselves get in and participate in government. I know there has been a feeling that if you get into politics your integrity and your Christian uprightness can be soiled. But if it is soiled, it is your failure. It's really the failure of the Christian and I hope we will learn from the experience of the Second Republic where personally I know quite a number of Christians, who had gone into government deciding to maintain their integrity and have done so right through.

Olubunmi Okogie:

The challenge before Christians is to practice their faith in an authentic manner. As soon as the apostles received the Holy Spirit, they went into the market place and started preaching. And they lived up to the expectations of the teachings of Christ. If we can live up to the claims of our faith, we will not only be helping ourselves, but our nation also. We also have the challenge of unity. Presently the church is fragmented and disunited. Christ prayed that we should be one and until we sink our pride we won't be able to overcome because everybody wants to be somebody.

S.L.S. Salifu:

Frankly, I put the blame of the ills of the country squarely on Christians! Because we have not been the light and salt of the world as we ought. The challenge before us as Christians is just one - to live righteously. Do what is right wherever you are. By the time you find even half the Christians even in a state or establishment doing what is right, they will change the place. Unfortunately most Christians prefer to follow the stream. Personally I don't blame the Muslims or those who do not believe. I blame Christians who are not ready to stick to what is right. You see, immediately some of them see money - finish. They just go ahead and do what they want. So let us do what is right even if it means suffering for it. Refuse to be promoted. Refuse to take that job. The Christian girl should refuse to give her body just to get that job or promotion. By the time you have people doing this, the society will change. This is the challenge for Christians.

In view of the turbulent role religious issues have played in the socio-economic development of the country, how do you think the question of religion can be effectively resolved in Nigeria?

Alex Fom:

It is true that religion continues to play a destabilising role in the socio-economic life of Nigeria. But the first question we should ask is, what religious sect constitutes the destabilising factor? At no time do the Christians get up in arms to destabilise the politico-economy of the country. At no time do the Christians get up to riot. No. The Maitatsine groups for instance are Muslim groups. All this burning of churches who did them? They are Muslims. They said that Christians burnt mosques in Kafanchan. In fact when you go and look at the sort of mosques we were told were burnt you will laugh. Both of them are on public property which is supposed to be neutral ground and not a place for religious worship. It's just like the other time somebody said in Jos that they should build a mosque in the Jos Main Market. Now if you build a mosque in the market, you have to build a church in the market too because there are Christians there. Must you go and do that? The answer is no. And this is the sort of thing people come in to demand. So where are we heading to? This is the big question. So when you look at the issue, you will discover that it is not religion as such. It's some group of people, and the only solution is for them to retrace their steps into the paths of sanity. But to them there is no path of sanity except the jihad. So the ball is squarely in government's court to deal effectively with the situation and the government has to make up its mind. We have to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to god what belongs to God. There just has to be that distinction between state and religion.

Helen Gomwalk:

The problem of religion is caused mainly by lack of education. Until you have educated people who know and ask for their rights, others can manipulate and take advantage of them by whipping up their emotions. But if people are enlightened, they will be able to differentiate between things related to their faith

and political issues. They can join any religion on their own volition, not because they have been lured into it with money. Then religion will be more of a personal thing than a political issue.

Obadiah Tebu:

I think there's too much of selfishness. Basically we have Christianity and Islam here. I know there are others too. The Christian is convinced that Christ is the only way to God. That is not negotiable, and so we sand by it. But we don't start breaking everybody's head and fighting everybody who doesn't accept it. He hasn't accepted it because he has not come to see it. If he comes to understand it clearly, believe me he will leave any other way. And so the way to practice our faith is by tolerance, not by fighting. This should apply to both Muslims and Christians. Both Christians and Muslims should in a legitimate way propagate their faith and leave people with an open mind to receive or reject. What happens beyond this life is left to the individual.

Both religions will continue to exist in this country and so there just has to be a spirit of living together because we are Nigerians after all. For example my uncle is an alhaji, and he doesn't cease being my uncle because I'm a Christian, because we are part of the same family. He will never tell me I have no right to live in my village because I'm not a Muslim. There's no way my uncle will go round at night or any other time and set our church in my village on fire. That issue just doesn't arise. And so in the same way Nigerians, being what we are by our mix, we just ought to have tolerance as each sincerely believes his way and lives by it. So long as one group decides that its own way must be heard and accepted and no give and take, well, so long we will continue to have turbulence.

Tunji Braithwaite:

I do not see any turbulence religion has played. Of course there have been some Maitatsine riots in the north. I don't think Islam per se is the problem. But there are certain people in the north, certain Muslims, whom I would describe as fundamentalists and extremists, who are using religion for very diabolical purposes. And there is no doubt that they use religion to gain political ascendancy and even steal money and perpetrate the worst imaginable atrocities.

They even kill! But as I said these flames of sectarianism are limited to the northern parts and that means something ought to be done to investigate the situation. Not just these probes which are of no significance as far as I am concerned. Of course I also recognise, like you have mentioned, the fact that there have been powerful lobbies by some influential Muslims in the south to introduce things like sharia and the sort. But I am absolutely confident that whoever attempts to force Islam on not only the south, but the whole country, will not succeed. Whoever! You ask what informs my optimism? This is not just optimism. It is confidence. Because as I have said, the residuary power in the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ is such that no weapon that is fashioned against a true believer will every prosper. And any tongue, anybody, and group, that shall try to rise up in judgement against the believer will be confounded. I speak authoritatively. This is why I said any group, no matter how politically powerful they may be, trying to force Islam on this country is doomed to fail. The reason why it may appear that they are enjoying a measure of success in some parts of the north, is that Christians had not quite realised their plans before. But their eyes were opened with the immoral registration of Nigeria into the OIC. And that has put Christians on the alert. So having been put on the alert, any Islamising effort is already doomed to failure. This is the basis of my confidence.

Chris Abashiya:

First, I want to maintain that the answer does not lie in a blanket ban on religion as some people have suggested. Apart from the fact that religion can help people become better human beings, banning of religious activities, like the one placed recently on schools, will only send religious groups under ground and make them more dangerous to the government.

Having said this, I want to point out that religion is a very sensitive issue and governments must take note of this. And since there are many religions in this country, government as the father of all citizens, should be neutral as far as religion is concerned. In other words, the government should provide for freedom of religious worship, though this freedom must be within limits.

All religions ought to know that if we want to live in peace in this country, there must be religious freedom but such freedom demands compromise before they can live together successfully. Because if you insist on your own ideas and the others insist on their ideas, the net result is chaos, anarchy and collapse of the rule of law.

Secondly the government should not be seen to be leaning towards any religion. This it can do if it stops getting involved in various aspects of the religions. Take for example the issue of pilgrimage. I think it was a great blunder that government made by getting involved. All it should concern itself about is the diplomatic cover in such issues as obtaining visas, etc. I am glad that a prominent Muslim in Kano State has come out to boldly say that government should hands off pilgrimages. Also we must not as a country join any organisation based on religion. I think unless we do that we are going to run into serious problems.

Ezekiel Izuogu:

The question of religion can be resolved by simply giving to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is god's. In other words, the deliberate effort to mix religion with politics, which the present administration has made, perhaps out of pressures from some Muslim fanatics, is a blunder. This present administration blundered terribly by getting involved in religious matters, by going to register Nigeria in the OIC. The OIC brought politics into religion and religion into politics and that is very unfortunate. The only way to resolve the religious dilemma is simply to separate religion from the state. There must be a clear demarcation. If this is done, Christians and Muslims will live together happily, like they did before and since independence.

Olubunmi Okogie:

I see it as easy. Selfishness and pride - these are the things worrying us in Nigeria. People are only trying to bring in religion to buttress their point. a selfish person doesn't care a hoot about his neighbour and he can kill in trying to get what he wants. The same is true of a proud person. If we can forget and sink our religious differences this nation will be a better place.

Ishaya Audu:

I believe the question of religion in Nigeria could only be effectively resolved if the government in particular decides to be totally neutral as far as religious practices are concerned. Of course that does not mean that the government should not be interested in religion in protecting the rights of the individual to practise whatever religion he wants freely. This is government's responsibility and no more. But as to the issue of promoting one religion over another, government should be very careful and really keep out of that. There is a special responsibility on government leaders in this respect. They must in all circumstances show that strict neutrality. When I was leading the Ahmadu Bello University in an executive capacity as Vice Chancellor for example, I remember a number of occasions in which Christians expected me to sort of show some partiality to the Christian community. I resisted that temptation very forcefully and showed them that I believed it was in the best interest of peace of the whole community that as head of community I be absolutely impartial in practice and that everybody sees that I am impartial. And I am happy to say that I think it's true that that had a lot to do with the relative peace of the ABU community during my time.

Now that is in a relatively small institution, and it's even more applicable as far as the government of the country is concerned. Heads of government must show this absolute impartiality. Of course that means for all pilgrimages government should pull out. I mean Christian as well as Islamic pilgrimages. If government can really heed this kind of role, then one could hope that the problem that religion can create in our country would be curtailed. I don't believe that Muslims or Christians operating single handedly without the assurance that they may get the backing or the connivance of government will really go and attack the other.

S.L.S. Salifu:

Well, it's unfortunate that most of our governments have not faced the problem squarely. The government is supposed to be a referee. You blow the whistle when somebody commits a foul. Finish. So if the government does not

lean towards any particular religion, we will not have all these religious problems. Therefore if the government actually wants to tackle this problem, number one, it should wash off its hands neatly from anything religious. All the pilgrimages, building of mosques, churches, schools, etc., should be left to Christians and Muslims. If the government is to build a school, it must be a neutral school and it must have its own neutral character. Also the situation in which government takes over a Christian mission school and renames it by an Islamic identity is wrong. In Kaduna State some people are talking about wearing some identities to school to show their religion. This doesn't make sense. So the government should steer clear of religion. No government that has steered the path of religion in the world has succeeded. Even Khomeini who says he is doing Islam, we all know the havoc happening there and how miserable the people are.

How realistic is it for us to attempt a theocracy in Nigeria whether Islamic or Christian?

Ishaya Audu:

Well, I think it will be very unrealistic and very foolish and in fact if we want to destroy the country very quickly, this is the best way to go about it: establish a theocracy. I am often surprised to see supposedly responsible Muslim leaders advocating theocracy. Haven't they seen what is happening in the purely Muslim countries like Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Egypt and so on? All the difficulties they are having with Muslim fundamentalists and so on? This ought to be a lesson that no amount of theocracy would make for peace in any country.

So I feel that as Christ said to us - give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's, is really the way that we should organise our affairs. There should be no union between any religion and government. The two should go their separate ways.

Alex Fom:

Theocracy in Nigeria? It is most unrealistic, but this is where the Muslims are pushing us to! And since it will never be possible, the only way to avert

confusion is for the government to come out now, and put down its feet, and hands-off religion completely, and say whether you're a Christian or Muslim or Buddhist, it's not in our interest. The surest way to split this country is to try anything like a theocracy. God forbid!

Helen Gomwalk:

It is very unrealistic to start thinking of theocracy in the country. It just cannot work. What I understand by theocracy is that the country will be run on Christian laws or Islamic laws, depending on the religion of the head of state. State and religion will then become one. But Nigeria is a secular country and it should remain like that. Give to Caesar what is Caesar'', and obey the authorities except when you are told to do something contradictory to your faith. That is why sharia cannot work here too because it will mean forcing non-Muslims to become Muslims. No religion should be imposed. People should be attracted to a religion by the way the adherents practice the religion, not by theocracy.

Obadiah Tebu:

Theocracy is unrealistic. In fact totally unrealistic. My understanding is that in a theocratic set up, you have government led by a religious leader and he rules the nation on the principles of either the Bible or Koran. That is not Nigeria. Nigeria has basically two religions. To the Christian, we are enjoined to pray for those in authority, because we are supposed to be part of authority. But there is a clear distinction between religion and state. We assert as Christians that we should see that distinction. But I understand Islam says religion and state are the same. These are two parallel views. They can never meet. And so what theocracy will be calling for here is to say no more one Nigeria, split the country. So it is unrealistic. We cannot have one Nigeria in a theocracy. So as long as we want to live as Nigerians, which is desirable, we just have to sink our differences and practise our religion on individual basis.

Tunji Braithwaite:

Theocracy as such cannot work in the modern world because of the changing social situations. But I do submit, however, that no nation in the world that is presided over by satanic elements and godless people will ever prosper. When I say godless I mean rectitude of the soul. The leaders of a nation may not even profess a particular faith, but their actions may just coincide with the teachings of the bible. So even if they are professed atheists or agnostics and even if they deny any faith, that denial not withstanding, they remain agents of righteousness by their deeds of governance. So in that context theocracy comes in indirectly. And I submit that only nations governed by such elements who rule genuinely in the fear of the Lord can prosper.

You have mentioned that there are people like Gumi who have stated categorically that Nigeria's path to greatness is through adoption of Islam. Well, I have never myself read this man Gumi. But if what you are saying is true of him, I dismiss it off hand as utter rubbish, not worthy of any discussion in view of what I've said earlier. In any case, we will never adopt Islam as a state religion. Nobody who nurses such a chaotic ambition means well.

Ezekiel Izuogu:

For the fact that Nigeria is a multi-religious entity, the talk of theocracy is naïve. You just can't talk of theocracy because theocracy is predicated in the language of the religion you are talking about. So it means different things to Muslims and Christians or even to different factions in Islam. So it is impracticable. Nigeria must be perceived, first and foremost, as far as political issues are concerned, as a secular state. This is the only way out of the wilderness.

Olubunmi Okogie:

Theocracy is not feasible. Unless we are able to sink our religious differences, we are just wasting time. Come the 1990s, you will hear people still campaigning on the platform of religion.

S.L.S. Salifu:

It has never worked anywhere, so Nigeria is not going to be any different. It didn't work in Britain, that's why you have the clash in Northern Ireland. It's not working in Libya. The people are as equally divided. Don't be fooled by the praises you hear people shouting on Gadhaffi. You go to Libya and find out what is really happening. Theocracy has not worked in Iran. They attempted it in Sudan and it resulted in war.

So the Christian should realise that Jesus didn't ask him to make "Christian" nations out of the countries, but to make disciples. There isn't such a thing as a Christian nation anyway. Here we are told to co-habit with all people. You see the weed and wheat must grow together. Now if the Christian would not want o impose his religion on anyone, then by implication, he will resist any religion that wants to impose itself on him. And as far as Nigeria is concerned, Christians who are in the majority will resist to their last blood, any attempt to force Islam or any religion on them. So the Muslims might as well forget the idea. We should learn to stay and grow together. The Christians should not under any circumstances, hate the Muslim because the Bible is against it. The only person to hate is the devil.

Christopher Abashiya:

I am of the humble view that one of the surest ways of destroying Nigeria is to make any attempt to impose a theocracy on the people. Because there are other issues that are even less sensitive in which we have not been able to achieve consensus. Take the area of lingua franca for example. If in this less sensitive area we have not been able to achieve progress, how much more disastrous it will be in a very sensitive area like religion if we try to impose a government based on religion. So I think if we want to live together as Nigerians we should not play with fire. I feel that for the success of this country we must try as much as possible to divorce government from religion.

Do you have any message for Christians in high and influential positions?

Ezekiel Izuogu:

They should keep their identity. There is always the tendency for Christians to get up here and forget that they are Christians, and join the crowds or become ashamed of what they have always professed. This is shameful. I respect Muslims in high positions because they don't make a joke of their religion. Christians in high positions should know that they are there to do God's will, so in word and deed they must portray the Christian life.

Ishaya Audu:

Christians in high and influential positions must realise they are Christians first and everything else second. When I say they are Christians first, I don't mean that they should push their religion down people's throat. I mean they should live the Christian integrity that they are supposed to as Christians, no matter the circumstances. And they must realise that truth and justice are indispensable, and in whatever circumstances they must stick to these and nothing else.

The second piece of advice I would like to give them is that they must make out time for their Christian life - prayer, reading and study of the work of God. No matter how busy, they must make time for that. It's absolutely essential.

I would also advise them to contact a number of homes and Christian groups and request specifically for prayers. The prayers of the Christian community supporting them in office is a great thing indeed.

Alex Fom:

My advice is that irrespective of whatever happens, Christians in high positions should keep calm and cool and trust in their God, and do the right thing at all times. I would encourage all Christians in times of danger and fear to remember that our God is ready and willing. All we have to do is praise His name. That is our weapon.

Helen Gomwalk:

Let us show the light wherever we are, whether highly placed or low, in influential positions or not. Christians in influential positions should not

manipulate people or discriminate against them on the basis of religion. Let their actions and behaviour win others to Christ.

Obadiah Tebu:

My first message for Christians in high positions is that they should remember where they started. That they are products of a new life in Christ and should never forget that fact wherever they are, whatever they are in all circumstances. Furthermore the Christian in high and influential position should now become much more sensitive to the issues of religion in this country. He should be. In the past we've been the good boys, the hard workers and we've done our things sincerely as we've believed them without turning to see whether this is a Muslim, Christian or atheist. But the time has come when we as Christians should become much more sensitive to the situation. I'm not saying when I sit here at my desk and work I should have any discrimination against an atheist or Muslim or that I should begin to play favouritism for Christians. No. What I'm saying is that as Christians we have opponents. And these opponents don't seem to operate in the way we have been operating honestly and sincerely. Perhaps we've been naïve and assuming everybody has been operating the way we are. That's what I mean by being more sensitive. They need to keep their eyes open.

Tunji Braithwaite:

In places where they have social and cultural progress, you find that the people are very swift to speak up and they protest injustice. My message to the people of this country is to speak up and protest injustice and oppression. So long as people are afraid to protest injustice and oppression, so long will they remain in chains. But that's not the will of God. That is my message, not only to Christian leaders, but to everybody.

Olubunmi Okogie:

Christians in high positions should carry Christ to their offices, and live by His precepts. Do unto others as you would want others to do to you. If they

do that much, there will be peace in this nation. And not only that, they will continue to prosper.

APPENDIX 4:

THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION: THE RELIGIOUS PROVISIONS PROVIDE A STATE RELIGION AND DENIES NON-MUSLIMS HIGH EXECUTIVE OFFICES

by

REV. WILSON SABIYA

Nigeria is a country that has experienced terrible blood sacrifices for her unity. Our minds are still fresh with the memory. The grief and agony of those sacrifices are still with us. We therefore do not need any more blood sacrifices to bring this country together. One thing is certain, *there is no alternative to Nigerian unity. Nothing can replace the unity of this country.*

In this article we intend to plead with Nigerian leaders and citizens of this great country, that we do not need religious bloodshed to seal the Unity we so much need. It is our contention that the religious provisions in the Draft Constitution is nothing but a time bomb to drench and flood this country with blood. The provision is nothing short of the creation of cold war of Jihad versus Crusade. Certainly we all agree we must at all cost avoid *jihad versus crusade*. The privileges conferred on Muslims in terms of appointments to executive posts in almost all the ten Northern States, including Federal appointment from Northern States and amenities provided Muslims to enable them to fulfill their religious obligations compared to the Christians who are by-passed in terms of appointment and the confiscation of their institutions established to serve everybody regardless of their religious beliefs, has declared Northern States Islamic States. Christianity is

completely regarded a persona non grata religion in the Northern States. But when a Government is given a Constitutional Right and obligation to enhance and promote one religion at the expense of others, religious war is inevitable. We are strongly convinced that if we are to avoid the catastrophe, we have to discuss the issues objectively, interpret each other honestly and truthfully, and we must do all out of God-fearing love for the unity and the survival of our beloved country. We intend to do just that in this article. We want to discuss the sharia court and Islamic Law provisions in this article. We believe the provisions regarding Islam has declared this country Islamic state, and has reserved the High Executive Offices at Federal and State Levels for Muslims only. This we intend to prove.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NATIONAL LIFE

Before we discuss the issue we would like to clear some wrong impressions and misconceptions created in recent publications, notably in the *New Nigerian.* We do not have to discredit and misinterpret religions other than the one we profess to make our case. To misinterpret and discredit other religions is merely to arouse emotions and explosive sentiments in the adherents of the religions. Thus we will easily produce bloodshed. However in discussing religions other than ours we can help the adherents of such religions to see how others understand their religion. Therefore in our discussions we must do it out of love for the stability, Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress of our beloved country. Thus we view with disgust and are totally apprehensive of the way in which on Ibrahim Sulaiman interpreted Christianity in the *New Nigerian* of July 15, 1977 and July 22, 1977.

First Malam Sulaiman was wrong to say that, "The controversy over the relevance of the sharia mainly centres on the *meaning attached to*

religion" (italics mine). It is very unfortunate to advance such a claim. Nobody is questioning the *relevance* of the sharia to a Muslim, we repeat, to *a Muslim*. Nor is anybody questioning the meaning a Muslim attaches to religion. The issue, put bluntly, is the *declaration of islam as state religion to be enforced, propagated and maintained by the state* at the expense of Non-Muslim taxpayers. It is in this light do we understand some state Government systematic confiscation of Church Institutions, the Inauguration of Pilgrims Welfare Boards, appointment of Grand Khadis, the establishment of only Islamic Institutions in some of our Universities, the appointment of only Islamic teachers in many of our primary and post-primary Institutions, all paid and maintained by the State at the expense of non-Muslims. Like Ibrahim Sulaiman said "Anything outside Islam is superfluous and irrelevant." but the most mischievous, spiteful and most insulting is Suleiman's claim that "The Christian idea of religion is that it is a private affair between man and what he worships, and that it has nothing to do with public life. Life according to Christianity," he claims, "is separate from the State, Caesar from God, religion from politics, etc." It is obvious, and we pitifully sympathise with Sulaiman, that he does not know any better. Jesus came that we may have life and have it more abundantly. Jesus declared "I am the Truth, the Way and the Life." If this is not the total way of life, we want to know what is. When Jesus said "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God the things of God," (Matthew 21:22) He was referring to a colonial situation and he was answering a question about obedience and not defining Christian Living. He did not declare the separation of the secular and the sacred, but a declaration of the Unity of the two in one person. His answer shows the Unity of the secular and the religious in an individual Christian. At that time the Jews were ruled by Romans whom

they termed pagans. The Jews therefore did not feel it right to obey a pagan Government, a government not based on the Laws of Yahweh, the Torah. They came to Jesus with the question with a view to obtaining a license to disobey the pagan government. They were however, disappointed because Jesus told them that Caesar had authority to demand obedience though representing a colonial government. The Holy Bible says:

> "Everyone must obey the state authorities because they have been put there by God. Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgement on himself. For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good, but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of the man in authority? Then do what is good, and he will praise you, because he is God's servant working for your own good. But if you do evil then be afraid of him, because his power to punish is real. He is God's servant and carries out God's punishment on those who do evil. For this reason you must obey the authorities - not just because of God's punishment, but also as a matter of conscience. That is also why you pay taxes, because the authorities are working for God when they fulfil their duties. Pay then, what you owe them: pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honour for them all. (Romans 13:1-7).

In other words Christians are asked to regard Christian and non-Christian government leaders as ordained by God, but obedience to such Christian and non-Christian leaders does not exonerate a Christian from his Christian commitment to God. Here is a practical example. The writer of this paper comes from Gongola State, and he is a committed Christian, in fact an ordained clergyman, yet the governor (Caesar) of Gongola State, Col. M.D. Jega, is a committed Muslim, in fact more committed than some Imams we know (we visited Governor Jega at the Government House and twice he went out to pray before we left, and we were there less than two hours). Thus Jesus was referring to this kind of situation where the

Governor happens to be a non-Christian. As a Christian I have to accept him as ordained by God to be my Governor. I must obey him. I am enjoined by my faith to obey him, "when they fulfil their duties" because he is God's ordained Governor for me. The Holy Bible says:

> Remind your people to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey them, and to be ready to do good in every way (Titus 3:1). For the sake of the Lord submit to every human authority: to the Emperor, who is the supreme authority, and to the governors, who have been appointed by him to punish the evildoers and to praise those who do good. For God wants you to silence the ignorant talk of foolish people by the good things you do. Live as free people; do not, however use your freedom to cover up any evil, but live as God's slaves (I Peter 2:13-16).

But my obedience to Governor Jega does not excuse me from fulfilling my commitment to God as a Christian. Thus Ibrahim Sulaiman is ignorant of Christians and his wrong and spiteful understanding of Christianity can only help to inflame, and hasten the doomsday.

Christianity is not just a way of life but also a declaration of war against injustices, oppressions and all forms of inhumanity of man to man. Therefore if Jesus declared that he came "to bring good tidings to the afflicted, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" and also said: "In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," where is the idea of the separation of the secular and the sacred? A Christian is the expression of the unity of God's government through spiritual institution, the church and the secular institution. Christianity is out to teach, heal and reform society. Thus there is no conflict because both the secular and the spiritual institution are established by God for the government of the world. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," says the Word of God. We as Christians

therefore believe that by ordaining Government, God has also given them instruments of Government, which is the Constitution, with which they are to curb evil and administer justice. What cannot be mixed is the Church as an Institution with Government as an Institution. For the Christian both Government and church are like Father and Mother, each has a specific role for the upbringing of the child under God.

If then as Ibrahim Sulaiman said that, "The sharia is the only law recognised by a Muslim to be binding on him, all other laws being invalid and products of selfishness and human desires" then honestly may God help us. For such will be possible only in an Islamic State. Is Nigeria an Islamic State? Shall we then construe his claim to mean that a Muslim does not recognize any law other than the sharia and therefore the Nigerian Constitution is "invalid and product of selfishness?"

GOVERNMENT FAVOURS ISLAM:

To us this is the crux of the matter. We want to reiterate strongly here, that we do not see anything wrong with the sharia court. What we reject is "Government doing" it at the expense of non-Muslim taxpayers. It is the duty of Jama'atul Nasir Islam to set up Sharia Courts, not the Government. What we are saying is that if the Government is establishing Islamic Institutions and Islamic Officials which are exclusively for Muslims, while at the same time confiscating properties and Institutions of other religions which are inclusively open to all with hardly and compensation, then the Government has declared herself Islamic and the country an Islamic State. For not only our Institutions but also our taxes are being confiscated to run Islamic Institutions.

We therefore plead that if the Government has decided to become financial and institutional custodian of Islam, Justice demands the inclusion of all religions.

We do not see how a Government can be financially and institutionally involved with a particular religion, using public funds, and claim not to have declared that religion the state religion or at the least according that religion the status of legally accepted religion, and we do not also see how a Government can systematically confiscate institutions belonging to a particular religion and claim not to have declared that religion illegal or at the least declared the religion persona non grata religion in the State. If we are going to be honest with ourselves we should admit, judging from executive appointments (e.g. Chairmanships, Commissionerships, Secretaryships etc.) and the massive support given to Islamic institutions from public funds, that Islam is the legally accepted religion to the various governments of Nigeria, and judging by the restrictions and treatment meted out to Christians in this country by the various governments in the country, Christianity has in effect been declared persona non grata religion. This is now the fact of life in the country.

Our recommendation is that since Nigeria has declared herself a *secular state*, she has no business establishing, appointing and financing religious institutions to enforce sectarian morals. Each religion under the provision of Freedom of Religion can establish such Institutions at their own expense. If the Government involves herself how can she intervene when such institutions use religion to perpetrate injustices? It is highly a gross injustice to burden a taxpayer with the expense of an institution which he does not only benefit from but also is inimical and spiteful to him.

It is necessary here to refer to the article by a Special Correspondent in the *New Nigerian* of August 12, 1977. His main argument in the first part was that three court systems have been operating in the country; wrong; in a part of the country, yes. Our argument however is that the court systems have been discriminatory. In the former Northern Region where the so-called three court systems existed, the customary law was defined as "native law and custom;" Islamic law was also defined as "Native law and custom." "It is as native law and custom, that Islamic law is enforced in Northern Nigeria more extensively than anywhere else in the world outside the Arabian Peninsula" declared one writer. The customary courts were and are still manned by Muslim Presidents and Alkalis. It is in these courts that a Muslim judge judges non-Muslims based on the Sharia. Customary courts in the Northern States are nothing but Sharia courts in disguise to enforce the Sharia on non-Muslims.

In most cases however only Islamic area courts exist. Thus all non-Muslims are tried by the sharia. The non-Muslims in the northern part of the country have been paying taxes to facilitate their own enslavement to the sharia system. We are saying therefore that it is criminal to make non-Muslims in this country slaves to Islam and be forced to pay tribute for the protection, application, promotion and enforcement of Islam. We have had enough of this crime. We want to be free and we will go to any extent to gain that freedom.

NOTE FROM BOER: The above is part of a larger paper. Long after this volume 5 was published, I decided to reproduce the entire paper in a chapter on Sabiya in vol. 7.

APPENDIX 5:

SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM:

A CHRISTIAN VIEW--EXCERPTS

by

Habila M. Istanufus[1]

Religious Pluralism (Multi-Religions)

Pluralism as a general term implies the doctrine that there is not only one or two ultimate substances as against monism or dualism respectively, but many substances. Religious pluralism is the principle that people of different religious groups could live together in harmony. It implies tolerating other religious confessions. It boils down to our situation in Nigeria to state that our issue in Nigeria is not trying to get rid of one religious group, but to find ways how w c an life together despite the diverse religious confession. We are not able to turn away our face from the fact that there are many religious groups in our society.

Secularism: An Option for the Religious Pluralistic Nature of Our Society?

I am not able to say categorically whether we should opt for secularism or not, but I would rather prefer we all look at this issue together with objectivity.

Where we like it or not, there is one fact that we have to accept. The fact is that there are many religions in the world, and the situation is not any different from what we have in Nigeria today. We have more than two

[1]H. Istanus, 1995, pp. 50-51.

religious groups in Nigeria, and the earlier we know and accept this fact, the better for us. If one thinks that his/her religion is the best and is expecting that in the next five to ten years all other religions shall be eliminated, I am sorry to say that I think such a person may have hyper-tension, because, instead of the number of religions decreasing, they will be increasing.

For us to have a wider perspective of this problem, I want to present one observation already made by a chaplain at the University of Kent. "To say that we live in a religiously pluralistic world is not new. What is new, however, is increasing awareness that brings with it serious theological issues for the Christian Church. The days of religious and cultural isolationism are at an end. To the seeker, the religions jostle with one another in a market place of possibilities."

It has been a difficult thing among the religions to develop a theology of other religions which should be the attempts, as Alan Race observed, on the part of theologians "to account theologically for the diversity of the world's religious quest and commitment." "To evaluate the relationship between the Christian faith and the faith of another religion."

The understanding of secularism in Nigeria is not necessarily the same as the understanding in the Western world. Secularism in the West is seen by some as a religion of its own that is antagonistic both to Christianity and to a true Christian humanism. Others consider it even stronger as the great contemporary enemy of the Christian faith. Some…accuse secularism of being guilty for having "exchanged the truth of God for a lie." Because of all these views, some prefer to use the term "laicization" to describe institutional secularization of society; that is, replacement of official religious control by a non-ecclesiastical authority.

In Nigeria, Christians have their own understanding of secularism, necessitated by the situation they find themselves in. Christians in Nigeria would call for secularization with the understanding that "the relationship of the Church to the society around it is not defined in terms of a mission to re-sacralize it by imposing ecclesiastical rules upon it. The relationship is one of loving service and witness, proclamation and healing." It is in this sense that Berger affirmed that secularization of society is a Christian calling.

Christians call for secularization of the state, because it has much to do with justice and human rights. Imposing religious laws or tenets on all people does not actually help in the end; it only creates in-built provocation and tension.

The call for secularization of the state in Nigeria by Christians is an effort to interlocute for equal treatment of the two major religions in Nigeria. Christians have on many occasions complained that the Government of Nigeria has shown much favour to Islam. Muslims make the same complaint vice versa from time to time. Whether the complaints are genuine I feel incapable to go into alone. But what I am trying to bring here is that the call for secularism is a call that the government should leave religious business to religious people if they want to be religious. They should be sincere enough to treat all the religious groups equally.

Actions that have been creating problems are those of the government officially participating at religious launchings and sometimes donating government funds to only one religious group. The cartoon below [not included] is an artist's impression of some of the actions that received public criticism at that time.

APPENDIX 6:

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION FOR NIGERIA

by

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March, 1977

I. Canon Law Courts for Nigeria

The question of religious pluralism in Nigeria is one of the issues fraught with grave possibilities of national unity or discord, of social peace or civil war. So grave are the possible consequences that political observers have been quick and will be quicker still to identify it as the underlying cause of any social stress or upheaval in the body politic. Many journalists and other political interpreters were not hesitant to speculate on the contribution of religious differences to the origin and administration of the last Civil War.

The handling of the religious factor by the CDC can be compared with the way the Willink Commission handled the issue of minorities in 1959. The solution offered by both is without faith, and without a social confidence born of historical vision and objectivity. As we have seen in the case of minorities, a palliative approach may serve for a short time, but it cannot last. A more daring and more dynamic solution has to be found. Unfortunately, we did not create States to cope with the issue of minorities until we have had a Civil War. Next to ethnic and linguistic differences, religious affiliation is similarly disposed to being used as a basis for mass

hysteric responses. And the fact that there are three main religious systems in Nigeria is a reality which has to be handled with delicate dexterity and absolute impartiality.

Church and State

The principle of the separation of Church and State was proposed in a number of memoranda submitted to the CDC. It is likely that those who made the proposal assumed too easily that it was the best device for the country and that the CDC could not adopt any other alternative. True enough, this is a subject of considerable interest and history. However, the CDC has adopted the principle of dichotomy which permits two religious systems to be identified with the ensuing social administration while the third religious system is left in the cold. Now that the CDC has shown an ambivalence in handling it, perhaps the issue is better raised up for a fresh debate in Nigeria. What should be the relationship of Church and State or of Mosque and Government in Nigeria?

The discussion of the relationship between Church and State has a long history in the Church vis a vis the national States of Europe and America. The same discussion has taken place in the Arab world as to the relation between Islamic authority and political authority in an Arab State. Two different conclusions have been drawn. On the whole, the Euro-Americans contend that there can and should be a separation between Church and State, though it is possible to draw a wide scale of separation and find different European countries at varying positions on that scale. The Americans who have “In God we trust” on their coins yet rule out religious education in their schools and, until Kennedy, were very wary about having a Roman Catholic as President. The German and Scandinavian

Governments have authority to collect and administer a Church Tax for religious and other ecclesiastical purposes. The English, or at least those in the Church of England, cannot appoint a bishop or revise their Prayer Book without getting authority from Parliament and the Queen. Yet, all these recognize and accept a separation of Church and State. The Church of England is seeking now to be dis-established.

In the Arab and Islamic world, the general tendency is to see religion and civil administration as two sides of the same coin. On the whole, there is no separation of mosque and court, no distinction between sacred and secular, no locus standi for a civil law which does not claim its origin and authority from religious law (Sharia). Political rulers frequently play religious roles in the position of priest-kings not unfamiliar in other situations where religion and culture coalesce.

Nigeria is an inheritor of both traditions. The way we merge the two approaches may spell our doom or assure a peace which can become an example to many other countries. Since we have both Islam and Christianity in this land, the conclusion we draw for one religion on the issue of relationship with the State must equally apply to the other. The Constitution must be based on a national policy to be uniformly applied. We cannot afford to apply to the Church the principle of separation of Church and State while we cede to Muslims the identification of Islam and governmental administration.

Religious Courts

The Draft Constitution, it has been noted, makes provision in its Part VII for the establishment of Sharia Courts to "administer, observe and enforce the observance of the principles and provisions of Islamic Law of

the Maliki School" (1895). According to Part V on Judicial Appointment, a Qadi of a Sharia Court of Appeal or the Grand Qadi of a State is expected to have "had considerable experience in the practice of Islamic Law or is a distinguished scholar of Islamic Law (Sections 152 and 153). The National Joint Muslim Organization submitted a memorandum for the "establishment of Sharia Courts in Ondo, Ogun and Oyo States." In response, the CDC has made provision for a Sharia Court of Appeal for each State where one is in existence on the date when the Constitution comes into effect (Section 180(1)(e) and 180(2)(a), and for other States after that date when "the House of Assembly passes a resolution bringing the sub-section into force…" (180(2)(b)). As such, there is no law stopping any State in the Federation having a Sharia Court and a Sharia Court of Appeal. There will be Islamic courts regulating the life of Muslims according to Koranic laws as developed by Islamic religious authorities, but at the cost of the State.

There is no reference anywhere to any parallel courts where Nigerian Christians, because they are Christians, may like to be judged, either out of religious jealousy or devoted zeal. The constitution of the different Church denominations in Nigeria now permit marriage, divorce and inheritance disputes, which are remitted to the Federal Sharia Court of Appeal by Section 184(3)(a)-(e), to go to secular courts. Such cases used to be handled by the Sacerdotium rather than through the secular Imperium. There were also Church laws which controlled stealing, gambling, and drunkenness. Religious courts of different levels, handling cases of these misdemeanours, had their procedures furnished with elaborate principles of casuistry to guide the judges in making decisions that subsequently became case laws.

One reason why the Churches abandoned these judicial roles to the secular government is tied up with their belief in the rightness of a

separation of religion and government where found necessary. Apparently, it is not found necessary in the Nigerian situation. By the take-over of Church schools and hospitals, Government seems to be pursuing a programme of dis-establishing the churches. At the same time, by confirming Islamic courts of law, the impression is being given that the Government is making Islam an "established" State religion.

Different commentators have suggested that in qualifying section 11(1)(a) on equality of rights and obligations with section 11(2) on the validation of Islamic law and customary law in opposition to the former, and also in the case of Sharia Courts, the CDC has merely given recognition to our custom and the existing rules of Islamic law. Opinions differ as to whether a Constitution is a thermometer or a thermostat. Tanzania and Zambia, to quote only two African countries, see the Constitution as a blue-print of what the people will like to become. It is not yet clear in Nigeria whether our Constitution should mirror the passage between yesterday and today or whether it should map out the highway from today unto tomorrow. Murtala Mohammed certainly would have opted for the latter.

Recommendation

If we hope to have a Constitution which is capable of leading Nigeria into a future of unity and peace, and if at the same time we like to keep Islamic courts of law as parts of the judicial system, there is a needed step to take. It will be based on "the need to give relevance to the moral, religious and ethical beliefs of all segments of this society," a principle which has been laid down by the CDC and on the basis of which, apparently, Sharia courts are given due recognition (CDC Report, Volume II, p. 107). It is recommended that encouragement be given to Church leaders, working

through their experts in Canon Law with other legal specialists, to review, collate and synthesize ecclesiastical laws and legal norms which exist and which can be given recognition and fully incorporated into the judicial system at each level as may be found appropriate.

II. Inter-Religious Cooperation for Nigeria

State Religion

Section 17 of the Draft Constitution states blandly that "The State shall not adopt any religion as the State religion." This Section is probably the shortest but certainly the most laconic sentence in the whole Report. It is explicitly stated, yet it is at the same time the densest statement recorded in the whole document. But for the fact that it has so many meanings and therefore can be said to be meaningless for our situation, it would have been accurate to describe it as the most contradicted statement up and down the Draft. Lawyers can have a field day contending what it is supposed to mean, if the matter has to go to court according to the provisions of Section 7(1)(3). The danger lies in the fact that mass reaction does not depend upon the adroitness of legal speculations.

There is no problem in agreeing that the section can be taken as an assertion that the government will not attempt to establish itself as a quasi-religious institution as a rival to other religions. Unfortunately, a constitutional embargo is not what is needed as a safeguard against this. History supports the view that the personal factor is strong in the establishment of a new religion. Once there come an executive President with totalitarian tendencies, his own vanity and the adulation of a part of the Nigerian public could make him claim to be a personification of God

Almighty with the power of interference not only in the religious affairs of the churches and mosques but also in the determination of the destiny of people. Then, what could the faithful do but fight to be martyrs for God and their country?

Section 17 might rejoice the heart of some Nigerians that the country has opted now to be a secular State. There can be nothing further from the truth. This provision is not a normative enactment for institutional atheism nor is it an expression of the State's neutrality towards religion. Secularism is not the ideological option for Nigeria in this regard. No Government which treats this country as a secular State is going to be popular with the generality of the people. The present Government knows that too well. And all those who nurse the ambition to rule the country after 1979 must have secretly come to terms with that in their minds. The only exceptions may be the different brands of secularists in our society. Members of the CDC have recorded their recognition of this and have therefore returned to the religious question at different points which contradicts one another in an honest effort to deal with the most intractable problem in our society.

The Communists have no answer for us in this matter because our Constitution is being written before or probably for the revolution. A revolution could have swept off the mosques and the churches. But we have to plan with our religious leaders in active cooperation. The Western European and American models do not help to solve our problem because our pluralism is not denominational but multi-religious pluralism. Lebanon, Sudan, the Philippines and other countries in similar situations have no answer for us because they have not yet solved the problem for themselves. This is a time for honest, humble and patient cooperation, not for brazen slogan-ranting nor for guerilla strategy-planning against one another.

Equitable treatment

The most plausible interpretation has been delineated and developed by Justice Sambo in a recent article. He avers that since the Government has already recognized religion as part of the way of life of the people, it becomes the consequent duty of the government to ensure both the teaching and the practice "of each divine religion." In fact, Section 11(3)(c) of the Draft constitution has declared that "The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring …that there are adequate facilities for social, religious and cultural life." In earnest anticipation of this Section 11(3)(c), the nation has already started to provide facilities for Muslim pilgrimages, and a State has voted a substantial amount of Government money for the building of a City Mosque. The only way to ensure that there is no contradiction between Section 17 and Section 11(3)(c) is to interpret Section 17 to read "The State shall not adopt any one religion by itself as the State religion;" rather, all religions in the country shall be equally treated as if they are all together, jointly rather than severally, the State religion.

This can be a very difficult formula to operate. The difficulty, however, is anticipated by Section 35(4) which attempts to ensure equality of treatment and to reduce religious rivalry. It reads: "No executive or legislative action shall operate so as to authorise the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of religious instruction in educational institutions in such manner as to deny equitable treatment to other religious groups." In a more civilian language, this means that in the expenditure of public funds for religious instruction, equitable treatment shall be given to all religious groups.

The CDC has made assurance doubly sure by putting in a definition of religious instruction on which public funds will be spent with an eye on non-discrimination. "Religious instruction" is defined in Section 35(5) as "instruction relating to the advancement of the practice of any religion." Care has been taken to distinguish it from the teaching of religious studies and of religion as a discipline about which no problem is envisaged. Section 35(4) should be seen as a specific case of the general provision previously made in 11(3)(c). To bring 35(4) into full line with 11(3)(c), it needs to be widened and made less restrictive than it is now. It might then read "No executive or legislative action shall operate so as to authorise the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of providing adequate facilities for religious life in such manner as to deny equitable treatment to other religious groups."

But spending Government money to advance the practice of the different religions in this country is going to be a gigantic operation. Those who know the great multiplicity of church denominations, sects and associations in Nigeria today, with the equally wide variety in their accepted practices, will hesitate before undertaking such an enterprise. The tendency might be to force a number of such groups together to form larger units and to reduce the variety of practices. Remember the Ahmadiyyas in our recent history. Where then is Religious freedom? The Draft Constitution as it stands now has no safeguards for Religious Freedom.

Recommendations:

A Government which undertakes to foster without controlling the advancement of religions ought to foresee and take account of the problem of religious freedom and the need for inter-religious cooperation. It is

therefore proposed that the Constitution should provide for an inter-religious body or bodies with moral and legal competence to ensure that religious freedom as enshrined in the Constitution is protected, and where the freedom is infringed, to take appropriate action for a redress. It should also be part of the positive duty of the body on its Federal and State levels to promote an active inter-religious cooperation in nation building. Religious groups should together search for a more adequate basis for their contribution to national development, should jointly bring their religious perspective of social concern to bear on development plans, and should cooperate to promote the spirit of selfless service and loyalty to God in the citizenry. Government money is probably better spent in fostering this inter-religious cooperation than in advancing the practices of each individual religion. The new Constitution should provide the basis for this new possibility.

III Questing the Functions of Canon Law Courts for Nigeria

The term "Canon Law Courts" seems for the time being to be the best available term for our purpose. At least, it is to be preferred to the term "ecclesiastical courts" which can be interpreted as courts held on church premises or simply at the direction of church authorities. Emphasis is not yet laid on the rule of law as the basis for the dispensation of justice. On the other hand, Canon Law Courts are courts interpreting or enforcing Canon Law. The term "Canon Law" can then be defined as a body of laws laid down by the authority of the Church constituted to work for social harmony so that the practice of morality in personal relationships and the administration of social justice can be based on the canon of Christian religious faith and discipline.

Once so defined, the next question which arises is what kind of cases such courts may be expected to handle. The Draft Constitution has been careful enough to limit the powers of Sharia Courts to civil cases while criminal cases are remitted to other courts. Thus, such courts have powers to interpret and enforce only Islamic Personal Law. It can be assumed in the same way that Canon Law Courts, when constituted, will have no authority to handle criminal cases. The following areas of Personal Law and Ecclesiastical Law may be cited as types of cases which Canon Law Courts in Nigeria may be expected to entertain.

Marriage and Family Questions

Sharia Courts deal mainly with Islamic Personal Law and with special reference to marriage and family relationships. In particular, such questions as are dealt with include

- validity of a marriage
- dissolution of a marriage
- family relationships in marriage
- inheritance, will, and benefaction
- the guardianship of an infant

For the Christian, these questions are bound up with the concern for Christian Home and Family life, an issue which has always been treated as being not only legal but also moral and pastoral. The separation of the legal aspects from the more persuasive moral and pastoral aspects has not been for the total good of the community. Pastoral care and counseling goes on all the time within the churches. In a few cases, questions of personal law standing before the court have been returned to the local pastors and other influential members of the Christian community to be “settled out of court.”

The proper establishment of Canon Law Courts for these purposes in Nigeria will bring all these facets of family care and maintenance together within the realm of Christian religion where they can properly be nurtured.

The Marriage Ordinance in Nigeria and in other territories previously under British rule certainly evolved under strong missionary influence. The formulation was in line with Common Law in England, but it was on the principle of separation of Church and State. It is that Ordinance and the laws related thereto as drafted and amended from time to time which now have to be re-examined and revised on a clear religious basis. It will then have to be re-incorporated into the legal system of the country as a religious law having national legal sanctions. The courts administering the law can then be identifiably known and referred to as Christian. Since the Government has decided that Muslims in Nigeria should come under Islamic religious law in matters of marriage and family life, and that those who so prefer should be governed by customary law with or without the associated traditional rites, it will be better for the laws governing the same matters in the case of Christians to be clearly put on a Christian religious basis.

Of interest to us in this matter should be the result of studies in East, Central and Southern Africa commissioned by the churches of those parts. The report of the study led by Fr. Adrian Hastings and commissioned by the Anglican Archbishops of Capetown, Central Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda has already been published with the title *Christian Marriage in Africa* (London, SPCK, 1973). The subsequent study commissioned by the Roman Catholics is soon to be published. A considerable amount of other materials on Christian marriage in Africa has accumulated from the fresh thinking done by Lambeth Conferences, Methodist Conferences, individual National Christian Councils, the All Africa Conference of Churches etc.

Without too much difficulty, the provisions of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* (1917) and of the foundation constitutions of the different church denominations in Nigeria can be reasonably brought up to date for incorporation into the legal system of our land.

Equality Before the Law

One effect of the proliferation of Sharia Courts in the Federation will be in the retardation of the progress of the ideal of equality before the law. For the Christian, the sanctity of the human person arising from man having been created in the "image of God" and Jesus Christ having taken up this human flesh in His Incarnation makes equality before the law a fundamental article of faith. The inclusion of a clause in our Draft Constitution on freedom and equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law as a directive principle of State policy can serve as some assurance that this ethical ideal will be nurtured under State direction (Section 11(1)(a)). Nevertheless, the concession by the State to a religious group to preserve social habits of inequality under the protection of religious laws converted to become the laws of the land ought to shake Christian confidence in the ability of a composite legal system to bring the divine equality to become a social reality (Section 11(2)).

Speaking to the members of the Roman *Rota* at the recent opening of the 1977 Church High Court judicial year, the Pope admonished the judges and the lawyers admitted to practice before the *Rota* in the following words: "The principal concern must be how to make the protection of justice more perfect. For everyone recognizes that the domain of human rights is greatly enlarged and that human dignity is seen in a clearer light." Those words can be taken as a challenge to the Church in this land. Direct responsibility for

promoting human rights in Nigeria will have to be taken up by the Church as a body and by Christian groups out of conviction. The social and political rights of women, the opportunities needed by the young and their obligations to society, the radical transformation of the lot of the unemployed and the poor have to be protected in practical ways by the Church. The Church in Nigeria will be failing in its social and national responsibility if she does not at this time undertake as a matter of urgency the codification of Christian ethical principles needed to sustain the new society of our religious imperative.

Ecclesiastical Disputes

Various cases of ecclesiastical disputes involving the interpretation of church constitutions, the appointment and deployment of church officials, and the discipline and rights of church workers have been taken to court in recent years. In some of them, we had the scandal of a non-Christian judge presiding over the case of a dispute concerning the internal life of the Church. Such cases may have to go before Canon Law Courts, should such exist in the land. Clear legal procedures will, however, need to be laid down beforehand so that such courts may have the credibility of absolute impartiality in ensuring true justice for all concerned. The theology of power has first to be carefully defined according to the mind of Christ and translated into action not only in canon law courts but also and primarily in practical life of service for social justice and harmony.

APPENDIX 7:

OLD WINE IN NEW SKINS[1]

How do you account for the violence in Africa that we read about? What began as rumblings of violence have slowly turned into a mighty crescendo of violence and death. We remember the Idi Amin debacle of Uganda. Today, Uganda is smarting from the so-called Lord's Army. The horrors of the Hutus and Tutsis are still fresh in our memory. Sudanese blood is still flowing. It is proving difficult to stem the flow of blood in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Of course, Nigeria has had its civil war. That war is long over, but violence continues to mark a Nigeria supposedly at peace with itself. Monograph One describes the outbursts of violence between Christians and Muslims from 1980-2002. The Miss World pageant in Nigeria led to riots that left over 200 people dead[2] and prompted frustrated President Obasanjo's outburst, "Enough is enough. We are fed up with these crises."[3] During the 2003 election campaign, Aminu Masari, a member of the House of Representatives from Katsina State, warned that "the greatest threat to a successful conduct of elections is political violence and activities of thugs."[4] Violence had become such a problem that the main opposition party and the Federal Government were both organizing separate conferences on political violence.[5] So, we should not be surprised then at Abba Gana Shettima's

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[1]*Christian Courier,* 5 Jun/98. This CD article is an edited version of the original.

[2]J. Boer, "The Anatomy of Miss World." *CC*, 3 Mar/2003, pp. 12-13. "Nigerian Muslims and the Miss World Pageant." *TCNN Research Bulletin*, Mar/2003, pp. 36-42. See also www.tcnn.edu as well as the Companion CD.

[3]*NN*, 30 Nov/2002, p. 1.

[4]B. Agande, 2 Mar/2003. See also J. Nwokocha, 2 Mar/2003.

[5]R. Ajayi, 7 Mar/2003.

comment, "The resort to violence is…institutionalised in the Nigerian polity."[6]

In addition to inter-religious and political violence, there is even a considerable degree of violence between Christians. A cluster of ethnic groups, all of them identified closely with specific Christian denominations that were nurtured by the same foreign missionary body, have engaged in bitter wars with each other for a decade or more. Wholesale destruction of entire villages, including churches and a denominational administrative centre, not to speak of the thousands of dead. At least one party had modern army weapons at their disposal. A reliable source reported that a top leader in one of the churches encouraged that war and even helped plan it!

How do we account for all these horrible inconsistencies amongst Christians? The aim of this article is not to analyze all the causes for these wars, but, rather, to indicate the continuing influence of ATR and the resulting role of ethnocentrism and their effect on the issue at hand. Neither is the purpose to berate these Christian communities from the vantage point of a superior moral perk.

I am aware that I am a Westerner and that my understanding is based as much on my origin as it is on my 30 years' experience in Nigeria. Nigerians have their own interpretation that is as valid as mine. The most common explanations are those based on colonialism. Having written a doctoral dissertation on that subject, I know all about it. I realize full well that colonialism has and continues to play a role in these matters. However, I am pointing out religious factors often overlooked in this religious question but that contribute to the problem. I like to think that we complement each other.

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[6]A. Shettima, "Group Identify Conflicts," http://www.gamji.com/NEWS1871.htm.

Parallels in Western History

As I contemplate the issue, I am immediately reminded of the centuries of atrocities and injustices that Western Christians have inflicted upon each other and, indeed, on much of the world. These atrocities have been perpetrated over the centuries by Christians brought up in countries where the gospel has had much more time to take root than in Rwanda and Nigeria.

I have recently read some books about medieval culture in the West. It is enough to raise one's hands in holy horror to see how bishops and archbishops, Christian kings and nobles routinely plundered, oppressed, imprisoned and even murdered. They generally abused their positions for purposes of naked power and wealth. A random example is the book ***A Short History of Ireland***[7] by Martin Wallace about the relationships between a dominant Christian England and underdog Christian Ireland. One can only shake his head and wonder what Christianity meant to those perpetrators of aggression, if anything at all. One can ask similar questions about almost all these countries throughout most of their "Christendom" phase.

To come closer to the present, the history of near genocide of native Canadians and Americans is too well documented to deny. The aftermath of black slavery in the U.S. is still very much with us. We think of Stalin's camps of hell in the land of Orthodox churches. We remember the Holocaust in the land of Luther. We have not forgotten the images of recent ethnic cleansing among Orthodox and Catholics in former Yugoslavia. The

[7]Martin Wallace, *A Short History of Ireland.* New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1996.

struggle between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland has not yet been resolved.

While we may try to console ourselves with the thought that these horrors took place in spite of Christianity, others were consciously based on warped versions of Christianity. The guillotine of Reformation times cannot be erased from history. A recent visit to South Africa made me conscious of the fact that "Christian" apartheid was much more cruel than many of us may think.

So as I seek to explain what is happening in Africa, I do so humbly. I do so in the consciousness that I am also looking at my own history. If, as I will argue, African Christians are struggling with the residue of their Animistic past, the same must be said of Western Christians in relation to both their Pagan and their Greek heritages, a point I discuss in Part 2 of Monograph 5.

Ancient worldview

It is possible to explain much of current African turmoil in terms of economic interests. Some very helpful studies have been published along this line. However, studies that limit themselves to economic considerations do not tell the entire story, often not even the basic one. Besides, in this article I am interested in the religious factors that have contributed to these wars.

Specifically, the issue here is: Why has the Christian faith of the combatants not prevented them from such atrocities?

At least part of he answer to this question must be sought in the relationship between the ancient worldview of traditional Africa and the new religion of Christianity. The official religious structures have changed and

churches have emerged all over the place, but at the deeper level of the underlying traditional worldview there remains a significant residue for many Africans.

And what was the shape of that worldview? At least two aspects are relevant for this discussion. First, the purpose of African Traditional Religion (ATR) is not to serve God or gods; it is to manipulate the spiritual powers to do the bidding of the people, of the tribe and of individuals. This manipulation is carried out by a complicated arsenal of religious rituals.

We have here the very opposite of the Christian religion, which insists that its followers serve God. Spiritual powers are manipulated to serve human interests. The deepest quest is for social harmony and for power. The spiritual world is manipulated so as to satisfy that deep quest.

Millions of Africans, including Nigerians, have moved over to the church. Often they have done so as part of large people movements. People have become dissatisfied with traditional ways. Tradition became an obstacle to progress under the new conditions developed under colonialism.

Religion for Worldly Gain

The Wukari people of Taraba State, for instance, stubbornly held on to their traditional ways, while Takum, only 50 miles away, had accepted the church. It was becoming clear that the people of Takum were benefiting from this change in various ways, especially in economics, education and healthcare. When the Wukari people began to recognize how Takum profited from adopting the new ways, they also started to move towards the church in large numbers. Today there is a large Christian community in Wukari, perhaps greater in number than in Takum.

Another example of this same tendency is the ease with which thousands of Nigerians first converted to the church only to move on again, this time to the mosque. The reasons for such spiritual shopping are generally economic or political. A Christian with political or business ambitions can often be bribed by Muslim offers of money or position to make another move.

There are innumerable rich Muslims in Nigeria with a Christian background. And why not? If the purpose of religion is to help you satisfy your ambitions, then such shopping around makes eminent sense. You follow the religion that promises to fulfill your dreams.

Issues of money

The point I am making here is that for many people this was a change in religious structure, but the old worldview continued to function at the same time. They expected to use their new religion to gain harmony and power in the modern contemporary setting. For many it was not much more than a method to achieve traditional aims in the modern context. It was no more a way to serve God or for self-sacrifice than was the traditional way.

Missionaries and African Christians are often at loggerheads, especially over issues of money and power. Often missionaries do not understand the African church leaders and pastors. These leaders seem so materialistic and power hungry to missionaries. Abuse of office and misuse of church finance seem to be the order of the day. They seem to show so little self-sacrifice. Of course, Africans rightly recognize the same in missionaries!

There are various reasons for the struggle referred to above. One is simply that the African concept of money and its use are inherently different

from and in some ways contrary to Western concepts. An underlying factor is the difference in the psychology of overwhelming poverty and the psychology of comparative wealth.

Power Complex

Another major factor is that the basic worldview of many Africans has not changed. Now the church structure, church position, church money and church ritual are to serve as the new and modern source of power and harmony, especially power. The strong desire for power and money is based on that largely unchanged worldview.

Some years ago, the position of Nigeria director was vacant in my mission organization. A Nigerian church leader encouraged me to go for this position. He was surprised when I told him I was not interested in administration. How could I not desire the power that goes with that position? he asked. I told him I was not interested in power, an answer he found hard to understand.

Bribery and corruption are a feature of human life in all cultures. They are part of the human condition. But they are, it is well documented, extremely prevalent in Nigeria. The reason, I submit, must again be sought in the traditional worldview underlying the Christian veneer. That worldview provides no motivation to oppose bribery and corruption. In fact, it encourages it. If bribery and corruption are the way to individual or tribal power, then those are the things to pursue. At that point, the demands of the newly adopted faith will have to be ignored. Religion should not inhibit my progress or reduce my power; it should serve to increase those factors in my life.

The Tribe Comes First

Tribalism is another characteristic for which Africa is famous. In the traditional worldview, one's identity is deeply rooted in the tribe. Benny Vander Walt of Potchefstroom University, a long-time foe of apartheid, refers repeatedly to Africa's communalism – an over-emphasis on the community.

All members of the ethnic group are obligated to advance the harmony and power of the group. Traditionally, this is a loyalty that stops at the border of the tribe. One has little or no obligation to members of other ethnic groups. In fact, any harm done to such members is tolerated as long as it enhances the well-being of your own tribe.

The continuing effects of the traditional worldview in the church automatically brings bribery, corruption and tribalism as well. Why have the churches failed to nip bribery and corruption in the bud? To do so would go against the traditional view of the purpose of good religion. Why is tribalism so rampant in the church? Because the traditional view of community or communalism still reigns in the church.

The new religion and the church's power are useful in so far as they enhance the well-being of the tribe. They will be ignored by many if they prove inconvenient to the tribe. As inconsistent as all this may look to the missionary, it is perfectly consistent with the traditional worldview applied to the new situation. Africa has always taken over from the West selectively and on its own terms.

Many True Christians

I must hurry to prevent a possible misinterpretation of what has been said so far. I am definitely not suggesting that all African Christians and all

African church leaders have retained this traditional worldview. There are many millions who have truly converted to Christ. I have many close friends among them.

Many have suffered deeply because they gave themselves to Christ. They have sacrificed much, some even their lives. The church would not be there today without them. I salute these Christians and have learned much from them. They shake their heads and shed tears as much as the rest of us. Unfortunately, they are not yet the majority.

Have the efforts of both African and Western missionaries been thwarted by the old wine in the new skins? By no means. The church is there. The Bible is available in many languages. The structures and the other tools of God for the completion of the task have been firmly established, even if they are constantly changing. There are millions of genuine Christians. There has been and continues to be an unprecedented movement towards Christ for which I, along with the angels in heaven, rejoice.

Patience Required

However, human nature being what it is, we must be patient. The mills of God grind slowly. He is not a revolutionary but a transformer. The leaven of the Holy Spirit is busily penetrating the hearts of more and more people. Negative aspects of traditional culture and worldview are under continuous attack by that Spirit. God is chipping away at them, deleting some aspects, transforming others.

The same is true, of course, for the church in the West. We are not all that different from each other. Whether the worldview that militates against and slows down the full appropriation of the gospel is Animistic African or,

as is the case amongst Westerners, ancient Paganism and Greek thought, both are old wine in new skins--and neither fits comfortably.

APPENDIX 8:

CHRISTIANS AND MOBILIZATION[1]

Institute of Church and Society/Northern Area Office
(Christian Council of Nigeria)
1989

I. THE SITUATION

The farmers quietly grumbled amongst each other. They had been waiting for the District Head and his guest, a "big man" from Yola. An hour and thirty minutes had passed and they still had not appeared. The farmers were getting impatient. It was time to plant their crops and it was only because the District Head himself had invited them to the meeting that these village farmers had agreed to come at all. Now they were not so sure they should have left their farms.

Finally, after a full two hours, the District Head and his big guest appeared only for the former to apologize. He would soon complet his discussions with the stranger and they he would attend to the business for which the farmers had been invited. The stranger stood high and tall with his flowing robes. He looked over the farmers with a look of arrogance as if he dared them to object to the district Head's explanation. Let his business be finished first so that he can go back to the Commissioner who sent him, back to the comforts of Yola. "The farmers better wait for a big man like me." That, clearly, was his attitude.

That, of course, has been the attitude of the peasant farmers, not only in this case, but throughout the years and throughout the country. It is a general attitude that pervades their lives. The big are big and the poor are to humbly do their bidding.
After the District Head and his arrogant guest disappeared, most of the peasants merely grumbled. What CAN you do about such a situation, except to grumble? But one man spoke up.

"Why should we wait for this stranger?" he challenged his cohorts. "We have been called here to prepare for the launching of Operation Feed the Nation. Our farming has been interrupted just so that this stranger can be served and go his way. His salary will not be interrupted if he spends the night here. Let's all go home and show that we don't want to be treated this way."

The others looked up with a look of surprise.

"Who dares to speak that boldly?" they thought.

The bold speaker received no visible or audible support. He was the only one to act on his own suggestion. The others waited for another full half hour before the District Head attended to

[1] Institute of Church and Society/Northern Area Office, 1989

them. The "big man" from Yola was driven away in his Mercedes without even so much as acknowledging their presence.

The above is a true story. It is a story that could happen almost anywhere in Nigeria any day. It is typical of the passive attitude that characterizes the peasant class in much of Nigeria whenever they are faced with oppression and contempt.

Oh, I know there are exceptions. I know that peasant women blocked the road when former Governor Yohanna Madaki was to drive through their community - but their men had safely hidden themselves! I know of the peasants who stopped the lorry with fertilizer and forced the driver to sell them his load at the official subsidized price right there and then on the highway. I also remember the "Bakalori incident" in which more than three hundred villagers died (Usman, 1982). Such things do happen and when peasants show such resistance to oppression and abuse, my hope for them as a group revives, even when the action ends up in tragedy. However, such radical action is not characteristic of the peasantry in general.

There is a government dispensary in the village, but it seldom has any drugs. The villagers complain amongst themselves, but they do not ask where the drugs may be. When they do occasionally know, they take no action against the culprit. When the local headmaster and his teachers fail to teach the children of the village and the latter seldom pass examinations, the parents complain, but seldom challenge the teachers, let alone the headmaster. Neither do they consult with the local education authority. When I once encouraged a group of parents to so challenge, they refused, arguing that the government had not given them the authority to interfere in the school! When the local farmers cannot get their rightful share of subsidized fertilizers except on the expensive black market, they simply do without, thought they may grumble amongst themselves.

And so it goes on and on in one village after another. Year in; year out.

The poor suffer from a low self-image. They often are illiterate. The have no impressive cars, houses or clothes. Their food is very basic at best. They think of themselves as powerless and, THEREFORE, they are. They suffer from an excessive degree of docility and are all too ready to pay homage to any "big man" who happens to come their way. When they are cheated, either individually or communally, locally or nationally, they seldom rise up against it but accept it with a shrug of the shoulder, placing the right hand inside the left with the remark, "Yaya za mu yi?" (Hausa: What can we do about it?) That is never more than a rhetorical question, the implied answer of which is a loud "***Nothing***!"

If the villagers happen to be Christian, they have ***religious*** reasons for their passive acceptance of all these forms of oppression. They are taught over and over again that the role of the Christian is to be obedient to those in authority - and those who regard themselves to be over them are legion! They are taught to pray for them, to honour them, to assist them and to pay their taxes to them regardless of what happens to these taxes or how that authority is exercised. Furthermore, they are taught to be patient. After all, their reward lies in heaven; certainly not on earth. Least of all would they expect their God to be interested in such affairs. Is He not interested primarily in spiritual and church affairs? So, let us be good religious boys and girls and put our hope in

Him. Let us concentrate on religious things, for only they will bring peace. One day, upon Christ's return, we will be delivered. And so the attention of many Christian peasants is directed to their future peace and reward without any hope for change in their present condition and without any thought about improving them here and now. Such attitudes led Karl Marx to refer to religion as the opium of the people: it puts them to sleep, thus giving their exploiters a free hand.

I suspect that the official government policy of having religion taught in the schools - of course, I am aware of discrimination here in various states - is aimed basically at inculcating and continuing this servile attitude. The goal is to keep our people passive, religious, docile and to prevent them from becoming radical. Religion in its pure and undefiled forms and radical action are considered to be opposites that never meet. Religion is expected to produce a people with high personal morality, a great sense of duty and obedience, but certainly not inclined to radical social thinking, let alone action.

II. THE UNDERLYING CAUSES

A. Socio-Political Aspects

I will not pretend to know all that has gone into the making of such servile passivity on the part of our peasantry. Let me suggest that part of it lies in the traditional culture where the chief often is associated with divinity and, consequently, with much power. The stories I have heard through the years of the power of chiefs at various levels convince me that this traditional set up has made for an excessive level of obedience to such rulers on the part of the people. a colleague of mine, the son of a chief, told me he despises the chieftaincy institution, for he has observed the oppressive rule of his father. My colleague did not recognize the evil in his father's rule until he, the son, became sensitised to these issues as a Christian.

To do a good job in analyzing all the causes, I would need to delve into international factors such as the Arab and Western slave trade enterprises as well as the subsequent incorporation of Nigeria into the international economy of capitalism via colonialism. This project is an essay, not a tome. I can only refer you to some of my other publications (1979, 1984, 1988).

It can, however, be said that the above order of servility was greatly encouraged by the colonial regime, as the authors of *The Kaduna Mafia* have so ably documented. P. Chunun Logams has described how under colonialism the class from which the Kaduna Mafia eventually emerged was firmly entrenched in power and clothed in prestige, which they never relinquished and which they were able to utilize even after the British had left (Takaya:Ch.5). It was that group, among others, that had learned the technique of using and exploiting the peasant class by means of manipulative tools that include religion, tribalism, inculcation of fear, show of power and divide-and conquer tactics.

> [(Takaya: especially Chs. 9, 10. Cf. also Usman, 1987:Chs. 2, 6 and Appendix D.) This reference, it should be clear, does not imply full support on my part of Usman. When, for example, Usman asserts that missionary organizations are "systematically and in co-ordinated fashion" used by European and American governments to prevent African

cohesion (Usman, 1987:32), as a veteran missionary, I can only demand that he back up this assertion with concrete facts and sources. I do, however, know of at least one former Nigerian Christian pastor who claims to be employed by the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Nigeria in order to report to them on developments in Gongola State and to interfere in the affairs of former Muslims who have become Christians by bribing them to return to the fold.]

B. The Religious Aspect

I want to look further into the religious aspect of the cause. My reference here will be specifically to the Christian contribution to this situation, not because I relish in self-criticism, but because a problem cannot be cured without an objective analysis of its roots. It is my conviction that both Christianity and Islam have contributed to the problems under discussion. The authors of *The Kaduna Mafia* have ably served us in alerting us to the Muslim contribution. That Muslims *have* contributed is acknowledged by their own sons such as Yusufu Bala Usman and former civilian Governor of Kaduna State, Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, who deeply implicated his fellow Muslims when he referred to "the retrograde north of federalists, slave-holders, crooks, parasites and foreign agents" (Usman, 1987:3).

When we ask these questions, we must take care to distinguish between a religion and its adherents, between Islam and Muslims, between Christianity and Christians. I am not prepared to say that Islam *per se* is bound to be oppressive. The adherents of a religion seldom meet its standard; in fact, they often distort their religion beyond the point of recognition. Similarly, when I talk of Christian contributions to the problems, I am not suggesting that the Christian religion inherently leads to the creation of these problems. I am talking about how its adherents have *de facto* contributed and I will in the course of this paper show that their contribution is the result of distortion of that religion, not of the religion itself. In fact, the basic aim of this paper is to show that the Christian religion has formidable resources to overcome these problems. Whether the same can be said for Islam is for its adherents to demonstrate.

As a pastor and evangelist, I have worked daily for over a decade with villagers in southern Gongola State. I have concluded that, as powerful and real as the external causes for such oppression may be, the basic causes for their ***continuation*** are ***internal***: they reside in the minds and hearts of the victims. It is their ***attitude*** that allows these situations to continue.

An aged retired pastor in Gongola State recalled for my benefit an incident in his village during his childhood that made such an impression on him and the others that it changed the whole community. Traditionally the Fulani had ruled over his people for generations. Whenever a Fulani would ride into their village on his horse, he would jump off and throw the reins carelessly into the hands of the closest bystander, demanding that his horse be taken care of during the night - free of charge, of course. It had become an unquestioned tradition. One day, not long after he had become one of the first Christians in the village, a man who had the reins of such a horse thrust into his hands dropped them and walked off. In a burst of anger, the Fulani pursued him and slapped him left and right. Who was this villager to disregard him, a member of the master race?

A ruckus developed and soon the whole village gathered. The relationship to the Fulani was changed forever. No one ever accepted that traditional responsibility again. Their attitude had changed and it brought them a degree of emancipation. Though their bondage was not by any means broken, the first step had been taken and it set in motion a long process that now threatens the hegemony of the Fulani over the area. That cause for the profound change was internal: an attitudinal change sparked by a new religious impulse.

The above point was corroborated recently by a chief in that same state who has been quoted as saying that as long as the common man bows before the big man," so long will the latter abuse the former. It is the same point made by Yohanna Madaki, former Governor of Gongola State, when he said that he fears no man, he only fears **fear**, quoting, I believe, from Franklin D. Roosevelt, a former American President. During his short but turbulent tenure as Governor, Madaki had learned that fear is more destructive than any man. Fear is an emotion, an attitude. The attitudes of servility and fear are still very strong among the peasantry, even in the Christians amongst them.

Why, I ask, did the Christian religion not help its adherents overcome fear and servility? No, this is not quite the correct way of putting the question. For one thing, if the Christian religion is going to encourage the liberation of the poor, the benefits should not be restricted to Christians, for millions of peasants adhering to either Traditional Religion or Islam are equally oppressed and equally in need of emancipation. The Christian religion is not designed to aid only its adherents; it is meant to benefit all citizens. Any attempt on the part of Christians to restrict the benefits of Christ in the area of liberation and rights will eventually backfire and lead to the accusation that, while they seek their own emancipation, Christians trample on the rights of others. A selective campaign for freedom will end up in new forms of oppression.

The second reason the above question is not well put is that the Christian religion did help, as we saw in the story of the Fulani. Without any conscious, official and deliberate programme on the part of Christian leaders, the seed of emancipation did its work in that village through the new Spirit that motivates Christians. It is a slow process that will surely accomplish emancipation as Christians gradually open to the new reality around them. Certainly amongst Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt, profound changes are taking place. They are moving towards insisting on their place in the sun, on their rights. This is true especially of Christian leaders. The Christian religion ***is*** helping Christians in this respect.

However, the movement towards emancipation is more a campaign for religious rights than economic and social rights, though such rights are always closely related to each other. And sometimes the campaign leaves one with the impression that it is more an effort to protect the rights and interests of a class of religious professionals with their own political agenda than an attempt to release the poor from their bondage. Politics being what it frequently is in Nigeria, Christians should not simply assume that those championing Christian rights are invariably operating without ulterior motives. No religion is immune to manipulation - and neither are religious leaders, whether they be Christian or Muslim. It would not be the first time some are operating with hidden political agendas in our country! Sometimes I have heard some Christian leaders describe the present campaign for religious equality with such relish that I was led to think they are enjoying the fracas and would like to prolong it either to achieve their own hidden

agenda or simply for the fun of it. I am not accusing anyone; I am merely alerting ourselves to an ever-present danger.

The campaign, moreover, is not the result of "emancipation theology" so much as it is a reaction to alleged Muslim attacks on Christian rights. It is a reaction to perceived external threats rather than the result of insights derived from the Bible and Christian theology. The attitude of the poor towards their ecclesiastical leaders is not all that different from their attitude towards the elite in general. It is characterized by servility while the relationship is basically structured hierarchically. One encouraging exception to which I will refer in more detail later, is the submission of the TEKAN churches to the Political Bureau.

The question still stands: why have Christians not ***consciously*** tapped their religious resources to affect ***emancipation of the poor*** when Christians in other areas of the world have gone to great length in this area? That is my real question. For the answer we need to delve into colonial and missionary history.

During the colonial era, education was "harnessed to the service of British …. interest," which was first of all economic. The curriculum was designed to meet that interest. It "was evolved to produce clerks needed for the companies and government administration, to inculcate obedience to the colonizing power and respect for its history, language and culture." It was also to include a moral element so that "the value of Truth, Honesty, deference to superiors, the dignity and pleasure of work, the reward of Unselfishness" would become part of the makeup of the educated and servile elite. One H.S. Scott summarized it this way: "The conception of the aim of education was, that it should make useful citizens … who would be of use to us. The conception was one of exploitation and development for the benefit of … Great Britain - it was to this purpose that such education … was directed*"* (Boer, 1979: 64-65; 1984:16. Scott:737).

Missions supported colonialism in general, including their educational policy. Karl Kumm, the founding pioneer of the Sudan United Mission (SUM), asserted that missions assist "the magnificent work our Government is doing … in these lands" by means of Christian education (Kumm, ***Hausaland***:266-267, 270; ***Khont*:**229-230. Boer, 1979:136-137; 1984:52).

In a discussion on how the government and missions could co-operate in education, Gilbert Dawson, Field Secretary of the SUM, was happy to have the government supply the schools with textbooks on the various subjects, so that the mission could concentrate on the subject of religion. In other words, the textbooks designed by the government to carry out its educational policy were acceptable to the mission. The SUM was so impressed with the government scheme that it placed some of its own schools in that scheme. This attitude was not peculiar to the SUM, for the 1913 Lokoja Conference, one of a series of missionary ecumenical meetings in the North, expressed interest in training students in the government scheme and favoured co-operation with the government in this area (Boer, 1979:137, 192-194; 1984:77-79).

I emphasize for good reasons that the above goals were adhered to by the ecumenical community, including the Anglican Church. In a discussion based on a pre-publication version of this essay, an Anglican brother denied that the above was part of the Anglican past in Nigeria. He appealed to the heroic work of Walter Miller as an example. Unfortunately, his emotional

rejection of the above policies cannot undo well-documented history. His church, no more than the others, can deny its participation in the development of these ecumenical policies. It is only the Roman Catholic Mission that is not covered by this discussion, mainly because of their isolation from the rest of the Christian missions in the country.

The intention of the above educational policy was to produce zombies, creatures at the behest of the colonial regime, loyal, obedient, ready to do its bidding, either directly or indirectly through the local chief or emir. Least of all was it the intention to produce critical and creative graduates who would do independent thinking, for such people could become dangerous to the establishment. It was strictly status quo - and missions bought into it. This was no way to produce a generation of revolutionaries who would advocate radical changes in social relationships.

Another part of the governments's educational policy was to set up special schools for the sons of chiefs and emirs. Again, the SUM was prepared to co-operate in such a scheme. Dawson, for example, was in favour of the SUM to provide a missionary principal for such a school planned for Ibi, a town in southern Gongola. He saw it as a scheme where the government would pay missionaries to bring the Gospel to future traditional leaders. The alternative would be a Muslim principal, something the mission obviously would not favour (Boer, 1979:193; 1984:78).

Though one can understand such reasons, it is clear that the mission was completely blind to the negative aspects of such schools. The missions concentrated on evangelism with such intensity that they were oblivious of the social consequences of such educational goals. Among these goals and consequences were the further entrenchment of Muslim chiefs and emirs and other northern aristocrats to whom Balarabe Musa later referred as "crooks" (Takaya:34-35, 51. Boer, 1979:211-212, 398; 1988:10-11).

The entire mission approach to education was part and parcel of the general policy to support colonialism in principle. During the early years, the SUM instructed its missionaries to "endeavour to inculcate in the minds of their neighbours and dependents principles of loyalty to the Government and obedience to its demands in this (taxes) and other respects, pointing out the benefits of open roads, cessation of slave raiding, etc. etc, which have been conferred upon the country in return for which but a slight impost is made" (Boer, 1979:185; 1984:54).

Readers of my other publications on missions and colonialism in Northern Nigeria, will have observed that there was a great deal of friction and even hostility between the two (see especially Boer, 1988:7-22). The missions were fearless, though careful, in opposing the colonial regime where they felt it necessary. No one can accuse them of cowardice in this respect. Their support for colonialism was in no way based on fear or subservience. The opposition of missions was evoked whenever the regime adopted policies the former considered to constitute a betrayal of true colonialism. However, the basic educational policies of the government were never the object of such opposition; missions and government agreed on the basics, if not always on the details.

What I am really showing her is that the Christian church in Nigeria, at least in Northern Nigeria, was a status quo church in terms of social relations from its beginning. Upsetting the social

apple cart was far from the minds of missionary and pastor. The emphasis was on loyalty, on obedience to those in authority. That emphasis was due largely to blindness on the part of missionaries to the forces of exploitation and oppression that were given a colonial facelift with the result that they became difficult to recognize, especially by people who were preoccupied with other-worldly affairs - and that certainly was true of Evangelical missions like the SUM. Such is the social legacy of the Nigerian church. It is here, I submit, that we meet a basic cause for the continued servility on the part of the Christian peasantry. It is also, I suggest, a major reason for the authoritarianism of church leadership, even in churches that have constitutions that were designed to militate against just such hierarchical relations.

In view of the foregoing, I am most happy to report on an exciting and exceptional development on the Christian political scene. The submission of the TEKAN churches to the Political Bureau proposes a very different approach to political affairs, namely from the bottom up. Instead of the peasants being the object of political and social development performed on and for them, TEKAN wants the people at the grassroots level to be involved in the decision making, for, it notes, when decisions are made at the top, developments become elitist, expensive, ineffective and bedeviled by corruption. The argument is backed up by concrete examples in various sectors. This direction is most encouraging. I, for one, hope that the TEKAN churches will begin to apply that same approach to their own ecclesiastical affairs as well as to the political sphere.

But we have still not reached the bottom rung of our search. I have tried to answer the question why Christian peasants in the north of Nigeria have scarcely overcome their traditional attitude of servitude. I later rephrased the question to ask why Christians have not drawn upon the Bible and tradition to create a theology for the emancipation of the poor. I have found at least part of the answer in the colonial/missionary legacy. The question still remains: how could that legacy have developed? What lay behind it? It is to this question that I now turn. It is an important question, for the answer to it constitutes a deep-seated problem in the Nigerian church even today. The answer lies in one short word: ***dualism***.

The word "dualism" has a variety of meanings, depending on the context. The dualism I have in mind here has its origin in pre-Reformation history, and is especially associated with and a result of Thomas Aquinas's synthesis of Christian thought with Pagan Greek philosophy. For our present purposes it is sufficient to summarize the following main features of dualism as it eventually filtered down through the years into the Evangelical community and its missionaries:

(1) Reality is divided into the spheres of the material and the spiritual
(2) God is said to be more interested in the spiritual than the material. There is thus a hierarchical relationship between the two, with the spiritual taking priority.
(3) One needs divine revelation, e.g., the bible, to understand the spiritual world, the world of the church and theology. Here human reasoning is insufficient.
(4) For the affairs of the world, human reason is a sufficient source of information.
(5) Working in the spiritual area is often called "the work of God," while working in the world is not really service to Him. Alternatively, working in the spiritual means one is working "full-time" for God, while working in the world constitutes at best "half-time" service.

With the above points in mind, it is possible to understand H.R. Rookmaker's description of dualism:

> This world is good, but yet has autonomy of its own. The world of faith, of grace, of religion is the higher one, a world for which we have need of God's revelation. This is where our aims and affections should be set. But the lower world, the world of men the world of "nature," can be understood by reason, and here in fact reason reigns. It is as such non-religious, secular. Here there is no difference between the Christian and the non-Christian, as both act according to the natural laws of thought and action (Rookmaker:34-35. See "Dualism" in indices of Boer, 1979 and 1984, especially 1979:452-454).

Another description of this kind of dualism comes from Ruben Alves, According to him, this kind of theology has its "ultimate concern in eternity, God, and salvation of the soul. (Its) relation to the world, to life, to history, when it is not negative is purely tangential. Or it puts the world and life in an inferior hierarchical rank: natural/supernatural; the secular world/the religious world; the material/the spiritual; the temporal/the eternal" (Quoted in Boer, 1979:453).

In the same vein, R.H. Tawney, a well -known economist, describes this dualism in terms of relating the religious and secular as "parallel and independent provinces, governed by different laws, judged by different standards, and amenable to different authorities." It is based on "an attitude which forms so fundamental a part of modern political thought, that… its precarious philosophical basis … [is] commonly forgotten" (p. 279, as quoted in Boer, 1979:453).

This is the dualism that has led to a popular mentality among Christians that would divorce their religious obligations from their participation in political, economic and social affairs - in short, from their participation in human society as a whole. The Christian religion is thus reduced to a personal, private, and spiritual affair that has relevance for personal morality, family relations, and church affairs. It has little or nothing to contribute to social affairs beyond these.

This is the mentality that has dominated most missions in Northern Nigeria especially and prevented them from taking the world and its affairs seriously as missionary concerns. Everything was looked at in terms of evangelistic opportunities. If no such opportunity was recognized, the missions were not interested and paid no attention. Hence, they unwittingly participated in and helped perpetuate practices that eventually turned against the Gospel. The negative reaction of many nationalists to the church can largely be explained from this perspective. Dualism is responsible for an extremely narrow view of the Christian religion and the Kingdom of God and has prevented Christians from participation in politics. This assertion is not merely mine; it has been repeated *ad nauseam* in the literature. Western theologians and African nationalists charged missions with dualism and recognized the same effect I have summarized for you. (In addition to the entry "Dualism" in the indices in Boer, 1979 and 1984, see also the entry "Nationalism" as well as entries including the word "ecumenical" in the Table of Contents, Boer, 1979 and Ch. 7 in Boer, 1984.)

In terms of our immediate subject, it is this dualistic mentality that kept missions in Nigeria from recognizing various forms of injustice not only but even led them to participate unwittingly in them. Missions were prepared to fight injustice when they saw it. They were not afraid. But their dualism blinded them to many forms of it.

This dualism is also part of the legacy of the church of Nigeria, though there are many encouraging signs that Christians are struggling to overcome it, without always realizing what it is they are trying to overcome. This dualism MUST be overcome if the peasants, especially Christian peasants, are to recognize and utilize the resources the Gospel has for a re-alignment of social, economic and political relations. It must be overcome if the Christian religion is to become a positive force in mass mobilization towards emancipation.

III. A RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

The rest of this essay is devoted to a description of the development programme of the ICS, Northern Area Office, Jos. It is a programme of radical integration of religious teachings and social realities. The first part of the programme consists of dialogue in which Bible passages and situations are compared with and contrasted to the conditions in which the peasants find themselves. We have prepared a booklet, *Living in God's World*. (Hausa version: *Kai da Dukiyarka*.

The first point of the dialogue is to enlarge the people's idea as to the scope of the ***Kingdom of God***, of the Christian religion, of God's own range of interest. Biblical passages about the Kingdom of God are discussed to show that God's interest, rule and His Gospel go far beyond the narrow range people tend to associate with the Christian religion. His kingdom is, in fact, co-extensive with all of creation. He rules everywhere and we owe Him allegiance and obedience everywhere. Thus, when a peasant steps into a government office or hospital, he goes where his King is already present with His rule and power. This should give him courage. It also gives him certain rights as a citizen of both our nation and the Kingdom of God.

The next point is the ***Goodness of Creation***. Based on Genesis, we lead them to the awareness that God has declared His creation good and He delights in it. Why, then, is it that Christians have a kind of theoretical contempt for the physical? Why do we think God is not interested in the physical? The point here is to help the people realize God's interest in this world and its affairs. Awareness of God's love for the world helps awaken the peasant's interest in the world and renders it legitimate in his newly developing Christian conscience.

Working in this world is not something that is of dubious Christian value, for the first order that God gives in the Bible is the so-called Cultural mandate of Gen. 1:26, 28. The first task is not something spiritual but very worldly: to take care of the world, to subdue it, to rule over it. Though it is true that in some cultures mastery over nature and the world has tended to degenerate into its rape, in Nigeria our problem has been more an excessive awe for nature that has kept the peasantry from tackling it.

Man is created in ***God's image***, the passage tells us, and that image is, among other things, expressed in ruling and subduing the world. So, away with negative thoughts about doing

something about the world as being a sign of illegitimate worldliness. Farming, politics, business, etc., are responses to God's design. Christians should not regard such occupations as being of secondary value in God's eye. They should be there, working there with the aim of serving God and emancipating both themselves and their neighbour.

The image of God also means that every person, no matter his economic or social status, deserves, nay, demands the highest respect. Made in the image of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The low self-image with which the peasant is burdened must be erased from his soul. He has every reason to stand up and be counted. He is somebody! He is a big man, as much as any rich and powerful person. The fact of the image serves to improve his self-image and reduce his awe for the "big man" not only, but also contains the seed for resisting the "big man" who would cheat him. After all, they are on an equal level: both made in the image of God the Most High! Then there is the issue of ***obedience***. We have already noted the prevalence of an almost absolute sense of obedience among the Christian peasants. They know that Romans 13 prescribes obedience to those in authority, but they have not been shown that the authorities to be obeyed are servants of God and are to behave as such. When they begin to act as servants of demons, the obligation to obey evaporates. Other passages discussed here include Exodus 1, where the midwives disobey Pharaoh when the latter commands them to commit murder. The story of Ahab and Naboth (I Kings 21) is studied. It not only serves to challenge abused authority but also indicates the risk of challenging it. Daniel's resistance to ungodly authority also comes into play as well as the story of Acts in which the Apostles, including Paul himself, refused to obey when ordered to stop proclaiming the Gospel. Obey authority? Yes, indeed, it remains an important Christian tradition, but there is a limit…. Whereas in the past the church emphasized the main thrust of the tradition, in this particular context we stress the equally important limit.

The concept of ***Jubilee*** in Leviticus 25 is a powerful one that Christians have yet to explore for its contemporary significance. In a day when peasants are frequently driven off their land and even from their villages for schemes that are often hardly related to their own welfare, the biblical concept of Jubilee gives one something to think about in terms of ownership, distribution and use of land. Should they always move regardless of the stated purpose without asking questions? Is there ever a time they may do more than simply question? This is a question that must be answered in the context of each individual case. However, a mature Christian community will no longer simply get up and leave, for they will have theological, that is, religious reasons to query the demand to move out.

There is the whole question of ***bribery and corruption*** from which the peasant suffers more than anyone else. We study why the Bible forbids bribery: it is an obstacle to justice. We study what the prophets have to say about injustice and oppression - powerful stuff aimed at all who perpetuate it. All power blocks are openly called to account: religious leaders, politicians and kings. All of them are challenged.

In this context, certain New Testament passages take on a new and more urgent significance. The first is the Magnificat in Luke 1:51-53, where we overhear Mary, the mother of our Saviour:

> He (Christ) has shown strength with His arm,

He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hears,
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
And exalted those of low degree;
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent empty away.

The ICS conducts its conscientization sessions in many denominations. One day it was held in a denomination that frequently recites the Magnificat in their liturgy. When the participants were asked whether they could explain the meaning of this text or interpret it in terms of their own situation, one man blurted out in the Hausa language, "Ah, we only recite it without thinking about it!"

The words of the Magnificat are worthy of weekly recitation. The fathers who instituted the custom clearly understood it. The time has come to think about these words once again. They are powerful and meant to be taken seriously. They ought to be a source of encouragement to the poor and a threat to all oppressors.

Jesus' first recorded speech in Luke 4:18, a self-introduction to His own village, also takes on new significance and power. Christ introduced Himself to His townsmen as follows:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed.

These passages identify Jesus Christ as a revolutionary in our present context. It is dualism that has prevented Christian leaders from recognizing the potential revolutionary thrust of these passages and the same has kept them from making their members aware of this thrust. Dualism has led them to concentrate on church and other spiritual affairs---while the country as a whole moved on, leaving a whole lot of both Christians and Muslims a marginalized lot, especially the peasants among them. Instead of the gospel liberating the people, it did indeed become their opium. Instead of empowering the people, they were disenfranchised economically. And in their false sense of obedience and awe, the peasant accepted his lot, though grumblingly so.

Then there is James 5:1-6, where we read:

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver have corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your field are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

This passage is followed by advice regarding patience in suffering. The Lord will soon return. This advice at first glance seems to support those who tell oppressed people to await their reward in the hereafter. However, such is a gross misreading, for the meaning of patience is explained in :10, where we read, "Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord." This is not the patience of one who passively awaits a heavenly reward. This is the patience of prophets who fearlessly spoke up against oppressors, including priests and kings. These OT prophets were stoned, imprisoned, thrown into wells, exiled, etc. etc., but they had the patience to endure all that suffering. Their reward was indeed reserved for heaven. Their patience was an active patience in suffering that resulted from seeking the freedom of the poor. ***That*** is the example held before us.

In the ICS programme we do not encourage individuals to act alone. We do not force people into a prophetic style. Only God can call a person to that kind of a ministry. The ICS encourages people to act together against oppression. And surely, church leaders - elders, pastors, bishops - have a collective calling to be prophetic, not only for their religious rights but just as much for the economic and social rights of the poor living around them. The ICS programme aims to equip the saints, that is, to equip them with the spiritual tools to resist all those who abuse them. That, surely, is also the task of all church leaders.

Finally, the biblical teaching of the ***community or Body of Christ*** is adduced to encourage the peasants, especially the Christian peasants, to try to improve their lot together with the new spirit and attitude which they have by now begun to adopt. this is often a difficult hurdle to overcome, for many communities have previously sought to improve their conditions on a communal basis. They would entrust someone with their money only to find that the money would disappear. There is hardly a village where this has not happened. The culprit may be an individual or a government department, but the result is the same: the money is gone and the desire to work communally has evaporated. Nevertheless, no community has refused to give it one more try after they have gone through the dialogue with us. There are two exceptions to the last sentence. In both cases the local pastors opposed the programme because they felt threatened in their positions. However, pastors who recognize Jesus as the great Emancipator have nothing to fear, unless they prefer to rule over a church consisting of docile sheep.

By the time we have gone through all this, the process of conscientization has begun to make its impact. The villagers then form a co-operative of some sort and begin to determine their needs and what to do about them. They begin to plan their programme, including raising money amongst themselves. They have built medical facilities, roads, small bridges, established educational facilities and more. They have challenged those who cheated them with false measurements and, in some cases, have obtained fertilizers where they previously despaired of access. The role of the ICS representative is to serve as facilitator, advisor and to link them with whatever expertise they need. But it is ***their*** programme. ***They*** make the decisions. ***They*** to the work. ***They*** raise their own money - with some notable exceptions.

The point here is: ***They are moving from being objects of development to that of subjects***. That is development. The basis for development is now there, without which no new skills, government plans and departmental re-organization will have any effect on them at all. The

programme is still in its infancy and requires fine-tuning, but the basic blocks are in place. We have practised in Plateau and Gongola States and are now expanding to Kaduna State.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above programme is an example of how religion, in this case, the Christian religion, contains the seed for mobilization in a positive way. It is a programme that aims to give Christians ***Christian*** motivation to mobilize themselves by undermining the negative dualism in their legacy. It is a programme in line with MAMSER and in line with various statements from the Federal Government that have encouraged conscientization of the peasants so they know their rights and resist injustice.

It is therefore a mistake when government officials in charge of the development of co-operatives reject applications for the establishment of co-operatives with an overtly religious overtone, for in so doing they undermine some of the deepest motives that can mobilize the peasantry positively. One cannot blame peasants when they display cynicism with respect to both Government and the civil service. The very civil servants who are assigned to encourage the development of co-operatives undermine their own task by refusing to register co-operatives that have overtly religious overtones. This is happening in Muri and Wukari, both in Gongola State. Dr. Jerry Gana of MAMSER fame promised that his organization would seek to rectify this problem. We will see! To us it appears to be a matter of religious discrimination. To suppress the positive use of religious motives in mobilization in a country as religious as Nigeria amounts to suppressing the strongest of human impulses.

A similar mistake has been made in Plateau State, where a sizeable group of Christian civil servants had banded together in order to pray and conduct Bible studies. They felt the need for this programme in order to encourage each other to do their work seriously and conscientiously--a most positive use of religious motives. However, the government forbade them to proceed with the programme, seeing in it only an effort at religious partisanship. The government thereby deprived its workers and itself of potentially the most noble and most powerful motives among its workforce.

Nigeria has suffered much from religious fanaticism, intolerance and manipulation. An increasing number of people are becoming skeptical of religion in all of its forms. In this paper I challenge Christians, Muslims, Traditionalist and Secularists to bring out the positive aspects of their religions in the service of the people of Nigeria. The programme of the ICS is one way in which this is being developed.

I recognize that the mobilization programme outlined above is largely on a micro-level, rather than national or even macro. But the world of the peasant's awareness is largely micro. That is where we begin. Our hope and confidence is, however, that once politics begins heating up again, those who have participated in the programme will carry their new attitude with them into the world of parties and politics beyond the village level.

APPENDIX 9:

The Liberating Message: A Christian Worldview

by

Bennie J. van der Walt[1]

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[1] 1994, pp. i-iii.

APPENDIX 10:

WHAT POLITICAL SYSTEM FOR NIGERIA

by

Jerry Gana[1]

1. Introduction

I am deeply delighted to note that the Graduate Fellowship has resolved to participate in the current search for a new political order for Nigeria. This is a noble and correct decision because Christians are called to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (Matt. 5:13 & 14).

Indeed throughout the centuries Christians have been in the forefront as men of ideas who have helped to shape the organization of human society. To a very large extent, "the respect for the dignity of the individual, the emancipation of women, the rule of law, the scientific method, universal education, the habit of work, and the habit of thrift, all these owe a tremendous debt to past generations of Christians" (Catherwood, 1969, p. 18).[2] As "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" we cannot afford to be cynical and apathetic about the great issues facing our society. Others may get tired, discouraged and frustrated. The Christian should never get tired and never give up, because he should have access to the deeper spiritual resources of Christ Jesus. He should have a creative ***hope*** and ***faith*** in the One who is the risen Lord of Glory.

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[1] "What Political System for Nigeria?" *The Grand Design*: *The Quarterly Journal of the Nigeria Christian Graduate Fellowship*. Nigerian Christian Graduate Fellowship, Zaria Branch. Spring, 1986, pp. 18-21. Dr. Gana was Professor. of Geography at ABU at the time and leader, if not chairman, of the ABU NCFG. He subsequently became national Director of the MAMSER and eventually ended up as a Minister in the Federal Government in several administrations.

[2] It is regrettable that Gana does not provide fuller documentation.

Before going on to the subject matter of my paper, I wish to emphasize that although

> both Church and State are ordained by God, there is an almost complete absence of dogma on the method of appointing the government of either institution. Christian teaching is quite clear on the ends; it leaves the means open. We are told what elders and deacons should be like, but not precisely how they should be appointed (I Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9). Similarly, there is no particular method of government which is sacrosanct. Different moral orders in society may require different types of government (Catherwood, 1975, p. 80).

Thus within the context of Christian principles, we have to think through the fundamental issues related to good government.

In the search for a new political system, we should also realise that no political system can by itself ensure good government, political systems are operated by people, and evil men can ruin the best system. The Christian should always be aware that there are corrosive and destructive forces of wickedness in the world (Eph. 6:10-20). Therefore, in setting out ideals for a good society, the Christian should not only be idealistic, but should also be realistic.

2. Towards a Just and Humane Social Order

From the perspective of Christian principles, I believe the new system we are seeking to establish should be founded on the values of freedom, equality, social justice, community, cooperation, progress, peace and prosperity. Such a system must be opposed to oppression, exploitation, inequality, injustice, poverty, misery and dehumanization.

We should struggle to build:

1. A society which places immense value on the sanctity of human

life, and the dignity and importance of the human person above all material wealth. If "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," it is clear that God places tremendous value on human life. All men are precious in God's sight.

2. A just, disciplined, progressive and truly democratic society which is deeply rooted on the principles of freedom, equality and social justice, and based on the power of a conscious, organised and vigilant people.

3. A society that truly respects the rule of law and due process, and which upholds the fundamental human rights enshrined in our Constitution.

4. A society that protects and defends the right of each individual to believe and practice the religion of his/her choice; hence, a society which is strongly committed to the principle of a secular state where the affairs of religion are separated from the affairs of State.

5. A society that provides equal opportunities for all our people to participate in every aspect of our public life, and ensures that no citizen enjoys special privilege or status by virtue merely of birth, descent, ethnic origin, wealth or religion.

6. A society that upholds the ethics of honest hard work and personal integrity, and respects the dignity of labour.

7. A society that truly believes that *all* the resources of Nigeria belong to the entire people of Nigeria, and is therefore irrevocably committed to harnessing such God-given resources for genuine people-centered development so as to create a just and egalitarian society.

3. What Political System for Nigeria

Mr. Chairman, I believe that, given the increasing level of consciousness of the socio-political forces in Nigeria-- especially the labouring masses--, it is too late in the day for any one to suggest a return to aristocracy, or to its degenerate form of oligarchy. In view of the reality of an awakening people, increasingly conscious of its democratic rights and political power, it is also too late in the day for anyone to propose for Nigeria such systems of government as Diarchy, Triarchy, Zero party or even Single Party system. Such proposals only aim at reducing or even removing the democratic rights of our people. The impression is often created that it is the masses who have failed Nigeria. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nigeria's problem has been that of corrupt and morally bankrupt ruling elite. Or "was it because people had a free choice between contending political parties that so-called leaders plundered the treasury and left the nation naked?"

> The rights possessed by the people were won by hard struggle against the British by young men who were imprisoned, by trade unionists who were shot or jailed, by the trenchant pens of newspaper men who courted imprisonment, by market women's associations who rioted against taxation without representation, and by the blood of our fellow countrymen and women in a bitter civil war. It is not the rights won by this historic sacrifice that have caused disaster to Nigeria. Why then deprive the people of their rights? Nigeria's failure has been the incapacity of its leadership and it is ironical that it is the same leadership, civilian and military that now seeks to penalise the people for its own failings (Enahoro, 1986, p. 15).

Mr. Chairman, we say "No" to Diarchy; we say "No" to Triarchy; we strongly oppose any form of dictatorship, tyranny, aristocracy or oligarchy. "There are those who argue that dictatorship is a more efficient form of

government, because in theory it gives government much more power, but "in practice no government can make its will effective without a broad measure of consent, and where this consent is missing no amount of terror or secret police will produce the same response" (Catherwood, 1969, p. 86).

From the perspective of Christian principles and values, and within the context of the present socio-political realities in Nigeria, the only viable form of government is democracy. "A democratic constitution embodies the respect of the Christian for the individual as someone who is both responsible and answerable for his action. It is a safeguard against tyranny and against the oppression of the poor by the rich. Where it commands respect it is an efficient means of government, because efficient government requires the consent of the majority of the people" (Catherwood, 1969, p. 86).

The miserable history of democracy in Nigeria is not due to inherent weakness of the ruling elite to allow the masses to elect leaders of their choice. The electoral system in Nigeria has been grossly abused; and if our new experiment with democracy in 1990 is to succeed great attention must be paid to how best to ensure free and fair elections. The real test of a democracy is that a government in full control of the armed forces and the apparatus of State voluntarily relinquishes its power to opponents on its electoral defeat. Nigerian democracy is yet to pass this critical test. This issue of peaceful succession is central to our political crisis.

Politics in Nigeria has been too much about power instead of about principles. The more a politician wants power and power alone, the less likely is he to stand firm about what he believes to be right. The tragedy of the Nigerian situation has been that politicians in power would do anything - legal and illegal- to extend their term of office. The electoral system in

Nigeria has been characterised by immense corruption, as is being revealed by the Babalakin Commission of Inquiry into FEDECO activities.

Apart from the gross failure of the electoral system, the number of Political Parties has contributed to the failure of democracy in Nigeria. In the past, the formation of political parties has been seriously influenced by ethnic and religious considerations instead of profound ideological alternatives on how best to organize the Nigerian economy and society. In future, the formation of Parties should be strictly based on sound ideas and principles about how best to build a just social order in Nigeria.

Also, the number of Parties has tended to confuse the electorate in the past. This time around, I believe we should promote and encourage the formation of TWO major political parties with clear ideological orientation and well-articulated alternative programme. A two-party system would not only give the masses clear choice between alternative leaders and programmes, but it could reduce the past tendency by a powerful political party to rig elections against weak party opponents. A two-party system may also promote the politics of principles instead of mere parade of personalities leading small and regional political parties. If properly organised and effectively operated, a two-party system could also promote unity and integration, since the two parties should cut across ethnic and religious groups.

However, it is important to point out that the suggested Two-party system should not be decreed from above but encouraged to emerge through the fusion of socio-political forces at the grassroots level.

As to the system of Government, I believe we should give a modified presidential system another chance. The 1979 Constitution is basically a very good document that was poorly implemented by those who have never

really believed in genuine democracy. Some of the modifications I would like to see made to the presidential system include the following:

(a) The separation of powers between the Executive and the Legislature was too rigid. I believe that Ministers should be elected members of the National assembly so that they could be regularly held accountable for their actions and inactions. A system whereby someone rejected by the people at the polls could become a Minister and operate with little accountability to the elected representatives of the people is not good enough for Nigeria.

(b) Secondly, to reduce the huge cost of the Presidential system, the size of elected representatives should be substantially reduced. At the centre, there should only be the Senate, membership of which should be based on equal number of elected representatives from each State of the federation. Given the absence of acceptable population census figures, equality of the number of representatives could promote unity and help to depoliticize the taking of a population census for planning purposes only.

Other modifications to the Constitution may be necessary, but such suggestions are beyond the scope of this paper.

4. Democratization of Local Government

The bedrock of true democracy is the organised power of a politically conscious and vigilant electorate at the grassroots level. Therefore, if we wish for real democracy in Nigeria, we must democratize and properly re-structure the Local Government system so as to transform Local Governments into effective instruments for total mobilization of our human resources.

It has been rightly argued that "Local assemblies of citizens constitute the strength of free nations. Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the peoples' reach; they teach men how to use and enjoy it. A nation may establish a system of free government, but without the spirit of municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty"(Tocqueville, 1966, p. 62).

Thus, a democratized local government system constitutes the most effective way of ensuring popular participation. It enables communities to participate in decision-making on vital issues affecting their daily lives through democratically elected Village Committees, District Councils and local Government Councils.

5. Economic and Political Power

There is often a strong relationship between the economic and political system. There are strong linkages between economic power and the question of political power. Indeed, as Yusuf Banguwa rightly argues, "specific (economic) adjustment policies throw up specific types of politics and institutional structures. The pattern of accumulation in any economy determines the distribution of political power between social classes and communities, measured in terms of the positions they occupy in the system of production." (1986, p.2) The tragedy of the Nigeria situation is that wealth has been concentrated in the hands of that section of the ruling elite which hates democracy and prefers monopoly power which allows it to misappropriate public funds through massive corruption. Such corrupt practices clearly "require thuggery, deceit and authoritarian rule as the appropriate forms of political behaviour." Thus the reactionary forces in Nigeria are not at all "interested in democracy as it does not correspond with

their current aspirations." Unfortunately, the opposing social forces are yet too poor and too weak to enforce democracy. To make matters worse, current economic measures in Nigeria, including privatisation, will only further enrich the business class, and widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

Moreover, such economic adjustment programmes have very serious implications for political relations, in that they require authoritarian policies to stem popular opposition to them. According to Banguwa, "such authoritarian policies have tended to vary from a zero or one party civilian dictatorship, to a military dictatorship or a civil- military diarchy, to a corporate system that will involve the co-optation of some of the leading members of popular organisations that will serve as rationalisers of the adjustment package" (1986, p. 7) "*multi-party systems are considered to be inappropriate since they tend to allow for some level of democracy and opposition.*"

In periods of economic recession, the reactionary business class tends to be largely opposed to a multi-party system, except if it can control it, but it strongly supports a zero party or one party system, and may in fact prefer the continuation of military dictatorship as a measure of last resort to prop up the capitalist economy against popular opposition by the suffering masses. To contain the militancy of workers, the ruling elite may adopt the strategy of co-determination or corporate representation, involving the participation of trade union leaders, students' leaders, religious leaders, farmers' leaders, and elite groups. Such strategies are not conducive to genuine democracy. The aim is to buy off popular reactions against injustice and exploitation.

The current debate so far has been very revealing. It is interesting to note the suggestions of the reactionary forces, most of whom prefer a return to so-called traditional political systems which we are told were humanitarian and classless - based on consensus. Hence, some have suggested triarchy (i.e. rule by traditional rulers, the military and civilians) or diarchy, zero-party, and one-party systems. The move is towards centralised authoritarian regimes. Most of the reactionary forces are opposed to foreign ideologies, except capitalism which they consider to be indigenous to Nigeria. Foreign ideology is always interpreted to mean socialism. What hypocrisy!

Mr. Chairman Sir, we argue for a popularly based social democracy for the emancipation of Nigeria. We strongly advocate a genuinely democratic multi-party system which will allow the formation of a mass-based political party to fight against the concentration of wealth and political power, defend the interests of the working people, especially the rural masses, fight against exploitation and injustice, and lay solid foundations for a humane social democracy.

Such a struggle for social justice, community life, co-operation, solidarity and freedom, is profoundly scriptural. For in Isaiah 58:6 & 7, the Lord says: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break the yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter, when you see the naked, to clothe him…?" In Amos 5:11-15 the Lord declared: "You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I know how many are your offences, and how great

your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes, and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts. Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you." In Zechariah 7:9-10, this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor."

The Lord Jesus had a lot to say about good social relationships in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:6-7). In Acts 2:44-47 and Acts 4:32-35, we are told about the genuine community life of fellowship and sharing. Acts 2:44 "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need." Acts 4:32 & 34, 35 "All believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own but they shared everything they had. There were no needy persons among them, for from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need."

Mr. Chairman, we could turn to several other passages of Scripture which clearly teach us to love community life rather than selfish individualism; to cultivate co-operation and solidarity instead of ruthless competition; to be willing to share with others instead of selfish accumulation. In other words, it should be easier for a Christian to support the struggle for socialism than to defend the establishment of exploitative capitalism. I believe the way forward in Nigeria is the way of co-operation, solidarity, community life, social justice and egalitarian distribution of the fruits of economic development. In other words, it is the way of God-

fearing and humane socialism. If anyone doubts this thesis let him give true and godly socialists a chance in 1990.

I thank you for listening.

APPENDIX 11:

MUBI WORLDVIEW AND ISLAMIC INFLUENCES

Herbert Eze[1]

A Muslim convert to Christianity and highly placed official of the Nigerian government noted in an important nationwide conference in Miango, Plateau State, that a Hausa man without Islam is very different from a Hausa man with Islam. Both have the same cultural background, but the one with Islam sees the world from an Islamic viewpoint. By this speech, he was making a statement on worldview. Islam has effect not only on the worldview of its adherents in northern Nigeria but also on non-Muslims who share communities with Muslims, especially in Muslim-dominated areas. Mubi is not an exception but among the examples.

The history of the coming of Islam to Mubi, Adamawa State, is important in understanding worldview in Mubi in relation to Islamic influences. The history of Islam in Mubi started with the migration of Muslim Fulani pastoralists who, during the jihad of the early 19th century, usurped tribal authority and imposed rule upon the indigenous people. The colonial government of Britain, through their system of indirect rule, favored the Muslim emirs who had established kingdoms in different parts of northern Nigeria including Adamawa. The pro-Islam nature of the British colonial administration helped in strengthening Islam, giving it an advantage over Christianity and the pagan tribes, some of whom were forced under Islamic pressures to embrace Islam.

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[1]Herbert M. Eze, "Mubi Worldview and Islamic Influences." Chapter 10 in *Felt Needs in Mubi, Nigeria, in Relation to the Three Dimensions in Contextualization.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation for Institute of Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2003, pp. 107-115.

The Fulani Muslims established themselves firmly in the land and their influence became so imposing and intimidating that some indigenes of the host community began to embrace the Fulani culture and the Islamic religion. M. Kraft writes that:

> The idea of becoming Fulani was offensive to most Kamwe. It implies a greater or lesser degree of conversion from Kamwe to Fulani culture and Muslim religion. It is symbolized by association with those who are ethnically Fulani…. The Kamwe began to feel that to rule, one had to become Fulani. For various reasons some changed from allegiance to Kamwe culture to allegiance to Fulani culture (1977:18).

It is important to notice the effect of Fulani influence at the deep level of the Kamwe mind in the statement of the above paragraph which says, "The Kamwe began to feel that to rule, one had to become Fulani." Although it was only some Kamwe people who changed to Fulani culture and Islamic religion, nevertheless, the feeling that "to rule one has to become Fulani" has great effect on the worldview of northern tribes. The feeling dominates the worldview of people in Mubi and is very much associated with Islam.

In my twelve years of ministry in Mubi, I heard people in Mubi voicing out the assumption (some in frustration) that associating with Muslims or converting to Islam is an advantage for having certain privileges in Mubi. One example among others is the case of a Baptist Christian who lost an election in local government chairmanship on two consecutive occasions to Muslim candidates. Public feeling was that he won the elections but the power structure was under the control of Muslims, and he was denied the position. He took the matter to court with massive support

from the people but the case was ruled in favor of the Muslim candidate by a Muslim judge. Following these events, this Baptist Christian in frustration assumed that to rule one must become a Muslim. He discontinued his association with a Christian candidate for the governorship race and joined a Muslim candidate in the hope of winning future elections. His assumption and shift have great impact on the worldview of many Christian youth in Mubi who feel that to be successful one must associate with Muslims and be under their leadership. M. Kraft had earlier observed this frustration among the Kamwe who did not want to become Muslims but political pressures and deprivations changed their assumption, and the Kamwe began to feel that to rule, one had to become Fulani. For various reasons some changed from allegiance to Kamwe culture to allegiance to Fulani culture and the Islamic religion (1977:18).

Islam's strategy in positioning itself in authority has enormous effect on the worldview of people in the communities where it has control. The ability of Islam to take over cities in northern Nigeria and to flourish has been noted as its strength. Gilliland writes that Islam's ability to organize and flourish in the city is a historical fact and a strength for gaining advantage over the church (1986:98). It is by this strategy that Muslims have imposed *sharia* rule in six different states of northern Nigeria in recent times. This strategy gives Islam a powerful image and gradually this powerful image is causing erosion on the worldview of non-Muslims in northern Nigeria, paving the way for conversion to Islam. It is not uncommon for Christians to request that Muslims first supervise the slaughter of their animals before it is considered clean and acceptable to be eaten. This results from the imposing influence of Islam in Mubi and gives Christians the feeling that they are subject to Muslim approval.

Another strategy of Islam in controlling the minds of people in Islamic communities worldwide, and northern Nigeria in particular, is the use of the laws of *dhimmi* and apostasy for control and conversion. Wilbert R. Shenk writes that:

> Political techniques, such as the *dhimmi* (protected) status of the church, or the application of forms of the law of apostasy in relation to Muslims who would convert to Christianity, have combined to assure that the net flow of conversion always favored Islam. In all countries ruled by Muslim governments, shrinking Christian communities vis-à-vis Islam have been the norm. Islam has generally confronted the church with church growth in reverse (1983:146).[2]

A situation, like in Nigeria, where the constitution declares freedom of choice for any religion and freedom of worship, the Islamic law of apostasy prohibits any Muslim who chooses to become a Christian from doing so with very stringent penalties. The Nigerian churches abide by the country's constitution without any prohibition or penalty on its members for one's choice to decide for Islam or for another faith. This gives advantage to Muslims for the growth of Islam and puts church growth to disadvantage. The so called law of *dhimmi* in Islam which assures Christian protection in non-Muslim areas remains a principle that is hardly practiced judging from the violent attacks upon churches and Christians in northern Nigeria and Mubi in particular (CAN:1994b). These attacks are efforts to intimidate Christians and force them to change their assumptions on the Christian faith to Islam.

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[2]Note by J. Boer, author of this series--The process described does not hold for Nigeria, where the church has grown phenomenally in the shadow of Islam to the point of constituting a serious challenge. This situation I take to be part of the reason for the religious unrest in the country: Muslims are power conscious. Serious Christian challenges to their power in Nigeria has led to great sensitivity on the part of Muslims.

In Adamawa state, where Mubi is one of the major cities, Muslims in power used the machinery of government to establish Islamic schools with public funds. By the nation's constitution, this act is unconstitutional. Christians in Adamawa State under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) have sought redress on the issue and other related injustices. Unfortunately, Islam's strategy of political control puts the judiciary virtually in Muslim hands and therefore justice is denied the church over some injustices of Islam brought to the Law.

What is disheartening on the school issue is that the establishment of Muslim schools with government funds in Adamawa State took place after the government took over mission-established schools leaving the church without its own schools. Some of the mission schools taken over by the government were later changed to Muslim names to conceal their original identity. An example is the change of St. Patrick School to Hassan Primary School (Sabiya 1992:7).

Sabiya, a Lutheran Minister, and Chairman of [the local chapter of the] Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), made the following appeal while addressing a governor who newly assumed office in Adamawa State:

> When the missionaries brought the Gospel to Nigeria, they came with the establishment of schools. No doubt, the missionary schools were far better than the government schools. The missionaries in all cases turned over the schools to the indigenous Church. The indigenous church was controlling the schools…. The Government jumped in and took over the schools without any compensation paid…. The names of some schools were changed as from St. Patrick to Hassan Primary School to conceal the identity of origin. To our surprise also we were not only refused the benefits of the conditions, but

> Government went ahead to open Islamiya Primary Schools…. We are citizens of one country and we should in all fairness be treated equally. Our schools should be returned to us. We should keep them. But what is annoying is that Islamiya Primary Schools and Islamiya Colleges are springing up everywhere all over the State (1992:6-7).

The above quote is just a small portion of the address on the school situation. The use of the instrument of government by Muslims to advance Islam touches on hospitals and the law courts as well as schools (Sabiya 1992:10, 17-24). There is also the case of a Muslim governor who constructed a mosque in the State House with government funds. The Christian community took the unconstitutional act to court, and it was ruled that rather than demolish the illegally constructed mosque, the Governor should use an equal amount of money to construct a church in the State House to balance the religious equation, but it was not implemented.

In a discussion of Islamic worldview influences in Mubi, it is pertinent to mention these things. They are all aspects of Islamic strategy to impose its influence upon the minds of people in the State by political control and thereby weaken the assumptions of their faith in favor of Islam. By the takeover of Christian schools and the establishment of Islamiya schools, funded by the government, a new form of Islamic jihad is in place to gradually weaken the Christian faith and pressurize Christians to join Islam. Sabiya lamented the unfortunate situation as follows:

> Today in what is called Adamawa, there are at least forty-fifty (40-50) Islamiya Primary Schools. There are also Arabic Teachers' College, Song, Higher Islamiya Studies, Song and Higher Islamiya Studies, Yola. While for the Christians, there is only one Christian teachers' College, Shiwa. Thus, instead of Government taking over Islamiya

> Primary Schools also, it merely expanded Islamic education paid from the public fund…. The Government has identified itself with Islamic education. The Christian Schools taken over were secularized and everything was done to erase the Christian presence and influence…. With over forty to fifty Primary Schools, Islam will have a firm moral grasp on the society of Adamawa alone at the expense of all of us and to the exclusive benefit of Muslims (1992:8).

This picture calls to mind the observation made by Gilliland that Islam's ability to organize and flourish in the city is a historical fact and a strength for gaining advantage over the church (1986:98). Having control over the State apparatus in Adamawa State, Islam's strategy, through the Islamiya schools established and sustained by government funds, is to have a firm grasp on the society by instilling Islamic values in the children at school. In this scenario, Mubi is not an isolated case but within the context where this is taking place with its own version of Islamic jihad in the modern form.

In Mubi, the [local] CAN chapter, in conjunction with the Maiha, Michika and Madagali Chapters of CAN, wrote a joint petition against the Lamido (Muslim Chief) of Mubi, addressing the issue of injustices in the deposition of Christians elected by their people to be installed chief in their areas, respectively, but were denied installation by the Lamido and replaced by Muslims who were not the official elects of their communities (CAN 1994a). The effect of this strategy of Islamization is that it changes the worldview of many Christians in Mubi, especially nominal ones, to believe that to have protection and be successful is to submit to the power of Islam. It sounds political when one discusses the Christian/Muslim relations in Mubi along these lines, but this is unavoidable because Islam uses a political

strategy to intimidate and influence non-Muslims in Mubi and northern Nigeria to embrace Islam. Both Gilliland and Shenk have pointed out this political approach of Islam in their relations to non-Muslims as earlier discussed (Gilliland 1986:98; Shenk 1983:146).

The political strategy of Islam results of worldview changes in Christians and other non-Muslims who feel inferior and unprotected as a result of the controlling, intimidating and violent activities of Muslims in northern Nigeria. It gives them the feeling of hopelessness to succeed and in sharing leadership with Muslims in the community unless they embrace Islam. The situation was very disheartening and humiliating for Christians in some communities around Mubi who by majority votes elected Christian candidates to be installed for them as their chief but were denied because they were not Muslims. The situation was so hopeless for such candidates that in Maiha, the Lutheran church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) lost one of its members to Islam. This chieftaincy candidate renounced his faith and became a Muslim in order to meet the condition for installation as chief. The irony of it is that he was qualified as chieftaincy candidate by the votes of the Christian community but renounced his faith as a Christian, and became a Muslim in order to be installed chief by a Muslim Lamido. His Christian name was also changed to Adamu to conform to his new faith as a Muslim (CAN 1994a).

A Muslim Local Government Chairman had for some time stopped the construction of the Christian Reformed Church building in Mubi on the excuse that it was near the governor's lodge. It took the joint action of Mubi CAN to make him revoke the decision during a security meeting convened on the issue. In that occasion, Mubi Church leaders told the audience about the mosque constructed right in the compound of the State House by the

Muslim Governor and made the point that if a mosque could unconstitutionally exist in the compound of the State House, what was wrong with a church construction on a land bought by the church with official Right of Occupancy issued by the State? (Eze 1997:5).

This is not intended to be a complaint against Muslims, but a discussion of a few events that took place in the 1990s as Muslims engaged in activities to influence the Adamawa State and Mubi community with their faith. The climax of these activities is the imposition of *sharia* rule on six states in northern Nigeria, a violation of the Nigerian constitution and an affront to the nation. This matter is known to the world, but the six *sharia* states have remained Muslim states ever since.

The three cultural themes in Mubi, Supernaturalism, Groupism, and Knowledge, discussed in Chapters 7-9 are targets of Islamization as Muslims use political control and processes to project a strong Islamic image, manipulate people's minds with Islamic values, and intimidate them to conversion. The Islamizing approach is that for Supernaturalism, the doctrine of Allah in Islam will replace the Christian Trinity, the Muslim *Ummah* (community) will replace Christian community and other communities and Truth/Knowledge that is based on the Bible or on Western education will be replaced by teachings of the Qur'an and the Islamic Law, the *Sharia*. A visit to the States in Nigeria upon which the *Sharia* rule has been imposed will be eye opening to anyone who is yet to understand the Islamic strategy.

The challenging influence that Muslims contend with, in its mission of Islamizing Mubi and northern Nigeria, is not indigenous values but Christian values. Unfortunately, the church in Mubi does not have as much support and the machinery to project Biblical values as Muslims do for the

projection of Islam. In addition, the disunity caused by tribalism and denominationalism in the Mubi Christian community is an added problem to any joint effort in projecting Biblical values on a large scale in order to create a large enough image for Christian values to counter the intimidating projection of Islam upon people's minds in Mubi. But the question is, what really is the will of God in the competing of assumptions, projection, and counter projection of values? Jesus did not come to compete but to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

It is the overall purpose of this study to find ways in assisting both Christians, Muslims, and others in Mubi to find a common basis for peaceful relations through community cooperation and selfless living, modeled by Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it is not out of place to discuss the influences of Islam in northern Nigeria and the changes taken place particularly in Mubi worldview resulting from the activities of Islam. I have noted some of these changes, stated the strategies by which Islam affects them and the injustices that need to be addressed; however, the primary purpose of this project is to meet the felt needs of both Christians, Muslims, and others in Mubi from the perspective of Jesus who gave his life for the salvation of all.

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APPENDIX 12:

SECULARISM IN NIGERIA

Iyortyom Achineku[1]

It will be necessary to formulate a working definition of secularism to help us know what it is and how it poses a challenge to Christianity in Nigeria. In light of its declared objective, secularism may be defined as those bold or seemingly innocent but satanic activities or forces in human societies that shape the all-pervasive ethos of human understandings in such a way that human autonomy rather than God's revelation becomes the center of attention. In all of these activities rebellious humanity fights for the recognition of its selfish rights.

This fight, begun in the Garden of Eden, has penetrated the whole fabric of human history. In modern history it manifested itself on a massive scale in the minds of Western Enlightenment thinkers. Through human reasoning the thinkers tried to liberate humanity from what they thought were religious and traditional restraints on their freedom.

In today's complex society people have intensified the effort to free themselves from religious inhibitions. We shall now turn to some of the dynamics which through secularization have ushered Nigeria into secularism.

Islam and Christianity

Before the arrival of Islam and Christianity, Nigerian society, like Athens in Paul's day, was deeply religious. Life was a religiously unified

[1]Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC), *Facing the Challenge of Secularism.* Grand Rapids: REC, 1991, pp. 26-32.

whole. Nothing public or private was done without religion. Everyone was an active participant in his/her communal religion.

After the arrival of Islam with its emphasis on the sword to convert the masses, and Christianity with its emphasis on individual conversion and personal commitment to Christ, a different religious dimension was introduced into Nigerian society. Religion was now no longer a communal affair but a matter of coercion or personal choice. Even though Islam through its 1802 jihad, led by Usman dan Fodio, had successfully subdued all five Hausa States in the North, it indirectly fostered secularism by imposing its religion without providing basic knowledge of Islam. This development provided fertile ground for secularism, since the hearts of the Hausa people were not really captured and committed to any religion, and thus religion became increasingly distanced from both public and private life.

Christianity also has done its share in promoting secularism. Even with their good intentions, the sum total of strategies adopted by early missionaries in Nigeria, as elsewhere on the African continent, contributed to the rise of secularism. Nearly all Western missionaries ignored the important role cultures play in human behavior. They prejudged all aspects of Nigerian cultures and hastily concluded that the only answer to the establishment of a sound and strong church in Nigeria was the total elimination of the indigenous cultural forms. To this end they launched an all-out attack on all aspects of Nigerian culture and destroyed it. In its place they "tried to feed the people with Western cultures but without really making them a part of their cultures" (Suemo Chia, p. 10).

Early missionaries tried to justify this destruction of Nigerian cultures by assuming that numerous features of Western society, such as

"monogamy, democracy, individualism, capitalism, the 'freedoms,' literacy, technological development, military supremacy, etc.," are products of Western association with God and therefore indicate the superiority of Western cultures over all other cultures (cf. Charles Kraft, p. 51).

Since African life was a religiously unified whole, early missionaries could not differentiate between cultural practices and religious rituals. The easy way out was to destroy all practices and replace them with western cultures. This according to Okonkwo, "put a knife on things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (Chinua Achebe, pp. 124, 125). The early missionaries, being men and women of their day, overlooked Charles Kraft's warning that

> Cultural practices should be interpreted in their proper cultural contexts, however not as a denial of scripturally revealed supracultural ethical standards, but as the first step toward advocating change in that direction…. Understanding such a custom … is not approval of it. Such understanding should, however, enable the advocate of change to better assess the extent to which that society would be upset if such a custom were to be … pressured out of existence (Charles Kraft, p. 361).

The blanket destruction of Nigerian cultures and their replacement by Western cultures without adequate understanding of the Scriptures resulted in a near disappearance of religious values. This, in turn, gradually and imperceptibly dichotomized Nigerian life and inescapably set a stage for secularization and secularism. Western cultures introduced by missionaries consigned rituals and worship to religion and private daily activities to social norms.

System of Government

Often when traditional loyalty to religious institutions was indiscriminately and drastically pressured out of existence, the blame was placed wholly on British colonial administrators and western missionaries. While it is true that white administrators have significantly contributed to the almost complete disappearance of respect for elders and religious institutions in our traditional society, it would be quite naïve to suppose that they alone are responsible for this change.

The introduction of indirect rule by British administrators took cognizance of the important role traditional rulers could play in commanding respect for authority. In 1960 Nigeria adopted a parliamentary form of government which still shared powers with the elders as the true representatives of the people. In 1966 the army seized power and dealt a death-blow to the traditional African system of government. Today both Nigerian constitutions of 1979 and 1989 have adopted an American style of presidential government and have virtually reduced traditional rulers to historical monuments.

The new government introduced into Nigeria has altered the customs and traditions that endorsed respect for religious institutions. This lack of respect has paved the way for secularism in-as-much as the general underlying policy of the new government has not encouraged respect for God.

Education

More than any other factor, Western education, in all its ramifications, has hastened the tempo of secularization in Nigeria. The traditional Nigerian worldview has been the basis for all human activities. This was

true also of the Nigerian traditional system of education. From the vantage point of a unified whole, education was not considered a means to free man from servile beliefs and activities. Because the Nigerian concept of human nature was not dualistic, education aimed at imparting knowledge as well as moral and religious values to enhance man's total religious life.

Colonialists introduced western formal education in Nigeria along with the Greek differentiation between the human material body and immaterial soul. With this new concept of human nature, the task of Nigerian education became one of setting the immaterial soul in man free from servile activities in the physical body. Although this Greek idea has been modified somewhat, its basic principle has been retained.

During our struggle for independence in 1960, the educational focus shifted from the physical body and the immaterial principle to colonial power and nationalism. The task of education became the liberation of Nigerian society from the clutches of political power and degrading colonial cultural domination. In 1960 the Nigerian system of education yielded its first-fruits when Nigerians themselves used formal education to free themselves from the controlling power of colonialists.

Today Nigeria acclaims Western education as the greatest and most powerful liberating force in the world. With all primary and secondary schools and universities federally controlled, education is increasingly viewed as an effort to free humanity from ignorance, superstition and religious inhibitions. All emphasis is on science and technology, to the exclusion of both religion and traditional moral values. Onwu laments the present situation in the following words:

> Much of the discontent and many of the social problems of the present time in Nigeria can be identified with a system of education which

> was and still is foreign to the lives of the people. Indeed from the 1960s until today this criticism has gained greater force. It would appear that whichever way we turn, modernity and development have been portrayed as the benefits of science and the conquest of religion. In the 1960s religions and other disciplines, excepts sciences, have always been referred to as the 'watery arts' or 'talkative disciplines' (Nlenanya Onwu, p. 2).

In recognition of the present threatening irrelevance of religion in Nigerian society, the Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv (NKST) has established an institution of Christian higher learning, completely free from any governmental control, to provide Christian education for Nigeria and the whole of West Africa. This move is necessitated by the fact that today about 13 million Nigerian primary school pupils receive an education that is secular or devoid of religion. Since the take-over of Christian schools in 1976, much harm has been done. Viewed as a process of enlightenment, education has created a third group in Nigerian society: in addition to those who still hold to traditional religions, and Christians and Muslims who identify themselves with so-called foreign religions, we have now the so-called "neutrals" who claim to have no allegiance to any religion at all.

The growth of this third group is becoming a big threat since the struggle against religion has become an inseparable component of the entire national policy on education. An anti-religionist policy, inherent in the exclusive emphasis on science and technology, has launched an aggressive three-pronged attack on religion in primary, secondary and tertiary schools.

War Time

In time of war cultural and traditional links with the past are broken and new remedies must be found. Those remedies that are successful become an integral part of the new way of life in the affected society. For example, during the Nigerian Civil War in the 1960s many traditional patterns of behavior were changed. Before the war the virginity of a girl was sacred. She lost it only to a legitimate husband after an appropriate rite was performed. During the civil war many families were broken up either through death or through long separation, and many young girls were forced to take up prostitution as a means of livelihood. Adultery, once considered religiously abominable, was now only frowned upon. Many housewives and girls went looking for men at the war-front, without any apparent rebuke from the gods. Many Ibo Christians, who prayed only for victory over the Nigerian army, became disillusioned with Christianity and generally with religion as a whole. On the Nigerian side, thousands of wives lost their husbands and had to find answers to the harsh realities of war time. Many traditional and religious practices were abandoned in favor of non-religious remedies. These anti-religious activities have now formed a subculture in Nigerian society.

Inventions

Inventions produce new customs and modify beliefs. In traditional societies inventions undermine established beliefs and thereby provide a path for secularization and secularism.

> A good example of this in Tivland is the effect of wonder-drugs on our belief in witches (*Mbatsav*). Since it was strongly believed that *Mbatsaw* were responsible for sickness and death it was absolutely

> necessary to perform certain religious rites to appease *Mbatsaw* before any medication was administered. Medication and religion were synonymous. Today very few people perform religious rites. This greatly undermines belief in *Mbatsaw* (I. Achineku, p. 3).

The loss of faith in *Mbatsaw* led to the loss of respect for elders who supposedly possess the *tsav* potency. This loss of respect for the elders is today generalized to include lack of respect for any constituted authority and all religious practices.

Inventions have laid bare mythical beliefs in *mbatsav* and idols (*akombo*). The wonders of flying planes, powerful drugs that cure the most incurable diseases, picture taking, telephone, etc., have dealt a death-blow to traditional myths. Modern inventions have paved the way for lack of belief in God.

Today many Nigerians have accepted man's ability to control the forces of nature, because the reality of human ideas has been confirmed in practice by the products of human knowledge and without the manipulation of any intermediaries. Man's maturity and his concomitant independence from God have been fully realized. Religion and belief in God have become irrelevant.

The Role of the Church

Our description of various dynamics which have fueled and fanned the flame of secularization and secularism in Nigeria does not stem from an anthropocentric approach to the challenge of secularism. Nor do we in our attempt to uncover the roots of secularism condemn science and technology. We painted a vivid picture of what were, and still are, contextual forces and activities in Nigerian society that have aided and abetted the rise of

secularism. Secularism succeeded because Nigerian Christians never developed a theocentric approach to life and society. Naively, we believed that our autonomous accomplishments could carry us into a glorious future without God.

The all-pervasive ethos of our general understanding is that we are self-referential and self-contained. We keep "God out of the world of the phenomenal by establishing the validity of science in terms of the ultimate organizing activities of the autonomous man" (C. Van Til, *The Case for Calvinism*, p. 113). Many Nigerians have accepted this prevailing secularized situation and have thereby undermined their fidelity to the Christian stance and the vision of reality which underlies it.

It ought to be clear to us that the challenge of secularism which the church faces is so amazingly great that we cannot afford anything less than a holistic theocentric approach. The need for this approach stems from the realization that human nature is so depraved that it would employ all instruments at its own disposal to free man from what it considers to be religious inhibitions. Only a holistic theocentric approach is capable of presenting a counter challenge which can effectively outweigh the prevailing humanistic approach which completely disregards the divine purpose of our existence as it is clearly enunciated in 1 Cor. 10:31, Col. 3:17 and 1 Pet. 4:11. Commenting on 1 Cor. 10:31, Calvin correctly asserts: "there is no part of our life or conduct, however insignificant, which should not be related to the glory of God and that we must be concerned…, to do all to promote it" (Calvin: *Commentary* on 1 Cor. 10:31, p. 224).

If secularism has succeeded because we have failed to develop a holistic theocentric approach to our national development, it follows that the only role we can play is that which deals with the whole man as a creature of

god. Man must be made to realize the purpose of his creation, namely to do all to promote the glory of God. To do this the Church must stop dichotomizing its services into "social" and "spiritual." This is necessary because "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (1 Cor. 10:26). Our dichotomy has by implication consigned ritual and worship services to the realm of religion and the rest of our private daily activities to the realm of social norms. For too long the Church has fallen prey to the Greek dualistic concept of the world which has necessarily deprived God of the earth's fullness. This in turn has turned over the so-called social activities to man as that for which he is responsible.

In the light of what is happening, the church ought to reclaim from man what our dichotomized concept of the world has mistakenly assigned him. In doing so the church must evolve an over-arching philosophy and set a goal for our activities to enable us to offer services holistically and not dichotomically. We must be prepared to offer holistic services in health programs, education in all its ramifications, agriculture and all other ministries.

The Church of Christ in the Sudan Among the Tiv (NKST) has already taken this approach in all her thirteen ministries. Chaplains are attached to all her 9 hospitals and 120 health clinics. These chaplains are trained not only to conduct devotional services but also to counsel individual patients. Doctors and nurses take the same approach. While medical expertise is not neglected, God is presented as the controller of all human activities including physical and mental disorders. Man and wonder drugs are presented as being under the control of God.

In all NKST institutions of learning, from primary to tertiary levels, students are made to understand that the facts they uncover in the pursuit of

their studies are God's created facts. These facts are to enable man to fulfil his cultural mandate to subdue and control this world. They are further made to understand that to truly control this world man must first be controlled by God, the Creator.

The holistic theocentric approach does not leave any part of life or conduct, however insignificant, unrelated to the glory of God. In facing the challenge of secularism the Nigerian church must proclaim and project Jesus Christ who is the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Omega and Alpha, as the reference point of all our activities.

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APPENDIX 13:

COUNCIL FOR THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS AND OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE CONFERENCE ON "RELIGION AND PEACE IN MULTI-FAITH NIGERIA" DECEMBER 4-8, 1989

COMMUNIQUE (EXCERPTS)

JACOB K. OLUPONA, EDITOR[1]

I. **Preamble**

The five-day Conference on 'Religion and Peace in Multi-Faith Nigeria,' jointly sponsored by the Council for the World's Religions (CWR) and the Obafemi Awolowo University, was held at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, on December 4-8, 1989.

….

II. **Observations**

During its deliberations, the Conference observed as follows:

1. That all religions have teachings regarding peace with God and love for fellow men. Therefore, religion can be an instrument of peace and national integration in Nigeria.
2. That the teachings of all religions emphasise that religion is a matter of personal conviction rather than coercion.
3. That Islam and Christianity have often enjoyed a peaceful relationship both at their places of origin and in Nigeria. In addition, African Traditional Religion has been tolerant of both Islam and Christianity, a situation that did not hinder the expansion of the latter two.
4. That Secularism (or the secular state system) is a misunderstood concept in Nigeria. It should be understood as meaning that government shall not favour one religion over the others.
5. That in a multi-religious state like Nigeria, the ideal leader is one who serves as the first protector of all faiths, without necessarily neglecting his own faith.

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[1]Jacob K. Olupona (ed.), *Religion and Peace in Multi-Faith Nigeria*. Ile-Ife: J. K. Olupona, 1992, pp. 201-203.

6. That the mounting wave of religious intolerance, crises, and conflagrations are worsened by the biting economic crisis, inequitable distribution of wealth, ignorance of others' religions, and contests for political power.
7. That the *Shari'a* issue is not a political matter; it is a religious condition under which Muslims should live as prescribed by Islam.
8. That the press has not been very conscious of the sensitive nature of religious conflicts and the possible consequences of such conflicts to the nation and the religious institutions themselves.
9. That while special days have been set aside to observe certain significant features of our national life (e.g. Communications Day, Environmental Day, etc.), no such "day" has been set aside for Religious Harmony.
10. That some teachers are employed in our primary and post-primary schools to teach religion(s) which they are not academically qualified to teach.

III. Recommendations

Consequent upon the observations above, the Conference recommended as follows:

1. That inter-faith relations should focus on the common ethical teachings of all religions and harness them towards the objectives of national integration and development.
2. That while no government should favour one religion over the others, the compartmentalisation of personal life into the religious and the secular should be re-examined in such a way that the day-to-day life of an individual should be guided by the religious values of peace, love and concern for humankind.
3. That religion must respect the state, while the state, in its laws, must respect religious beliefs and practices.
4. That the Federal government should review the National Education Policy and make it mandatory for students at all levels of our educational system to learn about the main religions in Nigeria in a positive manner as in the case of the national language.
5. That Federal and State governments should constantly encourage inter-faith dialogue as an integral part of national life.
6. That the Federal Government should designate one day in a year (a public holiday) as National Religious Harmony Day.

7. That students in Nigeria should be exposed to both Islamic and Common Laws, and that law graduates should be conversant with both legal traditions.
8. That a Centre for the Study of Religion, Ethics and Society be established by the federal Government as a matter of urgency, to promote inter-faith dialogue in Nigeria, in particular, and Africa in general.
9. That the media houses, irrespective of location and ownership, should take special interest in exposing and reporting positive issues that emphasise the common goals of all religions which include peace, love and co-operation.
10. That the government and all religious institutions have a responsibility to alleviate the sufferings of the poor in the country consequent to our present economic crisis.
11. That people receiving and those seeking public services should not be subjected to religious coercion.
12. That teachers of religion(s) should be employed in our schools to teach only the religion(s) which they are academically qualified to teach.

Signed: Dr. Jacob K. Olupona
Convener

8 December, 1989
Ile-Ife

APPENDIX 14:

(NOTE: This appendix contains 2 articles by Minchakpu. For Art. 2, find XXXXX below.)

Muslim Fanatics in Nigeria Burn Down 10 Churches

Undisclosed number of Christians killed in northern town of Makarfi.

Obed Minchakpu

KADUNA, Nigeria, April 8, 2004– Muslim fanatics burned down 10 Christian churches in the town of Makarfi in the northern state of Kaduna, Nigeria on Saturday. Claims that a mentally retarded Christian teenager desecrated the Quran, the Muslim holy book, apparently incited the attack.

An undisclosed number of Christians were reported killed in the incident, which also resulted in the displacement of hundreds of other Christians from the town. These have now taken refuge in the city of Kaduna.

Bodies of the dead Christians from Makarfi were brought to police stations in Kaduna City on Sunday, the day after the attack. This *Compass* correspondent visited the Kakuri and Sabo Tasha police stations and saw corpses piled in trucks to be taken away for mass burial by the police.

Police prevented people there from getting close to the trucks bearing the dead bodies.

At a press conference in Kaduna on Monday, Dr. Sam Kujiyat, vice-chairman of the Kaduna state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) confirmed the killings in Makarfi and the destruction of the 10 churches.

We are still receiving reports from affected churches on this incident and would inform you adequately on the issue once the security situation there improves, Kujiyat told journalists.

Islamic terrorists hiding under the cover of religion have invaded the state and are now unleashing terror on Christians over stupid reasons, he said.

The situation we are witnessing today is the emergence of a dangerous trend in which religious sentiment is being used as a cover to victimize Christians.

Having observed closely the trend and the pattern of the attacks CAN has only one option and that is to alert the public, through the mass media, of the dangers and fears these incidents evoke in the minds and hearts of Christians in the state.

During the press conference, CAN leaders demanded the arrests and prosecution of the Muslim fanatics that carried out the attacks on Christians. They also requested provision from the Kaduna state government to rebuild all the burned churches.

It is our conclusion that Muslim leaders are deliberately using fanatics in the name of Islam to engage in periodic attacks on Christians with the sole aim to intimidate, terrorize and force Christians into submission and to denounce their faith, Kujiyat concluded.

Malam Yusuf Abubakar, a Muslim residing in Makarfi, witnessed the attack on Christians. Abubakar described the incident to *Compass* at police headquarters in Kaduna on Monday, April 5.

A teenager, who is said to be mentally retarded, went into an Islamic school, took a copy of the Quran from one of the students and tore it, Abubakar said. This provoked the students and Muslims nearby, who then pounced on the teenager, beating him mercilessly.

Abubakar explained that the teenager's mother came to his rescue and took him to a nearby police station. But the Muslims pursued the pair to the police station and set it ablaze.

The mob then proceeded to burn down the 10 churches.

Kaduna Deputy Governor Stephen Shekari said in a statewide radio and television broadcast on Sunday night that the situation in Makarfi had been brought under control.

Kaduna State Police Commissioner Muhammed Yusuf, a Muslim, spoke to journalists on April 6 about the Makarfi attacks, which he blamed on mischievous people (who are) fomenting trouble in the area.

So far, we have arrested five people. We are still making arrests, Yusuf said. It was a confused situation. The person who was being pursued (the teenager) is still in coma.

XXXXXXXXX

Muslim Militants in Nigeria Threaten to Kill Christian Nurses

Obed Minchakpu[1]

Muslim militants have threatened to kill Christian nurses serving at the Federal Medical Center in the town of Keffi, in the central state of Nasarawa, Nigeria, unless they stop conducting Christian worship services.

An undated letter received by the hospital's chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Nurses (FCN) – also delivered to hospital management – stated, "We are making it abundantly clear that our thirst for your heads/blood is mounting daily if you continue with your worship services in the hospital unabated."

The letter carried no names and was simply endorsed by a group calling itself "Islamic fundamentalists." The group said that it has a strong presence in the hospital and would do everything possible to deal with all Christian health workers there.

The letter has reportedly caused panic at the hospital and prompted institutional authorities to ban all Christian worship activities.

Christiana Shiaki, secretary of the local chapter of the FCN, told Compass that Dr. B.A. Abiminku, medical director and chief executive at Keffi Federal Medical Center, sent the nurses a letter on July 19, 2004, stating that Christian-related activities at the facility had been banned.

"Following the events of last week … which occurred within the center, Management has decided that Christian religious activities at the center is [sic] suspended in the interim," Abiminku wrote.

Shiaki said the letter also contained a summons for the nurses to meet with hospital management. "On arrival, we were informed that the management has reached a decision based on the threat letter to ban our fellowship in the center indefinitely," she said. "No mention was made [at the meeting] to the threat to our lives as Christians."

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[1]*Christian Courier,* 8 Nov/2004, p. 9.

Shiaki told Compass that the ban on Christian activities at the hospital denies Christian nurses and other health workers the privilege to exercise their faith as guaranteed by the Constitution of Nigeria.

"We are being discriminated against because we are Christians," she said. "We have not done anything wrong to deserve this. How can they ban us from praying or worshiping here when the Muslims have two mosques built with public funds for them here in the hospital?"

Shiaki also said that for the past five years, the Christian community at the hospital has been pleading for space to build a chapel to serve health workers and patients, but the request had been turned down.

Nigeria's chapter of the FCN was established in 1960, the year the country attained independence from Britain. The fellowship is affiliated with the Nurses Christian Fellowship International, headquartered in Scotland.

According to a report released last week by the Associated Press, violence between Muslims and Christians in central Nigeria over the last three years has left more than 53,000 people dead. A government-appointed committee said 53,787 people had died in Plateau state alone between September 2001 and May 2004.

Most of the casualties have been Christians killed in riots and militia attacks carried out by radical Muslim groups. Evidence is emerging that shows the Muslim militias receive foreign funding to purchase weapons and material. The militias often mount attacks from neighboring countries, such as Niger and Chad, which have large Muslim populations.

APPENDIX 15:

Why The Violence in The World And Africa in Particular?

Caleb Ahima[1]

The contemporary global trends with regards to our experience of violence raises the level of alarm to red, considering its urgency and intensity. That conflict is creating enormous insecurity in the human society is glaringly troubling. There is tremendous impact that this experience of violence is exerting on individuals, social groups, communities and the world at large.

We are witnessing loss of lives and property, and social dislocations and displacement are growing, along with social tensions. We see new patterns of settlement where common interests, beliefs and aspirations decide who stays where (see for instance Muslims – Christians relocations in Kaduna, Nigeria). Family and communal life is disrupted, and there is a general atmosphere of mistrust, fear and frenzy. The humanity of women and children is eroded by such evils as rape, neglect and abuse (see for instance the cases of Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda and Congo). There is deepening hunger and poverty in many regions of the world hence, for example, the clarion call currently, by the United Nations, for urgent steps to bring food and relief materials to the starving victims of violence in the Sudan.

The picture is disturbing. The continent of Africa has been experiencing numerous civil wars and conflicts, some of which are still going on. No fewer than 28 sub-Saharan African States have been at war since 1980. A police officer in Nigeria once lamented, "I shed tears at the sight of human corpses, many completely severed of their skull, bones of many years, coffins with corpses…I never believed that such a thing could happen in this country" (Saturday Sun, Vol. 2, No. 82, April 7, 2004). In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an unparallel degree of insecurity. Inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes, religious violence, armed robbery, assassinations, murder, gender-based violence, and bomb explosion have been on the increase, leading to enormous loss of life and social tension for the people (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, *Memorandum on National Security,* 2002).

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[1]*REC Focus*, Sep/2004, pp. 63-75.

Since May 1999 when Obansanjo was elected as the President of Nigeria, at least 10, 000 lives have been lost to violence of different kinds and character communities and groups have been fighting each other. In some cases, like those of Odi and Benue-Taraba, even state agents were found to be involved.

Sometimes, it is true that some violence is state sponsored, such as in the Darfur (non-Arab) region of Sudan. It is for this kind of evil that the deposed Slovodan Milosevich stands trial today at The Hague.

But why the terrible experience of violence today? What explanations have been there for this experience? Many Christians tends to simply hold the view that the violence we see today at global and regional levels is just the fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy on the eschatological phase of the existence of the world: that, "wickedness will so multiply…" (Matt. 24:12).

In some quarters, the prevailing violence is viewed in the light of the factors of modernism and modernization, which have stripped man of godliness.

A major cause of some of the violence we see now is explained by facts of the history of the activities of Europe on the continent of Africa. These causes lie in certain policies and legacies that followed the scramble for and partition of the continent of Africa among some European nations in about the mid nineteenth century. The Berlin Conference of 1884/5, which produced the famous Berlin Act of 1885, resolved to partition and effectively occupy the partitioned lands in Africa. Effective occupation implied the use of force or conquest and subjugation (which would later be the seed of future violence on the continent). Nations like Britain, France, Germany, Portugal and Italy succeeded in dividing Africa among them. Their administrative, political, social and economic policies left legacies for Africa and Africans that have since then bedeviled Africa with much violence.

One among the colonial legacies in question was the creation of international boundaries in the partitioning process. According to Professor J.A. Atanda (2002), "Definite boundaries were to be drawn to delineate areas of dominance, and full political control was to replace mere commercial influence" (p.22). It is clear that virtually all the international boundaries Africa has today are creations of the European scramble and partition of the continent. Atanda observed that, "the historical experiences, cultural

diversities" and the Africans' "precolonial boundaries and affiliations were of little relevance in determining the colonial boundaries in Africa" (p.318).

The political autonomy of different African groups was destroyed through their being conquered and brought together under one particular umbrella. In some instances, only parts of the different groups were incorporated into the union – bringing ethnic and linguistic divisions and incorporations into different unions. These boundary decisions have become a serious source of disaffection and trouble today (cf. the Nigerian-Cameroun border conflict over the Bakassi Peninsula; the experience of the Masai in Kenya and Tanzania).

It is sad to note that sometimes the architects of the African violence-prone situation still desire to pursue policies that imply direct or indirect confrontation with certain parties in Africa. They openly and shamelessly indicate their readiness to mobilize troops, arms and ammunitions, to give support to their perceived target. For instance, "France has always desired to dismember Nigeria in order to dislodge her influence in the West African Sub-region. Cameroon is therefore said to be a snare set up by France in order to lure Nigeria into a fight. ...Apart from the arrival of French troops and their combat jets into Yaounde, French naval frigates were also sent into Douala" (Atanda, 202, p.323). This was an act capable of provoking serious regional bloodshed but for the fact that Nigeria played the role of the sane brother toward Cameroon.

Generally, the administrative policies and practices of the colonial hawks in some quarters of Africa were not only terrible, but became the seed of later violent resistance and succeeding experience of violence. The policies left Africa and Africans badly divided and suspicious of each other. The British system of "Indirect Rule" in Buganda and Northern Nigeria created aristocrats and disregarded local variations in the traditional systems of government of the different peoples. This was the case in the Igboland of Nigeria where the people had no central government. It was part of the policy of the colonial administrators to keep the elites out of power and deep involvement in government. This act later became the basis for nationalist agitation, with all the attending violence and destruction to lives and property.

According to Barkindo et al (1994), "The Africans fought bitter wars in order to prevent their countries from being colonized" (p.95). No form of colonial rule was

acceptable to the Africans because they lost control of their affairs and were exploited and brutally suppressed.

The British colonial administrative colonial policy favored local hierarchies, "a process which unconsciously promoted the most malleable, collaborative or corrupt local chiefs and where none existed…they simply created one, enabling ambitious individuals and groups to achieve positions of status, dominance and wealth that might otherwise have been unattainable" (Geldorf, 2004). Such colonial practice is accountable for some of the tensions and conflicts some places still experience in Africa. No wonder then that between 1960 and 1980, 107 African leaders had been overthrown – some murdered, some jailed, some slung into exile.

A historian, Akintoye (1976), argued that the period 1900 – 1920 was, "marked by rural armed uprisings against colonialism…Africans found it difficult to tolerate the new strange things they were being made to do and the strange ways in which their lives were being ordered" (p.18).

The case of Portuguese Africa was very bad. While most African countries had begun to move toward independence, Portugal continued to prevent freedom of association, freedom of expression and of the press, arguing that Portuguese colonies were provinces of Portugal. The colonial administration was extremely violent toward any challenge to her position, using the police and the army to repress, arrest, deport, imprison and torture, massacre and terrorize, so as to control the Africans' push for freedom. The Portuguese colonial administration got the backing of France, West Germany, South Africa and Rhodesia in the brutality she meted out on the Africans. Remember that violence begets violence.

As the Africans united to break the shackles paced on them by the Portuguese, the colonial administration used an approach, that has turned out to be one of the most lethal seeds of violence on the continent of Africa and wherever such is found in the world. In her bid to destroy the unity of the Africans, Portugal played one ethnic group against the other. For instance, in Angola she "recruited the people of the south to fight against those of the north in order to create the bitterness between them" (Akintoye, p.52). In Mozambique, she played the other groups against the Maconde ethnic group. In a lecture delivered by one Bob Geldorf (Why Africa? 2004), he observed that, "the most pernicious of the

traditions which the colonial period bequeathed to Africa was the notion of tribalism." The Europeans felt that just like they belonged to different states, the Africans in the same manner should belong to different tribes.

The Apartheid system of racial segregation, discrimination, separation, suppression, dehumanization and systematic annihilation of the Africans has its path littered with woeful tales of unimaginable inhumanity. The Boer and the British land acquisition policies caused overcrowding among the Africans and further generated inter-tribal wars, poverty and other violence-related experiences, which still explain some of the unrest in South Africa today. Racism, which is the cornerstone of the Apartheid system, is also partly accountable for some of the socio-political frictions experienced now and then in the USA and other parts of the world.

Racism explains the violence we are witnessing today in places like Darfur in Sudan. According to one Dare Babarinsa, in *Tell*, an independent weekly magazine, No. 33 of August 16, 2004.

> **The crisis in the Sudan since 1961 has been that the Arab North has refused to acknowledge the humanity of the Black South. The latest is the bloody campaign of the janjaweed militia, made up of Arabs, to wipe off the Black population of the state of Darfur (p.5).**

He further stated that,

> **For hundreds of years, Black Africa and the Arabs in the North Africa had been in perpetual conflicts even before the present Sudan took form. The Arab world had often regarded Black Africa as a place for slave raiding and cheap goods (P.5).**

Still on the question of the crisis in Sudan, the *Daily Sun* of Friday, June 11, 2004, speaking on the violence and sufferings in the country, reported,

> **A two-year-old child Ikram was buried and 400 children in the same camp in Kalma were unable to keep food down. Their families have fled attacks by pro-government Arab militias, accused of forcing black Africans off the land. Last week, a senior aid worker said 300,000 people would starve in Darfur, even if help is sent immediately.**
>
> **Some 10,000 have died in Darfur (p.11).**

The western media is famous for her scanty news coverage of events that happen in the Third World nations, especially in Africa. Even where she does the coverage, her emphasis

is mostly on the negative events in the continent. This has raised much concern among Christians, especially when it comes to reporting on the religious violence that the continent has been experiencing, which is always an issue that is highly inflammable. In January 2003, at the meeting of the Fellowship of the Churches of Christ in Nigeria, a gathering of twelve denomination scattered all over Nigeria, a message was sent through someone to the VOA, BBC and the Dutch Radio in Germany, calling on them to revisit this issue for correction. The point is that such one-sided reporting has quite often been causing consternation here on the ground.

Violence whether in Africa or anywhere in the world can also be traced to the factor of geo-political power play that is there in world politics. With the inception of the European colonial in Africa, the discovery of petroleum and other mineral riches in the continent, there has been what Bob Geldorf has called "cold war by proxy," which is the experience where multinational companies, nations and governments arm and support warring factions in mineral-rich areas of Africa, to fight each other for the political, social and economic gains of their sponsors. Geldorf (2004) has said, in confirmation of this claim, that,

> **Throughout the Cold War, major powers like the USA, the Soviet Union and others supported various regimes and dictatorships never caring the hoot how this might affect the peoples of these countries. He mentioned specifically that USA alone was said to have brought in weapons worth $1,5 billion.**

In certain parts of the world, ethnicism and regionalism have caused and still cause much violence. The factor of regionalism is, for instance, a big issue in Nigerian politics. It has bred seeming perpetual suspicion, envy, dangerous provocations and even open conflicts (Kukah, 1993, p.69). Even as recent as the times we now are in, it is clear in the politics of the nation that though she is a country with one name, she is essentially a divided country because of the North-South politics since the 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates under the Colonial Rule. Obasanjo who now rules is from the southern part of the country. While the country is still waiting for 2007 when there will be another Presidential election, there is already much bickering about where the President should come from. A former governor of Kano State in the North, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi has said,

It is useless talk for anyone to say it (the Presidency) has not been zoned to the North. It is a must that the Presidency returns to the North (*Daily Sun*, Friday, July 23, 2004, p. 4).

Religious bigotry and fundamentalism is a strong igniter of violence in Africa and the world today. It accounts for the terrorism that the world faces at all its nooks and crannies presently. A northern Nigerian Islamic scholar, Late Sheikh Abubakar Gummi once released a venomous speech, which sparked off deep and serious reactions across the country. He said,

That General Gowon was one of the best leaders that the country had ever had, but that he wished that Gowon had been a Muslim…went on to argue that in Islam, Muslims are not allowed to vote for non-Muslims, and in the event that non-Muslims cannot live with this, the country should be divided (Kukah, 1993, p.261).

This position was later corroborated by a once Head of State of the country, and Presidential candidate of the All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP), General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd.).

Very recently, there was a very bloody religious riot in the northern city of Kano that led to the death of over 3000 non-Muslims, and the destruction of property worth several millions of naira. The Muslims claimed that it was a reaction to the religious crisis in the southern part of Plateau State where, after an attack on Christians in a Church and the death of many people, the Muslims were also attacked with much in human death toll. In the Kano crisis, the State Governor was accused of being an accomplice. In a statement by him on the violence, he said,

This violence, I must tell you, completely overwhelms me. I am overwhelmed not in terms of not being able to manage the violence, but in terms of the magnitude of the destruction of lives and property…I cannot believe such violence could be unleashed within two days all in the name of religion. I think this level of bestiality is shameful and very embarrassing (*Weekend Vanguard*, May 15, 2004, p.6).

Reacting to the same happening, a former governor of Kano Sate, Alhaji Kabiru Gaya, said,

I am not happy over what had been happening in the city of Kano in the last few days… the violence we have witnessed in Kano here and most states in the north are

essentially religious. But we cannot continue like this. We cannot continue to waste lives and property. We cannot continue to live in violence. (*Weekend Vanguard*, p.7)

Also, an elder statesman, Alhaji Tanko Yakassai, reacted to the terrible violence meted to the non-Muslims in Kano:

The violence in the city of Kano, to say the least, is condemnable. I totally condemn and abhor it. The destruction of lives and property of other persons are acts condemnable by God and the Holy books. There is no progress that is made when there is violence. (*Weekend Vanguard,* p.7).

For a long time in the country of Nigeria, Christians have lived with the fear of secret plans for the islamization of the country by Muslims. This fear was heightened by the confusion that came up in respect of Nigeria's quiet and dangerous admission into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) during the time General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida was the President of the country. It was actually in the 1980s that the appearance of Islamic fundamentalism became more prominent in the country, causing much suspicion, fear and tension in the country.

In his book, *Religion, Politics and Power* (1993), Kukah argued that embedded in the Islamic "faith is the revolutionary capacity which is accepted as a force for social, political and spiritual transformation of the human society." For instance, the Maitastine riots of December 18-29, 1980 were an attempt to "sweep away the accretions, which, he (Muhammadu Marwa, leader of the riots) believed had polluted Islam in the new materialistic Nigeria" (p.55). It is in this context of Islamic fundamentalism that the hatred Iran has for America, whom she calls the great Satan, can be understood. It is also herein that we can understand Osama bin Laden's (Al Qaeda) attempts to bring down the nation of America and all the nations viewed as enemies of the Islamic faith.

It is unfortunate that politicians often reiterate this position, as many of them have done in the desperate struggle to exploit the Islamic Shari'a Law issue, for gains other than religion. A southern multi-millionaire Christian politician, in reaction to the utterances by the muslims, called on Christian to unite and elect a Christian President – a sad infusion a religion into polity (Kukah, p. 261).

In the country, Muslim have been divided over many issues, even religious ones, because it is clear that a lot of the noise about religion is a forced and calculated effort to

manipulate people toward some selfish goal(s). According to Kukah, "when an international award was given to Gumi for scholarship and contribution, that was only an indication of the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism" with the attending violence (p. 215).

The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism and the violent havocs it has wrecked on the world is glaring: the world Trade Centre bombing and the bombing of the pentagon in the USA, the violence in the Middle East, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran are all glaring evidences of the violence-prone nature of Islam, which claims on the contrary to be a religion of peace.

It is interesting that the history of Islamic violence in the world today is partly a result of certain activities of the world powers. Gilles Kepel (2000) has claimed in his book, *Jihad-the Trail of political Islam* that, "At first, western nations, particularly France and the United States, which had served as sanctuaries and refuges for the "Afghans" (terrorists), became targets of violence and terrorism" (p.300). The captured Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein was greatly armed by the USA against Iran and later turned the arms against them. I it was the same USA that trained the deadly Osama bin Laden, who is now a threat not only to his trainer but the whole world. In a way, America has contributed to the violence in the world, though that may not be very intentional.

Though much that has been said here seems to put much finger on the West in terms of the violence that Africa and the world are suffering, we cannot deny the fact that in Africa, there have been the factors of poor governance, corruption and mismanagement, which have, in turn, caused severe unemployment, ethnic violence, religious skirmishes, poverty and their like. The present struggle with the issue of Nigerians filing out of the country for commercial sex work overseas is one of the outcomes of poor leadership in the country. In the *Source*, vol. 15, no. 19 of April 16, 2004,p. 40, it is reported summarily that, "Despite its degrading, dirty and dangerous nature, more and more young girls still trade sex for cash." One hardened young prostitute, Eudora, said that she turned to prostitution after she lost her job as a receptionist. This could be not be said to be a reasonable excuse, but what she is saying is that if she had a good job, she wouldn't be a prostitute.

Since colonial days to the present, many of our leaders in Africa have proven to be callously evil in the manner they have governed their subjects. The reign of late Idi Amin in

Uganda was such an evil one that the number of people he killed and the havoc he wrecked on the country is unprecedented. Milton Obote of the same Uganda was also a murderer of a sort. Though Yoweri Musevini has come to throne after many years of guerilla warfare, his government still faces the challenge of violence in the hands of some dissidents in the country. Their fights have caused Uganda much loss in human lives and property, and it still continues.

On the callousness of our leaders and their nonchalance toward the plight of the masses they govern, a prominent Nigerian in the person of His Eminence, Cardinal Anthony Okogie, has warned of an imminent bloody revolution unless the federal government listens to the cries of the masses: "I foresee a bloody revolution which will be difficult to contain, because it will involve the military, the police and the general public" (*Daily Sun*, Tuesday, June 29, 2004). Speaking further on the attitude of Obasanjo's regime, the Cardinal accused it of having "failed to realize the suffering that the masses are going through" (p.10).

Other leaders such as Jean Bendel Bokassa of Central Africa, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, Hissene Habre of Chad, and Sani Abacha of Nigeria all governed the nation and left certain footprints of violence that are difficult to forget by the very people they ruled. For instance, Sani Abacha's reign was one of terror such that the freedom of expression, suppression, callous spending and personal amassing of wealth were all characteristic of his time. He was so much of a terror that news of his sudden death was received with joy in virtually all parts of the country.

In the present so-called democratic trip of many countries in the continent, for example the case of Nigeria, we see much political manipulation and exploitation of the people resulting in tension and such things as assassinations, armed robbery and corruption. There is loss of confidence in the leaders, the law enforcement agents and even government programs. When the *Daily Sun* of July 9, 2004, reported a fatal clash between the Police and the Air Force, the story was chilling, seeming to portend greater danger ahead. According to the paper, "three policemen were shot dead in cold blood and several others injured by Air Force men in Lagos on Wednesday, following a raid by detectives on a dark spot" (p.4).

Should men and women in uniform, who are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping the peace, now turn around to be the fighters on the street? What would a clash between the keepers of peace imply for the millions of people in the country that depend on them? If they could act so terribly violent toward each other, where is the hope of the civilians for protection and justice? Will the violence, which they now practice openly, not finally be the norm of the geo-political entities entrusted into their hands?

Occultism, ritualism and crude, outdated systems of justice on the continent of Africa all explain the prevalence of violence on the continent. The southern states of Nigeria have been in the grips of violence for long now, and there seems to be no hope of its ending soon, as even the presence of the army and the police does not seem to do the magic yet. The *Daily Sun* of June 25, 2004 reported that, "peace took flight once again in the ancient city of Bakana in Rivers State following renewed violence in the community…some indigenes of the community told Daily Sun that two rival cult groups were involved, one of them called Kelanders" (p.9).

Recently in Anambara State in the southern part of Nigeria, certain discoveries have been made that could form the current news anywhere in the world today. In *Tell*, No. 33, August 16, 2004, (caption: The Ogwugwu Okija Shrine in Anambara) it was reported thus: "Police uncovers some dreaded shrines in Anambara State filled with corpses and skeletons" and one Osita Ndukwu, chief priest of the shrine was bold enough to speak for the Igbo, saying, "'this is our culture' and so there is nothing extraordinary about it. But this is a culture that is said to have kept the people in bondage until now ('the people had been living in bondage')." Describing the scene at the shrine, the writer of the report said, "It was a haul of corpses with putrid smell, scores of bones, perhaps outnumbered only by the collection of bones at a busy abattoir" (p.25).

The shrine had been used for a system of justice, but actually that is a system of justice that has no place in the civilized world in the twenty-first century. *Tell* (No. 33 of 6:16:04) reports, "For the operators of the shrine, it is a lucrative business as a complainant pays between ₦5, 000.00 to hundreds of thousands of naira to the chief priest…outside the mandatory N580.00 summons fee" (p.26).

The Okija shrine is the same as the "House of Horror" discovered in Kaduna, northern Nigeria in 1994. It is sad to say that places like these where much violence is done to the

innocent have been patronized by politicians who are supposed to be governing the people, men and women at the upper stratum of responsibility in the nation. This is true not only in Nigeria but also in many places in Africa and the world. This could be why the Inspector General of Police in Nigeria has "ordered the police to clamp down on evil shrines being patronized by unscrupulous politicians, fraudsters and armed robbery gangs" ***Tell*****, No. 33, 6:16:04, p.10).**

Ritualists have caused much pain and sorrow to Africans through their nefarious activities. In the ***Daily Sun*** **of Friday, July 30, 2004, p.9, it was reported that, "suspected ritualists have struck at Kofar Dumi in Bauchi metropolis, plucking the left eye of a 10-year-old boy, leaving his family and residents of the state capital in great fear and sorrow." Some kind of violence occurs in this life that we find difficult to understand the cause, unless we turn to what Jeremiah 17:9 says about the heart of man. The** ***Sun*** **Vol.2, No. 76 of June 26, 2004, reported an episode that seems to tally with what is pondered in this paragraph. The caption was "Callous!" The report says, "a housewife slashes niece, 11, with hot knife for "shitting" (excreting) near her soup pot."**

The reporter, Murphy Ganagana reported that, "After using a hot knife to inflict multiple deep cuts on the body of her niece, a 22-year-old housewife says she did it to teach the little girl a bitter lesson"(p.1). When interviewed, the little girl, Patience, said, "Later she call me into the room, lock the door and ask me to lie down after removing my clothes. She now bring the hot knife from the stove and use it on me." The very emotional part of the story is that when the wicked aunty asked for forgiveness, little Patience said, "I forgive her, but all I want now is that I want go back to my parents" (p.8).

Violence is a phenomenon that can be traced to so many factors, both big and small, but which are difficult to exhaust. Suffice it to say that while it is true that it is endemic in the fallen human nature, it can equally be caused by factors stretch from faith to secular developments and teachings.

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REVIEW OF ABOVE ARTICLE

Jan H. Boer

The following review has been personally requested by Dr. Ahima.

Dear Caleb

I've long been meaning to write you my brief assessment of your article in FOCUS. I should tell you first of all that I appreciate it enough to include it among the appendices to my vol. 5. However, none of those appendices will appear in the printed version, only on the Companion CD.

It is basically a good article that covers all the bases. You allocate blame to every quarter--the West, Africa, Nigeria. In that way it is balanced.

Your discussion of the role of France--you have opened my eyes to something I have till now not been very much aware. Will have to keep my eyes open to this one.

SOME POINTS OF CRITIQUE:

1. On p. 64 in the middle you have just a very brief reference to modernization. This is a very important point in this discussion and, I believe, deserves more extensive treatment. Especially also because it is a very major point in Nigerian Muslim discussions. Indeed, man stripped of godliness!

2. Though I know you do not subscribe to a separation of religion from society and want Christians to pursue a wholistic approach, you use language that comes from the secular tradition of separation.

EG--the phrase on p. 70--"the sad infusion of religion into polity." It comes out as if religion should not infuse politics. As Reformed, we know and in fact insist that it should. It is the WRONG infusion that we must resist, but not the infusion itself. Your use of this terminology is common among Nigerian Christians and is part of the larger linguistic confusion that the Nigerian Christian community has inserted into the Christian-Muslim scene. I know what you and many Christians mean, but the language you use causes confusion and comes directly from the dualism you deep down reject.

3. You should be careful in identifying Maitatsine and his movement as Islamic. Orthodox Muslims tend to reject his status as a Muslim because of his heretical view of prophethood. He is more a cult figure like that of Jehovah Witnesses in Christianity. The Christian church does not recognize them as Christian even though on the surface they look, sound or act like them.

4. You are very right in identifying the basic cause of violence in the human heart (pp. 73) or human nature (p. 74). If that is the basic cause, then that also might have been explored more than you did. That is not absolutely necessary, but it would have improved the nature of your discussion. If you ever republish this article, try to explore that a little more towards the end. Give it more weight.

5. Your very last sentence suggests that the explanation of fallen human nature is a different one from the "factors [that] stretch from faith…teachings." Almost as if these are two different sets of explanations, two separate causes, one spiritual and one natural or historical. However, the fallen nature of man is expressed in those other factors. It is the underlying factor. Perhaps that is what you mean, but that's not how it comes out. Probably the editor should have pointed this out to you.

6. Finally, still that last sentence--"from faith to secular developments" again suggests that faith is one factor and secular developments another. However, secular developments are also based on faith. It is never a case of faith vs secularism; it is a question of one faith vs another faith, worldview vs worldview.

I state some of these critical points because they are important in our relations to Islam in Nigeria. The language embedded in the article is not only weak from a Reformed point of view, but also has caused gross misunderstanding among Muslims

with respect to the Christian faith. Its origin lies in the way the Gospel has been brought to Nigeria by missionaries who had little or no understanding of these issues. The Nigerian Christian community is trying very hard to overcome that heritage and I laud that attempt. However, cleaning it up requires also cleaning up the language we use. Too much of our language is still based on the orientation we are trying to get away from. One of the aims of my writings from the beginning has been to clean up our language. It is especially an important part of my current series. It will become more clear in vol. 5.

I hope these comments are helpful. We can talk about them more when we see each other in a couple of weeks.

A gai da gida--John H. Boer

APPENDIX 16:

Principles and Programme of a

Christian Political Party

The year we opened the Northern Area Office of the Institute of Church & Society, 1977, was an extremely crucial one in Nigeria. It was also the year of the first Constituent Assembly that was supposed to create a new constitution that was more Nigerian in spirit rather than colonialist. In this context, I tried to make a contribution to the first Constituent Assembly. I translated into English a Dutch Christian political statement of the Kuyperian Christian party in The Netherlands. I gave this document to Ibrahim Usman Sangari, our Wukari friend, who was member of that Assembly, for him to share it with his colleagues in the Assembly, both Christian and Muslim. I offered this document to this community because, as I wrote in its introduction,

> **In the present political discussions many issues debated arise not out of local situations, but are inherited from the international community of Islam on the one hand with its centre in the Near East and of western Humanism that has been influenced by Christianity, but cannot be said to be Christian as to its basic tenets. Thus we feel free to make available from the world-wide context that which seeks to apply the Gospel in that particular context, but that has so far remained hidden in an obscure language.**

I am not sure he actually distributed the document. Ibrahim's politics was based more on "reality politics" than on principle, an attitude he shared with many Christians. At its basis lay the unacknowledged assumption that the *de facto* political situation and dynamics is more real and powerful than the principles arising from the Christian world view. Whether or not he did, I distributed it also by sharing it with others in all appropriate circumstances, hoping thereby to effect changes in people's basic perspectives. I have over the years received enough appreciative comments from my readers to know that my literature did have that effect on many people, even as recently as 2012.

There are at least two English translations of this document. The one is mine, which I wrote about in our *Every Square Inch,* vol. 2, pp. 190-191 with which I open this file above. That is the version I distributed in Nigeria in stenciled copy under the title "An Example of a Concrete Christian Approach to Politics." The other translation is by Dr. Bernard Zylstra of the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto. I bowed to his translation and re-published it as Appendix 16 to Volume 5 of my series *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations* (see the Islamica page of this website). That is also the version that forms the core of this file.

Introduction Number 1

But before proceeding to Zylstra's translation I present you with the introduction in the document "An Example of a Concrete Christian Approach to Politics," written by me (Boer)

> **Nigeria is presently in the throes of devising her political future. Various groupings seek to leave their imprint on the constitution, both Christian and Muslim. Among Christians themselves there is disagreement as to the role of religion in political matters. Some have a very narrow understanding of their own religion and they champion a politics devoid of religion. Others, like their Muslim counterparts, view religion as a way of life that necessarily and by definition has political over- or undertones. The document introduced here constitutes the principial statement and programme of a Christian political party in The Netherlands. This party consists of church members, but it is not itself an arm of the organized church. It is independent of the church and seeks to live its politician life in obedience to the Word of God within, of course, Dutch culture and history.**
>
> **We present this document because we note that in present political discussions many issues debated arise not out of local situations, but are inherited from international communities. One of these is Islam with its centre in the Near East; the other, Western Humanism that has been influenced by Christianity but cannot be said to be Christian in its basic tenets. Thus we feel free to make available from the world-wide community a political document arising out of a specific national context that seeks to apply the Gospel in that context, but that has so far remained hidden in the obscure language of a small nation.**
>
> **The name of this party at the time was Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP). This term does not indicate opposition to modern progressive movements that call themselves revolutionary, but, rather, it refers to the spirit of the French Revolution. This Revolution sought not only to destroy the church for her complicity in oppression but also to reject the teachings of the Scriptures themselves. That Revolution sought to replace the sovereignty of God with that of man, also in politics. It is hardly a new party, for it can trace its origins back to the 1870s. The following document is the result of nine decades of political experience and reflection.**
>
> **The document is presented without comment or changes. We realize that some articles need considerable historical explication for full understanding. We also recognize that some of the articles contain notions perhaps not acceptable at all in our Nigerian context. We have resisted the temptation to eliminate them, for our aim is not to present it as a concrete guide to be copied in Nigeria, but as an example of how Christians in a different situation have sought to apply some basic teachings of the Bible to their political life in a professional way. If the specific application is irrelevant, as Christians we cannot afford to reject off hand**

the basic teachings of the Bible that have relevance to political life. We are part of the global Christian world as much as our Muslim neighbours are of theirs.

Introduction Number 2

The following is a second introduction to the document that I wrote elsewhere. It supplements the first.

The Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) is the Christian political party organized by Abraham Kuyper and his followers. Its programme was based on Kuyperian principles, some of which are explained in Part 2 of Volume 5 of my series *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations.* It was established during the 1870s and over the course of the 20th century it has frequently served as the party in power either alone or in coalition. In fact, Kuyper himself served one term as Prime Minister. Towards the end of the 20th century, under the force of changing circumstances, especially the unrelenting secularization that overran The Netherlands during the closing decades of the century, the Party joined with the Catholic and other Christian parties to form the Christian Democratic Party.

The term "Anti-Revolutionary" referred to the spirit of the French Revolution that had put its deep secular imprint on the country. It was really a synonym of what today would be called "anti-secular."

The Statement below hails from the early 1960s and has been overtaken by events. However, I offer it as an example of Kuyperian political thinking in an age when religious considerations still played an important role in the country. It was still part of the pre-multicultural Christian era when major religious differences were not between different religions as they are now, but between Christian denominations. At that time, major worldview differences were more between two major players: Christianity and secularism. Today, there is a worldview clash between *three* major players: Christianity, Islam and secularism.

I am in no way suggesting that Nigerian Christians adopt this statement as their own. I present it only as an example of Kuyperian wholistic thinking in the political sector. Christianity does not have to be as shapeless as Nigerian Christians have inherited it and as Muslims have observed it.

STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES AND GENERAL POLITICAL PROGRAM OF THE ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

(Drawn up by the Meeting of Deputies, June 10, 1961, in Utrecht, the Netherlands)

Translated by Dr. Bernard Zylstra
Of the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto

PREAMBLE

The anti-revolutionary or Christian-historical movement represents that element of our national character which was formed under the influence of the Reformation and the leadership of William of Orange and which acquired its identity in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Its point of departure is the confession that God is the absolute Sovereign and that He has given to Jesus Christ all power in heaven and on earth. Both the Government and the people are to acknowledge this power and are therefore obliged to keep the commandments of God for the life of the state.

In conjunction with the above, the Anti-Revolutionary Party (A.R.P.) accepts the following Statement of its Principles and general Political Program.

PART I: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

ARTICLE 1

The A.R.P. considers as its calling to strive and struggle for the preservation and strengthening of the authority of the Word of God over public life.

ARTICLE 2

While recognizing the Church's calling to proclaim the message of the Word of God as it applies to all of life, the A.R.P. believes that government and people must learn

to understand on their own, in the light of Holy Scripture, what this message means for the political life of every age.

ARTICLE 3

Not the will of the people but the sovereign power of God is the foundation of the authority of Government. While opposed to specifying any single form of government as the only acceptable one, the A.R.P., grateful for the blessing given by God in the House of Orange, judges that for the Netherlands the most suitable form of government is the constitutional monarchy by members of this royal house as it has gradually developed from the Republic of the sixteenth century.

ARTICLE 4

The A.R.P. acknowledges that the Government is the minister of God invested with the power of the sword, called to maintain justice and to rule the nation for the benefit of the people.

In fulfilling this calling, the Government is to respect the limits determined both by the nature of its office and by the particular calling and responsibility of other societal relationships and of private individuals.

ARTICLE 5

The Government as the servant of God, by Whose grace it reigns, has as its calling

a. to acknowledge God's Name in all of its public activity;

b. to take care that God's Word can have free course among the people;

c. to extend equal treatment to all churches and all citizens, whatever their religious beliefs may be;

d. to abstain, in view of its incompetence in these matters, from all measures which intend to coerce the religious development of the nation in a particular direction;

e. to uphold law and order and to insist on sound moral conduct in public life;

f. to honor the conscientious objections that any of its subjects may have against a governmentally imposed obligation, provided these objections derive from religious convictions and are not incompatible with a proper execution of the Government's task;

g. to respect Sunday as a day of rest as far as governmental functions are concerned, and to promote such maintenance everywhere within the bounds of its authority;

h. to use its right to demand the oath whenever necessary to confirm fidelity and truth;

i. to promulgate days of prayer and thanksgiving for special times or occasion in order that the people may be encouraged to invoke the Name of the Lord;

j. and further, in general to do all it possibly can within the bounds of its authority that the people live according to the demands of the Law of God.

PART 2: DETAILED ELABORATIONS

ARTICLE 6

The Constitution

The A.R.P. accepts the existing constitution as the foundation of our political institutions. While taking into account the time and the circumstances, the Party wishes through lawful procedure to develop and reform the constitution in accordance with the demands of the anti-revolutionary or Christian-historical principle.

ARTICLE 7

The Influence of the People

The A.R.P. considers indispensable a powerful influence of the people, to be exercised on the government through the parliamentary medium of a States-General [House of Representatives] fully conscious of its particular task and responsibility with respect to both the government in power and the voters and their several parties.

ARTICLE 8

Province and Municipality
[State amd Local Government Area]

Provided neither national unity nor civil rights are thereby placed in jeopardy, an autonomous position and a sphere of authority as broad as possible should be guaranteed to the provinces and the counties, firmly rooted as they are in our history and forming specific administrative communities, indispensable for the whole of the Dutch political order.

ARTICLE 9

The Administration of Justice

Justice is to be administered according to laws founded on divine principles of right, albeit that the legislator should take into consideration the condition of the nation's sense of justice.

In civil as well as in criminal cases a verdict ought to be rendered by an independent judiciary.

Penalties should be imposed not only to protect society or to rehabilitate the convicted person but in the first place to restore the violated order of law. For this purpose the government may, if necessary, resort to its fundamental prerogative of inflicting capital punishment.

To the extent that the activity of the Government should give occasion for conflicts of an administrative nature, a binding decision should preferably be handed down by an independent judiciary. Under all circumstances a solution should be sought in such a manner as to guarantee as much as possible that lawful interests be honored.

ARTICLE 10

Church and State

Inasmuch as the Government is to respect the mutual independence of Church and State, it may not concern itself with internal ecclesiastical [religious] matters.

ARTICLE 11

Education

It is a matter of public interest that there be adequate educational facilities and that everyone be enabled to receive instruction and training suited to his aptitude and ability. As a consequence of its duty to protect the spiritual freedom of its subjects, the government must base its educational policy on the principle of freedom in the choice of school, in accordance with the general guideline that the free and private school should be the rule and the state school a supplement. The particular responsibility of the parents for the education and development of their children must indeed be recognized by the Government. The Government must accord equal treatment, financially and otherwise, to private [non-profit] and to state education, in order that the freedom of private education be respected and guaranteed.

ARTICLE 12

Government and Culture

The policy of the Government with respect to the cultural life of the people ought to be founded on the recognition that all culture originates from spiritual roots and can thrive only in spiritual freedom. The Government should therefore not act directively in this field but restrict itself to making possible, encouraging and protecting the development of cultural
life. The citizenry's own activity in this area should always have primacy.

Besides the diversity of spiritual attitudes, the government ought also to recognize and, as much as lies within the scope of its activity, to promote the variety of local and regional cultures, as they form an indispensable source of and stimulus for the culture of the nation as a whole.

The government should safeguard the treasures of culture against loss, see to it that the available products of culture be made accessible to citizens of all social levels, and do its part to promote international cultural exchanges.

As elsewhere, the Government should bar from the cultural life of the nation all that would be contrary to good order and public morality.

ARTICLE 13

Public Morality

The Government should watch over public morality, keeping out of public life all that is contrary to decency or in any other way would tend to debase man, and protecting everything which cannot protect itself against abuse.

The Government should support all spontaneous efforts on the part of the people to raise the level of morality, in particular, actions against improper use of the Name of the Lord, against prostitution, gambling and excessive drinking.

The Government should promote every means conducive to strengthening the moral consciousness of the nation.

ARTICLE 14

Public Health

Health care is first of all a personal responsibility. At the same time, however, the maintenance and protection of the health of the people is a matter of public interest. The Government should watch over the condition of the people's mental and physical health.

This ought to be done by supporting the citizenry's own efforts at preserving and improving public health, and, if necessary, by governmental provisions.

ARTICLE 15

Social Policy

Since the doctrine of the class struggle ought to be rejected, our society should aim at a just order for labor, to be realized through mutual consultation of employers and employees in suitable organizations or bodies. Whatever is achieved in this area is to be judged by the Government according to the standards of law and justice, and, in case of deficiency, should be corrected or supplemented by appropriate governmental action.

Industrial law should guarantee to everyone, who is directly involved in industry, the place and the responsibility due to him.

The acquisition of property by all classes of the people merits the active encouragement of every person and socio-economic organ connected therewith. Within the limits of its task and calling, the government should promote this acquisition of property.

ARTICLE 16

Social Work

The Government must allow ample room for churches and private organizations to be active in the wide area of social work. It should support and promote these activities also by legislative measures. Only in case of evident necessity should the government undertake this work.

ARTICLE 17

Economic Policy

With respect to economic life Government and industry have a distinct and different task in accordance with their particular nature.

The economic policy of the Government should aim at creating the general conditions conducive to the maintenance and growth of national welfare.

The activity of industry itself, provided it is accompanied with a sense of responsibility, generally offers the best guarantees for supplying the needs of the national economy. Consequently the Government should take part in the production of goods or

the provision of services only to the extent that the public interest definitely requires this and private initiative is unable to supply them or clearly falls short of supplying them.

The legislature must leave ample room for industrial life, both in private-legal organizations as well as public-legal bodies, to regulate its own affairs, but at the same time it must guarantee that the Government have sufficient means at its disposal to nullify any activity on the part of industry which would run counter to the public interest.

The Government should promote the discovery and the development of all the resources of the national economy, and it should stimulate the creation of an optimum level of employment, taking into account a balanced development of the nation.

In general the Government should strive for free international exchange of goods and currencies. The Government should do its part in cooperating with international bodies which aim at removing impediments to reciprocal economic relations among the nations.

ARTICLE 18

Financial Policy

The Government should follow a long-range policy of striking a balance between income and expenditure and of maintaining stability in the value of the currency.

Direct and indirect taxes are to be levied in order to meet the financial needs of the Government. No taxation, however, should be imposed without due consideration of the possible consequences for the socio-economic life of the nation, in particular the course of the business cycle and the level of employment.

When levying taxes on income and property, the Government should take into consideration the composition of a taxpayer's family as well as other circumstances which affect his ability to pay.

As far as lies within its power, the Government should avoid a policy of spending which would necessitate an increase in taxes to such a high level as to deprive private initiative of its power and render it ever more dependent on governmental support.

ARTICLE 19

The Netherlands, Surinam, and the Netherlands Antilles

Though looking after their own affairs independently of each other, the Netherlands, Surinam, and the Netherlands Antilles should, when providing for their common interests, do so as equal partners. Furthermore, the close historical ties between these three parts of the Kingdom should bind them together for the purpose of rendering mutual assistance in case of need.

ARTICLE 20

New Guinea

The Netherlands must energetically carry out its moral duty to develop Dutch New Guinea so as to prepare it as quickly as possible for self-determination. The population's opportunities for sharing the government of this country must be expanded as much as possible.

Missionary work in the area of education and of medical and social care is entitled to the support of the Dutch Government.

[New Guinea is no longer part of The Netherlands.]

ARTICLE 21

International Relations

Relations with other nations must be governed by the divine Law for the family of nations. Accordingly, the Netherlands, while maintaining its own national independence, should vigorously assist in efforts towards the development of international law and thus towards the peaceful settlement of disputes among the nations. All unlawful coercion must be resisted, if necessary by force of arms. Attempts must be made to build an active community of nations, by general means as well as in the form of special associations, which meet the demands of law and justice and which promote the spiritual and material interests of the peoples.

This may require delegating certain national powers to international bodies or organs; in such a case, however, guarantees ought to be obtained that national interests will not be unjustly harmed.

As far as it is able, the Netherlands should give aid to emerging countries.

ARTICLE 22

Maintaining Our Nationhood

The vitality needed for maintaining our national position among the nations should first of all be sought in a strengthening of the national consciousness in the broadest sense of the word. For this purpose there ought to be stimulated among the people a knowledge of Dutch [Nigerian] history and an understanding of the significance of the struggle for justice and liberty from which dates our independence as a nation.

The Netherlands [Nigeria] has the duty to maintain armed forces strong enough to offer resistance to foreign aggression, to safeguard domestic peace, and to enable the

country to fulfill its obligations on the international level. The Netherlands [Nigeria] should cooperate with efforts at international disarmament agreements that include effective controls.

The Government shares the responsibility for the spiritual care of those who are in the armed forces; it should respect and support the official work of the churches [religious establishments] in this field.

ARTICLE 23

Co-operation

In conclusion the A.R.P. declares that it is willing to work together with other parties, on condition and to the extent that such cooperation be useful for bringing about the general aims of its Principles and Program in the actual political life of the nation.

It expressly declares that it strives in particular for the united action of all those who accept the Reformational-Christian mandate, in the sense of this Statement, also for political life. [In practice, when political situations demanded it, this has translated into cooperation and coalitions also with Catholic and secular parties and could, in the Nigerian context, conceivably be expanded to include Muslims groups.]

APPENDIX 17:

DECLARATION OF FAITH CONCERNING CHURCH AND NATION

(The Presbyterian Church in Canada)

1. The Lordship of Christ in Church and State

The one holy triune God, sovereign Creator and Redeemer, has declared and established His kingdom over all powers in heaven and earth. By the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, all things have been made subject to Him, so that even age-long evil is overruled for good. We worship and obey Jesus Christ as Lord of lords and King of kings, Judge and Governor among the nations. He is both Head of the Church and Head of the Civil State, although their functions under Him are to be differentiated, and their relationships to Him are not to be confused.

2. The Respective Functions of Church and State

Jesus Christ, in the administration of His father's will, employs all the heavenly and earthly powers He may choose to serve Him. He employs the Church and the Civil State, entrusting to each its own distinctive function. He has ordained the Church to serve Him in the proclamation of His word, in the administration of His sacraments, and in the life of faith which works by love. He has also in His grace ordained the State to serve Him in the administration of His justice and benevolence, by discerning, formulating, and enforcing, such laws and policies as will promote the well-being of all its citizens and curb license, discord, and destitution.

3. The Authority of the State

Christ, the eternal Word of God, through Whom all things consist and from Whom by the Holy Spirit all men receive their gifts and powers, calls and appoints men to the offices of civil government. He commissions the civil authorities with the right and duty of using force under law against internal disorder and external aggression.

4. The Stewardship of Power

The righteousness of God, which came to decisive triumphs in the cross and resurrection of Christ, is the sole foundation of national justice, development, and destiny. Every organ of power in the Nation, whether cultural, political, or economic, is a stewardship under Christ, and can properly function only by obedience to His revealed word. Every abuse of power constitutes a breach of trust, destructive to the abuser and injurious to the glory of God among His creatures.

5. The Limits of Earthly Authority

It is high treason against the Lord Jesus, and deadly both for the Church and for the Nation, to attribute to any man, group, or institution, the total power that belongs to Him. God alone is absolute Lord of the bodies and consciences of men, and He demands that we obey Him against all authorities, whether civil or ecclesiastical, whenever they claim absolute power, especially the power to control men's thinking on right and wrong.

6. The Church and Tyranny

It is the Church's duty to denounce and resist every form of tyranny, political, economic, or ecclesiastical, especially when it becomes totalitarian. A citizen is not barred from disowning any government or organ of power which usurps the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, and indeed may be obliged by God's word to rebel against it. But if involved in such action, the Church must remember that the weapons of her warfare are finally not of this world. Led by the Holy Spirit she will in any situation bear public witness to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ and to the freedom of all men in Him.

7. The Relation of Church and State

The Church and the State are intimately related, with manifold overlying concerns and common responsibility to their Lord. Their true relationship derives from the subordination of each to Jesus Christ. Each is bound to aid the other according to its appointed power and functions, but neither is given any right thereby to attempt domination over the other. We reject any doctrine which misconceives the Church as the religious agent of the State. We reject any doctrine which misconceives the State as the political instrument of the Church. We reject all doctrines which assume,

whether on sectarian or on secular grounds, that the Church's life should be or can be completely dissociated from the life of the Civil State.

8. The Church's Service to the State

The Church must not merge or confuse her Gospel with any political, economic, cultural, or nationalistic creed. At the same time the Church may not hold aloof from the affairs of the Nation, whether the authorities be of the faith or against it, for she must fulfil the ministry laid upon her by her Lord who became one with man for man's redemption. She owes a manifold service to the State. Her preaching, sacraments, and discipline, confront the Nation with Christ's judgement and grace. She offers thanksgiving and supplication to God on behalf of all men, with particular intercession for those in authority, praying that the over-ruling power of the Holy Spirit may fructify what is good and uproot what is evil in national and international life. In discharging her commission to evangelize she promotes righteousness and peace among men. As her Lord may lay it upon her, she declares and commits herself to His will by public proclamations of her courts or agents. In fulfillment of the law of Christ, she engages in special works of Christian love. Her members take full share as their Christian calling in commerce, politics, and other social action.

9. The Christian's Civil Duty

Christians must always do their utmost to honour the civil laws, and to fulfil all statutory obligations whether financial or personal, as unto Christ the Head. Nevertheless, no citizen is thereby relieved of his constant responsibility to work for the remedy of any unjust statue, or iniquitous assessment, or violation of conscience.

10. The Civil Government's Duty toward the Church

In its ordained service of God, the State has a three-fold duty to the Church. It has the duty of establishing public peace and providing protection, guarding impartially the rights of every citizen. It owes to the Church in all her branches, without partiality, the recognition of her office and of her consequent right to due resources, time, and opportunity, for the public worship of God, for the education of her children in His truth, and for the evangelizing of the Nation. It must pay serious attention whenever its

office-bearers are addressed by the Church in the name of the Lord Jesus concerning the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

11. Reformation by the Word of God

During the present age, while the Lordship of Christ is not yet openly disclosed nor perfectly acknowledged, men are beset by sin in every private and public relation. Our existence in this world is continually threatened by anxiety, covetousness, imperfect justice, and proneness to corruption. The Civil State and the Church are constantly in need of reformation by the Word of God. Wherefore it behooves all civil and ecclesiastical persons to seek the grace of Christ without which they cannot rightly know or do His will.

12. The Final Manifestation of Christ's Dominion

The Lordship of Christ, in the midst of the evil and sorrow of this present world, must be discerned by faith, with the full assurance of our hope in Him. He is coming again for the healing of the nations and the perfecting of the Church. In that day when He reveals the New Jerusalem, His sovereign dominion over the universe will be made openly visible to all, causing every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has adopted this Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation as setting forth the Biblical teaching on their relationship. The Declaration grew out of a Petition by the Presbytery of Paris (1942) and an Overture by the Presbytery of Montreal (1949). A joint committee of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action and the Committee on Articles of Faith labored on the text through numerous revisions, until the doctrine as formulated in 1954 was given interim adoption by the General Assembly. The Presbyteries of the Church affirmed the Declaration by majority vote under the Barrier Act; and final ratification was signified by the General Assembly in 1955.

APPENDIX 18:

A WORLDVIEW AND FAITH STATEMENT BY THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

The following statement constitutes a statement of the Christian faith. It is a frankly *wholistic* statement in which the Church states its basic views on many aspects of contemporary culture. It is a refreshing statement and one that challenges the philosophies of both secularism and post-modernism in favour of an unabashed religious approach. It is very much couched in Kuyperian thought and is thus a good example of the approach I am offering to both Christians and Muslims as food for thought.

***I offer it to you, Christians,* as an aid for liberating you from the restrictions of the dualism you have inherited that has led to the marginalization and the trivialization of the Gospel.**

I offer it to you, Muslims,* as a corrective of the narrow version of Christianity they have observed in Nigeria. Your analysis of the basic problem of dualism in the Christian Church is largely--and painfully--*on the mark*. However, your understanding of many other aspects of both Gospel and Church are woefully *off the mark.

Whether you want to critique Christianity or seek ways to establish cooperation with it, either will be difficult if you misunderstand your Christian neighbours. Your critique begins to sound silly if based on incorrect data. And don't forget your own insistence that there can be a wide gulf between Islam and what Muslim individuals or groups do or say. You often don't want people to identify Islam with what some adherents do with it. The need to observe that distinction with respect to Christianity and Christians is equally great.

Our World Belongs to God

Preamble:

1. As followers of Jesus Christ,[1]
living in this world—
which some seek to control,
but which others view with despair—[2]
we declare with joy and trust:
Our world belongs to God![3]
[1 Ps. 103:19-22]
[2 Ps. 4:6]
[3 Ps. 24:1]

2. From the beginning,[1]
through all the crises of our times,
until his kingdom fully comes,[2]
God keeps covenant forever.
Our world belongs to him![3]
God is King! Let the earth be glad!
Christ is Victor; his rule has begun. Hallelujah!
The Spirit is at work, renewing the creation. Praise the Lord!
[1 Ps. 145]
[2 Rom. 11:33-36]
[3 Rev. 4-5]

3. But rebel cries sound through the world:[1]
some, crushed by failure
or hardened by pain,
give up on life and hope and God;
others, shaken,
but still hoping for human triumph,[2]
work feverishly to realize their dreams.[3]
As believers in God
we join this struggle of the spirits,
testing our times by the Spirit's sure Word.

[1 Ps. 2]
[2 Eph. 6:10-18]
[3 1 John]

4. Our world has fallen into sin;
but rebellion and sin can never dethrone God.[1]
He does not abandon the work of his hand;
the heavens still declare his glory.
He preserves his world,
sending seasons, sun, and rain,[2]
upholding his creatures,
renewing the earth,
directing all things to their purpose.
He promised a Savior;
now the whole creation groans[3]
in the birth pangs of a new creation.
[1 Ps. 19]
[2 Acts 14:15-17]
[3 Rom. 8:18-25]

5. God holds this world[1]
in sovereign love.
He kept his promise,
sending Jesus into the world.
He poured out his Spirit[2]
and broadcast the news
that sinners who repent and believe in Jesus[3]
can live
and breathe
and move again
as members of the family of God.
[1 John 3:1-21]
[2 Acts 2]
[3 Acts 17:22-31]

6. We rejoice in the goodness of God,
renounce the works of darkness,
and dedicate ourselves to holy living.
As covenant partners,
called to faithful obedience,[1]

and set free for joyful praise,
we offer our hearts and lives[2]
to do God's work in his world.[3]
With tempered impatience, eager to see injustice ended,
we expect the Day of the Lord.
And we are confident
that the light which shines in the present darkness[4]
will fill the earth when Christ appears.
Come, Lord Jesus![5]
Our world belongs to you.
[1 Mic. 6:8]
[2 Rom. 12:1-2]
[3 2 Pet. 3]
[4 1 Cor. 15]
[5 Rev. 22:20]

Creation:

7. Our world belongs to God—
not to us or earthly powers,[1]
not to demons, fate, or chance.
The earth is the Lord's!
[1 Deut. 10:12-14]

8. In the beginning, God—[1]
Father, Word, and Spirit—[2]
called this world into being[3]
out of nothing,
and gave it
shape and order.
[1 Gen. 1]
[2 Ps. 33:1-11]
[3 Isa. 40]

9. God formed the land, the sky, and the seas,[1]
making the earth a fitting home
for the plants, animals,[2]
and humans he created.
The world was filled with color, beauty, and variety;
it provided room for
work and play,
worship and service,
love and laughter.
God rested—[3]
and gave us rest.
In the beginning
everything was very good.
[1 Gen. 1-2]
[2 Ps. 104]
[3 Mark 2:27-28]

10. As God's creatures we are made in his image[1]
to represent him on earth,[2]
and to live in loving communion with him.
By sovereign appointment we are[3]
earthkeepers and caretakers:
loving our neighbor,
tending the creation,
and meeting our needs.
God uses our skills
in the unfolding and well-being of his world.
[1 Gen. 1:26-30]
[2 Ps. 8]
[3 Matt. 22:35-40]

11. Male and female,[1]
all of us are to represent God[2]
as we do our tasks.
Whether single or married,
we are called to live within God's order[3]
in lives of loving service.
[1 Gen. 1:26-28]
[2 Gal. 3:26-28]
[3 1 Cor. 7]

12. No matter what our age, or race, or color,[1]
we are the human family together,
for the Creator made us all.
Since life is his gift,
we foster the well-being of others,[2]
protecting the unborn and helpless from harm.[3]
[1 Acts 17:22-31]
[2 Ps. 139]
[3 Lev. 19; 25:35-38]

13. God directs and bends to his will[1]
all that happens in his world.
As history unfolds in ways we only know in part,[2]
all things—
from crops to grades,
from jobs to laws—
are under his control.
God is present in our world
by his Word and Spirit.
The faithfulness[3]
of our great Provider
gives sense to our days
and hope to our years.
The future is secure,
for our world belongs to God.
[1 Matt. 6:25-34]
[2 Ps. 147, 148]
[3 Ps. 111]

The Fall:

14. Early in human history
our first parents listened to the intruder's voice.[1]
Rather than living by the Creator's
word of life,
they fell for Satan's lie
and sinned!
They forgot their place;
they tried to be like God.

But as sinners they feared
the nearness of God
and hid from him.
[1 Gen. 3]

15. Apart from grace[1]
we prove each day
that we are guilty sinners.
Fallen in that first sin,
we fail to thank God,
we break his laws,
we ignore our tasks.
Looking for life without God, we find only death;
grasping for freedom outside his law,[2]
we trap ourselves in Satan's snares;
pursuing pleasure, we lose the gift of joy.
[1 Rom. 1:18-3:23; 5:12]
[2 1 John 1:8-10]

16. When humans no longer show God's image,[1]
all creation suffers.
We abuse the creation or idolize it.[2]
We are estranged from our Creator,
from our neighbor, and from all that God has made.
[1 Rom. 1]
[2 Eph. 4:17-19]

17. All spheres of life—[1]
marriage and family,
work and worship,
school and state,
our play and art—
bear the wounds of our rebellion.[2]
Sin is present everywhere—[3]
in pride of race,
in arrogance of nations,
in abuse of the weak and helpless,
in disregard for water, air, and soil,
in destruction of living creatures,
in slavery, deceit, terror, and war,[4]

in worship of false gods,
and frantic escape from reality.[5]
We have become victims of our own sin.
[1 Rom. 1]
[2 Ps. 14]
[3 Amos 1-2]
[4 Jer. 17:9]
[5 Isa. 28:7-8]

18. In all our strivings[1]
to excuse
or save ourselves,
we stand condemned[2]
before the God of Truth.
But our world,
broken and scarred,[3]
still belongs to God.
He holds it together[4]
and gives us hope.
[1 Ps. 89]
[2 Rom. 1:18]
[3 Jer. 14]
[4 Rom. 5:2-5; 15:13]

Redemption:

19. While justly angry[1]
God did not turn his back
on a world bent on destruction;
he turned his face to it in love.[2]
With patience and tender care he set out[3]
on the long road of redemption
to reclaim the lost as his people[4]
and the world as his kingdom.
[1 Gen. 3:9-15]
[2 John 3:16]
[3 Luke 1:68-75; 3:23-37]
[4 Rev. 11:15]

20. Although Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden[1]
and their work was burdened by sin's effects,
God held on to them in love.
He promised to crush
the evil forces they unleashed.
[1 Gen. 3:15-19]

21. When evil filled the earth,[1]
God judged it with a flood,
but rescued Noah and his family[2]
and animals of all kinds.
He covenanted with every creature
that seasons would continue
and that such destruction would not come again
until the final day.
[1 Gen. 6-9]
[2 1 Pet. 3:18-22]

22. The Creator pledged to be God[1]
to Abraham and his children,
blessing all nations through them
as they lived obediently before him.
He chose Israel as his special people[2]
to show the glory of his name,[3]
the power of his love,[4]
and the wisdom of his ways.
He gave them his laws through Moses,[5]
he led them by rulers and teachers,
so that they would be a people
whose God was king.
[1 Gen. 12:1-3]
[2 Deut. 7]
[3 Rom. 9]
[4 Mic. 6:8]
[5 Ps. 103:7]

23. When Israel spurned God's love[1]
by lusting after other gods,
by trusting in power and wealth,

and by hurting the weak,
God scattered his people among the nations.
Yet he kept a faithful few[2]
and promised them the Messiah:
a prophet to speak the clear word,
a king to crush the serpent's head,
a priestly servant willing to be broken for sinners.[3]
And he promised the gift of the Spirit[4]
to bend stubborn wills to new obedience.
[1 2 Chron. 36]
[2 Isa. 10]
[3 Isa. 53]
[4 Jer. 11; 31]

Christ:

24. God remembered his promise[1]
to reconcile the world to himself;
he has come among us[2]
in Jesus Christ,
the eternal Word made flesh.[3]
He is the long-awaited Savior,[4]
fully human and fully divine,
conceived by the Spirit of God
and born of the virgin Mary.
[1 2 Cor. 5:18-21]
[2 Gal. 4:4-7]
[3 John 1:1-14]
[4 Luke 1-2]

25. In the events of his earthly life—[1]
his temptations and suffering,[2]
his teaching and miracles,
his battles with demons and talks with sinners—
Jesus made present in deed and in word
the coming rule of God.
[1 Luke 4]
[2 Phil. 2:1-11]

26. As the second Adam he chose[1]
the path we had rejected.
As our representative,
serving God perfectly,
and loving even those who scorned him,[2]
Christ showed us how
a righteous child of God lives.
[1 Rom. 5]
[2 1 Pet. 2:21-25]

27. As our substitute[1]
he suffered all his years on earth,
especially in the horrible torture of the cross.
He carried God's judgment on our sin;[2]
his sacrifice removes our guilt.
He walked out of the grave, the Lord of life!
He conquered sin and death.[3]
We are set right with God,
we are given new life,
and called to walk with him[4]
in freedom from sin's dominion.
[1 Isa. 53]
[2 Heb. 10]
[3 Rom. 4:18-5:11]
[4 Gal. 5]

28. Being both God and man,[1]
Jesus is the only Mediator
between God and his people.
He alone paid the debt of our sin;[2]
there is no other Savior!
In him the Father chose those[3]
whom he would save.
His electing love sustains our hope:
God's grace is free
to save sinners who offer nothing
but their need for mercy.
[1 1 Tim. 2:5-6]
[2 Acts 4:10-12]
[3 Eph. 1:1-14]

29. Jesus ascended in triumph[1]
to his heavenly throne.[2]
There he hears our prayers,
pleads our cause before the Father,[3]
and rules the world.[4]
Blessed are all[5]
who take refuge in him.
[1 Acts 1:1-11]
[2 Eph. 1:18-23]
[3 1 John 2:1-2]
[4 Rev. 5]
[5 Rom. 8:31-39]

The Spirit:

30. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit[1]
was given to the church.
In pouring his Spirit on many peoples
God overcomes the divisions of Babel;[2]
now people from every tongue, tribe, and nation
are gathered into the unity
of the body of Christ.
[1 Acts 2]
[2 Rev. 7]

31. Jesus stays with us in the Spirit,[1]
who renews our hearts,
moves us to faith,
leads us in the truth,[2]
stands by us in our need,
and makes our obedience fresh and vibrant.
[1 John 14]
[2 2 Cor. 3:7-18]

32. The Spirit thrusts[1]
God's people into worldwide mission.
He impels young and old,[2]

men and women,
to go next door and far away[3]
into science and art,
media and marketplace
with the good news of God's grace.
The Spirit goes before them and with them,[4]
convincing the world of sin
and pleading the cause of Christ.
[1 Matt. 28:18-20]
[2 Matt. 9:35-38]
[3 Luke 14:15-24]
[4 John 16:5-15]

33. The Spirit's gifts are here to stay[1]
in rich variety—
fitting responses to timely needs.
We thankfully see each other
as gifted members of the fellowship[2]
which delights in the creative Spirit's work.
He gives more than enough
to each believer
for God's praise and our neighbor's welfare.[3]
[1 1 Cor. 12-14]
[2 Eph. 4]
[3 Rom. 12]

Scripture:

34. God has not left this world[1]
without ways of knowing him.
He shows his power and majesty
in the creation;
he has mercifully spoken
through prophets, history writers, poets,[2]
gospel writers, and apostles—
and most clearly through the Son.
The Spirit who moved humans[3]
to write the Word of God[4]
speaks to us in the Bible.

[1 Rom. 1]
[2 Heb. 1]
[3 2 Tim. 3:14-17]
[4 2 Pet. 1:12-21]

35. The Bible is the Word of God,
record and tool of his redeeming work.
It is the Word of Truth,[1]
fully reliable in leading us[2]
to know God
and have life[3]
in Jesus Christ.
[1 James 1:18]
[2 Acts 8:26-39]
[3 John 20:30-31]
36. The Bible tells God's mighty acts[1]
in the unfolding of covenant history.[2]
It is one revelation in two Testaments,
which shows a single plan of salvation,
and reveals God's will infallibly.
As God's people hear the Word and do it,[3]
they are equipped for discipleship,
to witness to the good news:
Our world belongs to God
and he loves it deeply.
[1 Acts 7]
[2 1 Cor. 10:1-11]
[3 2 Tim. 3:14-17]

*God's New People:**

***Eph. 1-4**

37. In our world, bent under the weight of sin,
Christ gathers a new community.[1]
Satan and his evil forces
seek whom they may confuse and swallow;[2]
but Jesus builds his church,[3]
his Spirit guides,
and grace abounds.

[1 1 Pet. 5:8-11]
[2 1 Cor. 3:10-17]
[3 Matt. 16:13-19]

38. The church is the fellowship of those[1]
who confess Jesus as Lord.
She is the Bride of Christ,
his chosen partner,[2]
loved by Jesus and loving him:[3]
delighting in his presence,
seeking him in prayer,[4]
silent before the mystery of his love.
[1 Rev. 21:9]
[2 1 Pet. 2:4-10]
[3 Eph. 2]
[4 Col. 1:1-23; 3:1-17]

39. Our new life in Christ[1]
is celebrated and nourished
in the fellowship of congregations[2]
where God's name is praised,
his Word proclaimed,[3]
his way taught;
where sins are confessed,[4]
prayers and gifts are offered,[5]
and sacraments are celebrated.
[1 Acts 2:41-47]
[2 Eph. 4:1-5:20]
[3 Rom. 10]
[4 Eph. 3:1-13]
[5 Matt. 6:5-15]

40. God meets us in the sacraments,[1]
holy acts in which his deeds[2]
elicit our response.
God reminds and assures us in baptism,[3]
whether of those newly born or newly converted,[4]
that his covenant love saves us,
that he washes away our guilt,[5]
gives us the Spirit,

and expects our love in return.
In the supper our Lord offers[6]
the bread and cup to believers
to guarantee our share
in his death and resurrection,
and to unite us to him[7]
and to each other.
We take this food gladly,[8]
announcing as we eat
that Jesus is our life
and that he shall come again[9]
to call us to the Supper of the Lamb.
[1 Gen. 17]
[2 Ex. 12]
[3 Matt. 28:18-20]
[4 Acts 2:37-41]
[5 Col. 2:9-14]
[6 Matt. 26:26-29]
[7 1 Cor. 10:16-17]
[8 1 Cor. 11:17-34]
[9 Rev. 19:6-9]

41. The Spirit empowers each member[1]
to take part in the ministry of all,
so that hurts are healed
and all may rejoice[2]
in the life and growth of the fellowship.
[1 1 Cor. 12-13]
[2 1 Cor. 1:1-9]

42. The church is a gathering[1]
of forgiven sinners,
called to be holy,[2]
dedicated to service.
Saved by the patient grace of God,[3]
we deal patiently with others.
Knowing our own weakness and failures,
we bring good news to all sinners
with understanding of their condition,
and with hope in God.

[1 Eph. 2]
[2 1 Pet. 1]
[3 Matt. 5:43-48]

43. We grieve that the church[1]
which shares one Spirit, one faith, one hope,
and spans all time, place, race, and language[2]
has become a broken communion in a broken world.
When we struggle for the purity of the church
and for the righteousness God demands,
we pray for saintly courage.
When our pride or blindness blocks
the unity of God's household,
we seek forgiveness.
We marvel that the Lord gathers the broken pieces[3]
to do his work,
and that he blesses us still
with joy, new members,
and surprising evidences of unity.
We commit ourselves to seeking and expressing
the oneness of all who follow Jesus.
[1 Eph. 4]
[2 Gal. 3:26-29]
[3 John 17]

The Missions of God's People:

44. Following the apostles, the church is sent—[1]
sent with the gospel of the kingdom[2]
to make disciples of all nations,
to feed the hungry,[3]
and to proclaim the assurance that in the name of Christ[4]
there is forgiveness of sin and new life
for all who repent and believe—
to tell the news that our world belongs to God.
In a world estranged from God,
where millions face confusing choices,
this mission is central to our being,[5]
for we announce the one name that saves.
We repent of leaving this work to a few,

we pray for brothers and sisters
who suffer for the faith,
and we rejoice that the Spirit[6]
is waking us to see
our mission in God's world.
[1 Matt. 28:18-20]
[2 John 20:21-23]
[3 1 John 3:11-24]
[4 2 Cor. 5:11-6:2]
[5 Acts 1:8]
[6 1 Thess. 1]

45. The rule of Jesus Christ covers the whole world.[1]
To follow this Lord is
to serve him everywhere,[2]
without fitting in,
as light in the darkness,[3]
as salt in a spoiling world.
[1 Phil. 2:1-10; 4:8-9]
[2 Rom. 12]
[3 Matt. 5:13-16]

46. We serve Christ by thankfully receiving our life[1]
as a gift from his hand.
We protest and resist
all abuse and harm of this gift[2]
by abortion, pollution, gluttony,
addiction, and all foolish risks.
[1 1 Cor. 6:19-20]
[2 Ps. 139]

47. Since God made us male and female in his image,[1]
one sex may not look down on the other,
nor should we flaunt or exploit our sexuality.
Our roles as men and women must conform[2]
to God's gifts and commands[3]
as we shape our cultural patterns.
Sexuality is disordered in our fallen world;[4]
grief and loneliness are the result;[5]
but Christ's renewing work gives hope

for order and healing
and surrounds suffering persons[6]
with a compassionate community.
[1 Gen. 1:26-2:25]
[2 Song of Songs]
[3 Gal. 3:28]
[4 Prov. 7]
[5 1 Cor. 6:9-20]
[6 John 8:1-11]

48. We serve Christ as singles,[1]
whether for a time or a life,
by undivided devotion to the work of God
and so add our love and service
to the building of his kingdom.
[1 1 Cor. 7:25-35]

49. In marriage and family,[1]
we serve God
by reflecting his covenant love
in life-long loyalty,
and by teaching his ways,
so that children may know Jesus as their Lord
and learn to use their gifts in a life of joyful service.
[1 Eph. 5:1-6:4]

50. In education we seek to acknowledge the Lord[1]
by promoting schools and teaching[2]
in which the light of his Word shines in all learning,[3]
where students, of whatever ability,
are treated as persons who bear God's image[4]
and have a place in his plan.
[1 Prov. 4; 9:10]
[2 Ps. 119:105]
[3 Col. 1:17]
[4 Deut. 6:1-9]

51. In our work, even in dull routine,[1]
we hear the call to serve our Lord.
We must work for more than wages,[2]

and manage for more than profit,[3]
so that mutual respect
and the just use of goods and skills[4]
may shape the work place,
and so that, while we earn or profit,
useful products and services may result.
Rest and leisure are gifts of God[5]
to relax us and to set us free
to discover and to explore.
Believing that he provides for us,
we can rest more trustingly[6]
and entertain ourselves more simply.
[1 Eph. 4:17-32]
[2 2 Thess. 3:6-13]
[3 Eph. 6:5-9]
[4 1 Thess. 4:9-12]
[5 Phil. 4:8]
[6 Heb. 4:1-13]

52. Grateful for the advances
in science and technology,[1]
we make careful use of their products,[2]
on guard against idolatry
and harmful research,
and careful to use them in ways that answer[3]
to God's demands
to love our neighbor
and to care for the earth and its creatures.[4]
[1 Gen. 1:28-31; 9:1-7]
[2 1 Chron. 29:1-19]
[3 1 Tim. 4:1-5]
[4 Rom. 8:19-23]

53. Since God establishes the powers that rule,[1]
we are called to respect them,[2]
unless they trample his Word.
We are to obey God in politics,[3]
pray for our rulers,
and help governments to know his will for public life.
Knowing that God's people

live under many forms of government,
we are thankful for the freedoms[4]
enjoyed by citizens of many lands;
we grieve with those who live under oppression,[5]
and we work for their liberty[6]
to live without fear.
[1 John 19:11]
[2 Rom. 13:1-7]
[3 Acts 4]
[4 Isa. 61:1-2]
[5 Gen. 18]
[6 Rom. 6:16-19]

54. We call on governments to do public justice[1]
and to protect the freedoms and rights[1]
of individuals, groups, and institutions,[3]
so that each may freely do[4]
the tasks God gives.
We urge governments to ensure the well-being of all citizens[5]
by protecting children from abuse and pornography,[6]
by guarding the elderly and poor,[7]
and by promoting the freedom to speak, to work,[8]
to worship, and to associate.
[1 Matt. 5:6]
[2 Isa. 61:8]
[3 Luke 4:17-21]
[4 1 Tim. 2:1-4]
[5 Ps. 72]
[6 Isa. 1:16-17]
[7 Lev. 19:13-16]
[8 Jer. 9:23-24; 22:15-17]

55. Following the Prince of Peace,[1]
we are called to be peacemakers,
and to promote harmony and order.
We call on our governments to work for peace;[2]
we deplore the arms race[3]
and the horrors that we risk.
We call on all nations to limit their weapons
to those needed in the defense of justice and freedom.

**We pledge to walk in ways of peace,[4]
confessing that our world belongs to God;
he is our sure defense.
[1 James 3:18]
[2 Mic. 4:1-5]
[3 Matt. 26:52]
[4 Matt. 5:9]**

New Creation:

**56. Our hope for a new earth is not tied[1]
to what humans can do,[2]
for we believe that one day[3]
every challenge to God's rule
and every resistance to his will shall be crushed.
Then his kingdom shall come fully,[4]
and our Lord shall rule forever.
[1 1 Pet. 1:3-12]
[2 2 Pet. 3:1-13]
[3 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11]
[4 Rev. 11:15]**

**57. We long for that day[1]
when Jesus will return as triumphant king,
when the dead will be raised[2]
and all people will stand before his judgment.[3]
We face that day without fear,
for the Judge is our Savior.
Our daily lives of service aim for the moment[4]
when the Son will present his people to the Father.
Then God will be shown to be true, holy, and gracious.
All who have been on the Lord's side[5]
will be honored,
the fruit of even small acts of[6]
obedience will be displayed;
but tyrants and oppressors,
heretics, and all who deny the Lord
will be damned.
[1 Rev. 20:11-21:8]
[2 1 Cor. 15]**

[3 John 5:28-29]
[4 2 Thess. 1:5-10]
[5 2 Cor. 5:10]
[6 Matt. 25:31-46]

58. With the whole creation[1]
we wait for the purifying fire of judgment.
For then we will see the Lord face to face.[2]
He will heal our hurts,
end our wars,
and make the crooked straight.
Then we will join in the new song
to the Lamb without blemish[3]
who made us a kingdom and priests.[4]
God will be all in all,
righteousness and peace will flourish,[5]
everything will be made new,
and every eye will see at last
that our world belongs to God!
Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus.[6]
[1 Rom. 8:18-39]
[2 Rev. 21-22]
[3 Rev. 5]
[4 1 Cor. 15:28]
[5 Isa. 11:6-9; 60:11, 19-20; 65:17-25]
[6 Rev. 22:17, 20]

APPENDIX 19:

THE NATURE OF RELIGION
(Major excerpts)

Paul G. Schrotenboer[1]

Preface (excerpts)

Remkes Kooistra

We live in an age in which specialized conferences are offered in abundance. In every field…the literature has swelled to such a broad stream that nobody can even keep up with the literature of his own specialty. Is it not a waste of time and energy for the cardiologist to read about religion and for the radiologist to study the difference between ethics and ethos?

It is my humble suggestion…that you give this matter second thought…. After all, it could just be that we are neither as wise nor as Christian as we think wise are. Is it utterly fantastic to suggest that our scientific enterprise has been secularized more than we ever realized? Have we not perhaps hauled into the ivory tower of our scientific specialty some beautiful Trojan horse, which now tramples both the keys of knowledge and the roadmaps of religious and scientific direction under his horseshoes?

I am tempted to suggest some scientific names for this Trojan Dancer--but I should wait…. I would love to…discuss this Black Beauty, this wooden, wild stallion….

You may think that today for the first the Unionville conference will embark on a study in theology. This is the first time that the title of a Unionville lecture mentions "religion." Many may expect that the consideration of religion naturally takes us into theology.

[1]Paul G. Schrotenboer, *The Nature of Religion.* Lecture given at the Unionville Study Conference of The Association for Reformed Scientific Studies on August 27, 1963. Christian Perspective Series 1964. Hamilton, Ontario: The Association for Reformed Scientific Studies, 1964. Parts of this lecture may be a bit difficult for some readers. Where this is so, move on.

…….

This is not, strictly speaking, a theological subject. Theology has no crown rights to religion. It may be that it has no greater claim to the subject than does any other special science. It may even be that religion is not fit to be the subject matter of any science.

……..

Whenever science and religion are brought together, science seems invariably to be the winner, and religion the loser. A schoolboy once described the difference between science and religion by saying: science is material; religion is immaterial. Science, it is commonly believed, deals with things that matter, religion with things that do not.

We are witnessing in these years a very widespread discussion of the role of religion in modern life. Nowhere is this discussion more lively than in the area of education. This is true of education on every level, from the grades to the university. The discussion has been highlighted by the United States Supreme Court decision barring religious exercises from public schools. In university circles too this has received much attention of late. As Paul N. Elbin, president of West Liberty State College said recently, many a college administrator might be tempted to wish that religion would go away. But although religion is by all odds the most controversial issue in the educational field today, it will not like the rain go away, to come again some other day.

It should be apparent to all who are acquainted with our Association that we do not broach the subject by way of embarrassment. To the contrary, we would stress that true knowledge must take due account of religion, must consciously live from a well-spring of true religion because we are convinced that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and

understanding. That is, if one would know truly and rightly understand he must begin with the fear of the Lord, the Biblical expression for true religion. This is the Christian's starting point, the chief premise….

Human life in its entirety is religion. This is for many a disturbing statement, both because of its form and its content. It is at this point that some may pause and refuse to go farther. This has not often been said. Can we really subscribe to this statement of the creed? To answer this question we shall consider the nature of religion.

There are many varying answers to the question what religion is. J. Milton Yinger said he could gather a hundred in a few hours time.[2]

……

Permit me to cite the definition of J. Milton Yinger. "Religion, then, can be defined as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with these ultimate problems of human life. It is the refusal to capitulate to death, to give up in the face of frustrations, to allow hostility to tear apart one's human associations."[3] Yinger therefore advocates a sociology of religion….

Feuerbach is right: the brutes are not religious. The question arises: are the angels? Religion is *human* response action. It is the well-spring of human actions, but is itself not self-originating. Religion is what we may call man's integral heart reaction to something or someone behind and beyond man. It is not, as Whitehead claims, the reaction of human nature to its search for God.[4] It is a reaction to God. Our definition Fromm would call authoritarian. Of more importance, however, is the awareness that

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[2] *Philosophy of Religion, A book of readings,* edited by George L. Abernethy and Thomas a. Langford, "Religion, Society and the Individual," Macmillan, p. 74.
[3] "Religion, Society and the Individual," p. 77.
[4] *Science and the Modern World,* A Mentor Book, p. 170.

before one can give a definition of religion, whatever its kind, he must have assumed a religious stance. It is always from a religious view that one speaks of religion and everything else. The failure to see this has resulted in the great variety of definitions of religion and an almost endless confusion.

Formally we may take the definition of Professor Herman Dooyeweerd who says that religion is the innate impulse of the human self-hood to direct itself toward the true or toward a pretended absolute Origin of all temporal diversity of meaning which it finds focused concentrically in itself. [5] But for a definition of true religion we may start with Calvin who said it "consists in faith, united with a serious fear of God, comprehending a voluntary reverence, and producing legitimate worship agreeable to the injunction of the law."[6] Herman Bavinck distinguished between objective religion, God's revelation, and subjective religion, man's faith or unbelief.[7] …Dooyeweerd speaks of man's reaction to the true or pretended ***Origin*** and Calvin speaks of conformity to God's law. Both assume that there is something before religion. Their description implies that religion is always and everywhere ***response.***

… If we are going to understand what religion really is, we need to know that to which it responds. Religion cannot be understood merely by considering that which appears as religious feeling and actions. In order to know the nature of religion, one has to go back stage, *behind* the religious phenomena, *behind* the history of religion, *behind* the varieties of religious experience. One needs to know more than the history of religion and more than the psychology of religion to grasp its nature. Nor will the sociology of

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[5] *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought,* Philadelphia, p. 57.
[6] *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* John Allen translation, vol. 1, p. 53.
[7] *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek,* Vol. 1, p. 209.

religion reveal what its essence is. The attempt to discover the nature of religion by the science of religion is misdirected and is bound to fail.

……..

There is only one way in which to get behind the religious phenomena (that which is commonly called religion today), namely, by listening obediently to the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God written. Scripture takes us, as it were, backstage. It discloses that to which man responds.…

……..

Perhaps it will be best to start with what we may all agree is close to the heart of the matter, namely, the Biblical teaching of God's covenant with man. The covenant is the life-encompassing arrangement which God unilaterally imposed upon man. Right at the beginning God bound man to Himself both in the structure of his being and in his assigned task. God made man to be His image, the visible representation and the reflection of His perfection. God gave him the assignment of subduing and exercising dominion over the creation. He accentuated the demand of absolute obedience to His command by forbidding man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man would have but one chance and the first slip would be fatal. Essential therefore to religion is the idea of office which means that man is everywhere and always the servant of the Lord, called to obedience and placed in a position of responsibility and trust.

God never abrogated this covenant, even after sin. He never released man from his responsibility and task. He at no point set man free from His holy law. Although man ***seeks*** to become a law unto himself, God's law continues to hold him, as God said it would when he predicted: in the day thou eatest, thou shalt die. To this day the original creation law-demands of

God, which constitute God's word, still hold man to account. Man can therefore never reach higher than a ***pretended*** autonomy.

……..

Man's religion is total, taking in the whole of his life, because God's demands are all embracing. It comprises outward actions, both personal and communal, as well as the spoken word and the inner motions of the heart. This totalitarian response that characterizes religion may be seen from a study of the Biblical teaching of the fear of God. You will recall that after Abraham had obeyed God's command to offer Isaac, God said to him, Now I know that thou fearest God, for thou has not withheld thy only son from me (Gen. 22:16). The fear of God, it appears, is co-existensive with the keeping of God's commands, that is, with true obedience.

……..

The full sweep of the fear of God can perhaps best be understood from noting what the Preacher said: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the ***whole*** duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The fear of God is the fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27). This expression comes close to the creedal statement that human life in its entirety is religion! The totalitarian nature of religion can also be seen from the great classic passage of Deuteronomy, "And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love, and to serve the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 10:11-12).

Turning to the New Testament, we find that it is required by the Great Commandment…that we love the Lord with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. Consider also the apostolic injunction that we must subject every thought to Jesus Christ and present our bodies living sacrifices, wholly

acceptable to God, for this is our reasonable service" (2 Corinthians 10:5; Romans 12:2). The bodies of men are the instruments by which to serve God.

The totalitarian character of religion may be seen also from the redemptive work of Christ. He redeems the whole man, starting with his heart. He also gives men a new mind. On both, God writes His law. In other words, He gives man the desire and power to keep the commandments. The redemptive work of Christ takes in both man and the cosmos. The whole creation travails in pain and waits for redemption. This waiting will not be in vain, for we look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness will dwell.

Scripture, however, does not define religion. Scripture, for that matter, presents few definitions on any subject. It does, however, reveal what religion is. And perhaps one of the most significant passages about religion is Romans 1:25. There we read that those against whom the wrath of God is revealed from heaven have changed the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. This passage contains three elements that deserve close attention.

First, they ***changed*** the truth of God for a lie. Theirs was a heart response of a negative sort to the truth, that is, to God's revelation. They remoulded, gtave another form to the truth, changed it into its opposite. Their response was radically wrong.

Second, they ***worshipped***, prostrated themselves before the creature. Worship is man's cultic response to God. It is this which Calvin stresses in his description of religion. Many evangelicals limit religion to the cultic. In fact, the popular idea of religion is largely restricted to this aspect of worship.

Third, they ***served*** the creature instead of the Creator. They rendered obedience to the surrogate of God. In the original covenant which God made with man, the element of service received more prominent attention than did the cultic aspect. Here it is mentioned alongside of worship.

We should note that religion, whatever its kind, contains these three elements: (12) It is either heart acceptance or rejection of the Truth of God; (2) It worships either the Creator or the creature; (3) It is service of either the true God or an idol. When James speaks of "true and undefiled religion," he refers primarily to the element of service. One must, he says, visit the fatherless and the widows and keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

From the Scriptural revelation of what religion is, it follows that religion is basically of two kinds. Man either worships and serves the Creater, or he worships and serves the creature. And these two kinds of religious responses are related antithetically. Either man walks in the truth, or he changes the truth into falsehood. God is pleased with man's faith, that is, with man's true response to the Word, but His wrath rests upon those who hold down the truth in unrighteousness. The basis of the antithesis in religion lies therefore in God, more specifically in his twofold reaction to man's response to Him and His Word.

……..

We, in obedience to Scripture, would distinguish between true covenantal religion and the religion of pretended human autonomy. In the religion of human autonomy man becomes a law unto himself. He still commits himself to a pretended absolute (for, because he is only the image of God, not an independent substance, commit his heart he must) yet he does not give his heart to Christ, but to a part of the creation which he absolutizes.

This is often man himself in one or another of his functions. The advocate of such a religion will agree with Brownoowski, "The source of authority … is the consent of free men."[8]

……

Men generally today are not congenial to the idea of a clear-cut separation between two kinds of religion. The popular mind tends to make religions fade into one another, and would gloss over or even deny the totalitarian and antithetical character of religion. It is very widely held that the various religions are all so many different roads to God. Let us look for a moment at the modern scene.

Two very prevalent ideas of religion are: (1) religion is optional; and (2) religion is restricted. On the view that it is optional, a man may be religious and then again he may not. He can even lose his religion, if he has one. It depends on whether he has an instinct for religion or not, or on whether he has a religious preference. ….

From what we have seen the nature of religion to be, we may conclude that it cannot be optional because it is co-extensive with man's life. One cannot lose his religion because he cannot break free from God. Even atheism feeds upon the revelation of God, and its denial of God is done religiously. Religion is man's ineradicable situation. When man realizes this he exclaims, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Psalm 139:7). Whether man realizes it or not, in the great judgment God will openly display how He, who has bound man to Himself with unbreakable cords, calls man to account.

We may say by way of anticipation that if religion were optional, the relation between religion and learning would be incidental, not essential.

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[8] *The Humanist Frame,* "Science is Human," London, p. 85.

Beneficial perhaps, but not necessary. A luxury possibly, but not a staple ingredient of the educational diet.

The view that religion is optional but not necessary has given rise to a terminology that divides people into religious and non-religious beings. Some concern themselves with God; others do not. Some show a feeling of sacredness for certain objects; others do not. It all depends on how man is constituted.

On the view that religion is restricted, life is divided into the religious and the non-religious or secular. This is the main stream of current thought. Religion covers only a part of human life. As the Germans say, it is a *private sache.* As William James said, it is the experience of individual men in their solitude. Religion is strictly personal. Therefore people do not like to discuss their religion. It is a sacred, untouchable land. Religious life is for many their devotional life, or as they describe it their quiet time, the hour of meditation and prayer.

The view of the restrictedness of religion has received a sanction from the recent United States Supreme Court decisions. "The place of religion in our society is an exalted one, achieved through a long tradition of reliance on the home, the church and the inviolable citadel of the individual heart and mind."

The area in which religion supposedly exerts a legitimate influence is becoming restricted more and more. ***It has been taken out of government by the interpretation of the principle of separation of church and state to mean a separation of religion and state.*** It has been taken out of the public

schools to a large extent on the supposition that it does injustice to some who are irreligious, whether a small or a sizeable minority.[9]

From what we have seen the nature of religion to be, the idea that religion is restricted is misleading and dissatisfying. What meaning this will have for our subject we can see presently.

What we should at all cost maintain is that religion is a matter of the heart. Only, the heart is not a place apart, not an upper room into which you can periodically retreat for religious exercises, but, like the eye of a hurricane, it is the place of concentrated energy. Just because religion seats in the heart, it cannot be restricted.

In the current discussion concerning religion and the schools there is a vacillation between two conflicting ideas of religion, both of which are faulty.

The first view is that since religion is the sacred responsibility of the home and church, it has no rightful place in school. The advocates of this view rejoice in recent court decisions barring Bible reading and prayer from the school.

The second view is that a kind of common denominator religious practice can provide a common basis for certain areas of life, including the building of character and the education of children in the values of society. Like Kant, they try to make Christianity a universal religion. In Ontario, for instance, public education is committed to the "Christian ideal." The

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[9]NOTE BY BOER: The most recent example in Canada relates to the issue of homosexualism. The Christian Church throughout the ages, firmly on basis of its Scripture, along with all the major world religions, has always disapproved to homosexualism and has been free to preach the Scriptural view. Suddenly, under the masterful social engineering of the tiny homosexual community and its supporters 9See Jeffrey Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996) it has now been moved from the religious and ethical spheres into the political and even criminal sphere. Speaking against homosexualism now has been dubbed a political act and any church doing so invites the wrath of Revenue Canada and will lose its charitable status. A clear example of reducing the scope of religion by the mighty publican arm of the Canadian government.

advocates of this view regret that the areas of life where religion functions are shrinking because of the current trends. The ones to gain the most, they claim with justification, are the secularists, those who advocate no religion at all. We know of course that even when they advocate no religion they are religiously active.

Here we behold the false dilemma of modern thought about religion and the schools: either ban it from the schools altogether, or grant to it a place of little importance where it gives no one offence. Neither view can stand the test of truly Christian insights.

Instead of being for a part of life, religion encompasses life. Rather, the whole of human life is religion; that is, man's heart-and-life response to God's demands and gifts. Human life and religion are co-extensive and education becomes a religious exercise.

……..

Religion is not to be identified with … theology. It is regrettable that this is done so often. Theology, strictly speaking, is a special science, dealing with a particular aspect of the temporal creation: man's life of faith. In a more general sense it may mean man's knowledge of God and salvation, of whatever sort that knowledge may be, ….

……..…

… Man is nothing in himself, nothing except in relationship to his Origin. Man's essential being is correctly described as the image of God: he is the visible presentation (an image is to see) and yet nothing more than a reflection of God (Scripture speaks of the image of a mirror).

Involved in the very nature of man, therefore, is his need to relate himself, yes, to bind himself, not just to something above him, but either to God or to that which takes God's place. Man's restlessness drives him to

seek security outside himself. He finds that rest, Scripture says, only when he seeks for it in the living God.

……..…..

Above all we should see that since life is religion, and God calls us to commit ourselves to Him and His Truth, to worship the Lord God and serve Him only, therefore our entire life, including our scientific endeavors should be true religion, hearty service of God. True religion is veritable self-surrender.

APPENDIX 20:

Ethnicity, Religion and Democracy in Nigeria (II)

Peter Bauna Tanko[1]

"Ethnocentrism is not always physically violent, but it is always unjust. Discrimination against people on grounds of ethnicity permeates the whole of African social and economic life. Jobs are frequently allocated, and services provided, on ethnic grounds. Every migrant to the African city possesses an ethnically based survival network, and his tribe remains his final source of social identity and security."

Not even the Church in Africa is free of ethnocentrism. Rwanda with a population of about 93 percent Christians turned on each other and tore each other apart. Some societies and organisations are formed along ethnic lines. Churches are springing up either along the same lines or based on common social interests and the creation of ethnically encapsulated parishes and dioceses show the extent to which the "ethnic disease" has become contagious. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the Church to ordain, appoint and post priests and Bishops to areas where they might be considered as ethnic outsiders or foreign bodies.

The universality of the message of salvation is thus being threatened by ethnic cleavages to some degree. Is it any wonder that in the 1960s, Catholics in one of the Ghanaian dioceses burnt their Bishop's Episcopal throne outside the Cathedral, because he was not of their ethnic group? Why do some clergy refuse to co-operate with a newly appointed Bishop based on ethnic grounds? Missionary administrators get appointed in some places due to ethnic rivalries among the diocesan clergy and the refusal to accept or

[1]P. B. Tanko, *New Nigerian*, 26 Jan/2000, p. 5.

cooperate with each other - how healthy is this for the church in this millennium? Archbishop Albert Obiefuna of Onitsha in Nigeria who is presently the president of the Catholic Bishops' conference of Nigeria (CBCN) in his speech at the African Synod of 1994 took a long and deep look at the ethnic problem we face and declared: "the blood of tribe is thicker than the water of baptism." Granted that he said this against the backdrop of the Rwandan genocide, is this not the case when push comes to shove amongst most ethnic groups in Africa? The church is the family of God but why is it that her members have failed to transcend family and tribal or ethnic allegiances? Why is it that ethnic allegiance is, or has become stronger than religious convictions? If at baptism Christians receive a new identity that should be stronger than ethnic or tribal identity, why is it that Christians have preferred clinging tenaciously to their ethnic groups in moments of crises than to their new Christian identity? That Christianity has not been able to make its adherents look beyond their ethnic identities and accept each other as they are bewildering and to some extent a threat to the survival of democracy.

If Christ commanded that we love our neighbour and we turn around to set the houses of these neighbours on fire and kill each other, it is because this message has not been firmly rooted or understood by its members. There is no way in which the love Christ spoke about can be universal if it imposes homogeneity or uniformity. Granted that our identities should be recognised for what they are, we must be prepared to relativise these identities if we must live in peace with each other. All religions advocate peace without which we cannot progress as a nation. With conflicts dotted here and there in our country, what chances has democracy to survive? ….

….

APPENDIX 21:

Declaration of Lakitelek I (2002) For a Christian Europe

Participants of the conference, representatives of Christian and Christian-democratic parties, movements and civil organisations from more than ten countries have examined new chances for Christian politics in Europe. We are at the brink of historical changes taking place on our continent and welcome the eastern enlargement of the European Union.

We acknowledge and give thanks to God for the many privileges that we enjoy: the liberation of Europe from oppression of communism; the spirit of reconciliation and fraternity offered by the community of nations in the European Union; the recognition of many civil rights and liberties; comparative economic prosperity; an end to the threat of war between the nations of our continent.

In the midst of new external (international) and internal challenges Europe cannot renounce her Christian values and the cultural-spiritual traditions based upon these values. Social justice, the integrity of life, the role of the family, equality between nations and persons are at the very heart of these biblical values. We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to follow him in every area of our lives, including the realm of politics. We recognise that the Kingdom of God cannot be simply identified with any political cause, but we affirm that it demands the pursuit of just government and the promotion of well ordered societies.

Using their best knowledge and will, participants of the conference wish to act for the above goals with their current meeting and their intended future co-operation. Political and civil organisations representing Christian values throughout Europe think that their main task is to link people and nations of the continent closer. Therefore, they want to launch a new Christian Political Movement for Europe, which will be the platform for new initiatives.

We agreed on the following agenda:

1. As soon as the enlargement of Europe has passed we will work on a common vision about the content and meaning of Christian politics in the framework of the European Union.

2. From a renewed perspective we will aim at consensus within the family of European Christian parties behind a Christian programme for Europe.

3. In order to give our actions a permanent character we will establish a European structure for our co-operation. ChristianUnion and Hungarian Democratic Forum will back this process.

4. In the interest of the future of Europe we want to strengthen the training of young people. Fulfilment of the long-term aims of the current conference will be helped by several educational programmes. We welcome the initiatives of the Hungarian Democratic Forum to establish a post-graduate course in the topic of the European Union (European Department) in Lakitelek, and also to establish "Mindszenty Academy" and "Bethlen Gábor Academy".

5. In order to fulfil these goals we will form a co-ordinating committee, that will regularly meet and work out plans. This declaration is signed at Lakitelek, a historical place in the Hungarian transition process. Here, new political life, based on Christian values, began in 1987. At that time, an iron curtain separated western and eastern territories, states and nations of the continent. Now, at the brink of the re-unification of Europe, we hope that Lakitelek will be the place where new political life for Europe will begin.

November 30, 2002

Hungarian Democratic Forum (Hungary)
ChristianUnion (Netherlands)
Estonian Christian Peoples Party (Estonia)
Partei Bibeltreuer Christen (Germany)
Christian People's Alliance (United Kingdom)

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Declaration of Lakitelek II (2003) Values for Europe

The Christian Political Movement for Europe, which was launched in November 2002 and consists of parties and organisations from more than ten countries, has now given form to their vision on the future of European politics. This vision was formulated at Lakitelek in 2002 in the Declaration of Lakitelek "For a Christian Europe".

At the brink of the historical Enlargement of the European Union and just weeks before the Intergovernmental Conference on the European 'Constitutional Treaty', we want to stress the importance of Christian values. Not only have they influenced the shaping of the European peoples and cultures, but they are also of great worth to the future of Europe. This historic, present and future influence must be recognised in the 'Constitution' of the European Union.

We will, therefore, strongly promote and defend Christian values in Europe. Not just because they are Christian, but primarily because they contribute to a healthy European society within which it is good to live. We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to do this by following Him in both our personal lives and in the realm of politics.

We want to work on Christian social politics for the whole geographical continent of Europe. This Europe is not, in the first place, an economic unity, but an entity with a common history and shared values. With dedication, we will work for a Europe which is characterized as a just society where people can live their lives to the full.

1. First and foremost, we acknowledge that God is the source of all authority, He is the ruler of the world. Political authorities, including European level political authorities, are His servants.

2. We stand for the protection of life, because every life is precious. This means:
• protection of unborn children and promotion of care for pregnant women;
• respect for the lives of elderly people, promotion of hospices and a prohibition of euthanasia;
• prohibition of cloning of man or animal.

3. Protection of life also means we must give a voice to the needs of the weak. We are convinced that the government has a special responsibility for those who cannot look after themselves: those with disabilities, refugees and the poor in our own countries and abroad.

4. The family is the cornerstone of society. It is the place where children learn responsibility, values and to live as good citizens. Families should be given all the room they need to realise these responsibilities. We reject every policy, for example tax or education policy or the undermining of marriage (e.g. by making same-sex-partnerships possible), which will negatively effect family life.

5. We want to stress the responsibility of every citizen for his/her own neighbourhood. However, we also stress the shared responsibilities of all kind of (civil) organisations for the public good. Governments must create a sphere within which individuals and organisations are encouraged to take up their responsibilities.

6. Churches and other religious organisations have a valuable contribution to make in society. Full freedom of religion, for individuals, communities and organisations, must be a priority within Europe and in European foreign policy.

7. We recognise the different peoples in Europe. Therefore, national identity must be protected and sovereignty of States respected. We stand for a balance in power between the different nations and the European Union: the responsibilities for public affairs should be at the level as close to the citizens as possible. Besides individual rights, we want to point out the importance of collective rights of minorities.

8. Concern for God's Creation is a major part of Christian social politics. We may not exploit natural resources. Instead, we are stewards of Creation and therefore sustainability of both economy and environment must be a priority.

The Christian Political Movement for Europe will focus on the out-workings of these eight political core values. Therefore, we will make and deepen contacts with all parties and organisations who share the same vision and we will encourage the training of young people in Christian political principles, at places like the "Cardinal Mindszenty" Catholic and "Gábor Bethlen" Protestant Academy.

Lakitelek, 12th September, 2003.

APPENDIX 22:

Biblical Grounds for Political Involvement

Christian Association of Nigeria
Northern Zone[1]

Biblical grounds for Christian political action may be established on three foci of Christian teaching: the creation order, the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and the principles of God's redemption, as revealed supremely in Jesus Christ.

The Creation Ethic

The creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2 present man as given responsibility over the world under God. In Genesis 1, the foundational notion of man as created in the image of God is presented in close association with the command to "have dominion over all the earth… be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it" (1:26, 28). For man to be like God, then, is for him to exercise creative management of the earth. In Genesis 2, the mandate is to till and keep the garden (2:5), a symbolic way of making the same point. Politics is integral to the out-working of this mandate. In the broadest sense, politics is simply the way in which man organizes himself corporately so as to preserve order and to exercise responsible development of the world. As a creation ordinance, it is to be respected.

In the light of the above, the Christian has no choice but to be involved politically – he is involved, by belonging to the mankind God created. Man does organise his society, and every man has responsibility in this process. The question is, In what way will I pursue my responsibility?

Political scientists may feel our definition of politics is too broad, this is intentional. It is meant to include all social organization at the corporate level so that man may achieve goals which he cannot reach single-handed. It is the formation of social relationships or structures for channelling human power towards certain ends. Party-Politics is one such example concerned with policy and decision-making as a nation. We organize for ourselves a government to which we give responsibility and authority and access to power, in order, to achieve for us all certain aims. These aims are, the control of our society so as to promote the maximum well-being for all,

[1]CAN, 1987, pp. 2-4.

promoting the development of our living standards in an international situation, and establishing protection for us both as individuals and as a nation from the use of power against us by others towards their own ends.

An option then, to do nothing in respect to such social organization, perhaps because of other priorities (such as evangelism), is to let the policy making be done by others. To allow others to forge the policy may be for us to opt for the *status quo*, when change would be better, or it may be to allow others to implement undesirable changes. In either case, we are involved in the out-come; non-involvement is a myth.

This is not simply a matter of individual Christian responsibility. Creative dominion over the earth is given to man corporately, indeed single handed we can accomplish very little. It is therefore thoroughly appropriate that as Christians, seeking to live as the people of God intended us to be, we should think and act together towards such social organization in the world generally, and in Nigeria in particular.

Who are the people in Nigeria who are most likely to promote social organization in accordance with God's values of right and wrong? God's people. God must wish His people to play the fullest part they can in the political life of this country, yet recognizing the limits imposed by their knowledge and skill. At the local level, the local church should organize itself actively, as the servant of God and the community, to play a responsible part in local decision-making. At the individual level, a career in politics is one of the most significant callings for a Christian to follow.

The Kingdom Ethic

The Kingdom of God is not just a place. It means the effective rule of God when man responds to it. God has always been King, but his Kingdom comes as his will is done by man.

Jesus taught that the kingdom of God has invaded history in his own person. Its arrival, he proclaimed in his own person. Its arrival, he proclaimed, is the basis for a new community in the world rooted in a right relationship with God. The Kingdom based community Christ came to establish transcended all traditional family solidarity for the sake of the unity of all men (Mark 3:35).

The key word to describe the right relationships of the Kingdom is righteousness (Mathhew 6:33). To be a member therefore, one has to repent (Mark 1:15) – by this is meant a total reorientation of life in accordance with the pattern of righteousness.

The Kingdom comes, therefore, not only when individuals repent and turn to Christ, but also when society lives in accordance with God's revealed moral and social standards. To say the Kingdom of God has arrived therefore is to say something about society and the harmony of the whole created order of God is well able to place within the Church people of sufficient diversity and gifts so that the growth of the kingdom may proceed in both the personal evangelistic and social evangelistic directions. The two cannot be separated. The Good News is about reorientation of all dimensions of life and this means politics.

The Redemption Ethic

The focus of our redemption is Jesus Christ, the divine Word, incarnate and crucified. By coming to earth as God incarnate, Jesus has set the highest value upon human materiality and history. The transcendence of God, we infer, is to be found in the realm of down-to-earth human society, and not in any sense by escaping from it, or relegating it to a position of secondary importance. Jesus completed his work for human salvation with the sacrifice of his passion, an event which was as thoroughly political as it was redemptive. He was crucified not only because God sent him to atone for sins but also for Jewish and Roman expediency. In a revolutionary age such a death carried the significance of major political crime.

It is often argued that Jesus took no political stance in his work for our redemption. That was not how the Jewish and Roman leaders saw it. Following our broader definition of politics, we may safely say that Jesus seriously threatened every option presented as a basis for social organization in his day, both those of order and those of revolution. For example, against the politics of orders, the word of Jesus came in criticism of the oppressive political lordship of both Jewish leaders and Romans. Against the ruling party, the Sadduccees, Jesus' messianic actions, along with the popular support for his teaching of righteousness, threatened to undermine the delicate balance of power on which the Jews reached compromises with the Romans. Against Pilate, the Roman Government, Jesus declard the lack of ultimate power in any human hands (John 19:11).

From the above, we can argue that political challenge is interwoven with the coming of the Kingdom of God and the out-working of man's redemption: where political conflict is not experienced by Christians, serious questions need to be asked about our faithfulness to the patterns of Community taught by Jesus, and our readiness to seek the kingdom of righteousness.

It is sad that despite the ample evidence in the New Testament in support of the Christian's political involvement, we have too often fought shy of conflict that belongs to the coming of the kingdom of God and preferred a quiescent alliance with the existing social order. One of the reasons is the prevailing philosophy of the early Christians – Platonism, a philosophy which encouraged Christians to think that only a spiritual dimension of life mattered to God; the material, and historic world was of secondary importance. The result was the separation of Church and State. This separation is attractive to Christians todday because it narrows our field of view to the Church, and makes life manageable by lifting our duty to secular society.

Those of us in Nigeria who are Christians have now realised our failings in the past, we confess our non-chalant attitude and call on all to a responsible participation in the running of our country Nigeria.