

**Appendix 6:**

**OFFICIAL WORKING COPY IS ON THUMB WITH LONG RIBBON—MAY 2010**

**WHEN FINISHED WITH THIS CHAPTER, SEND A COPY TO AJETUNMOBI.  
For address see Gamji 78 with his letter attached at the back.**

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**NOTE:**

1. This Appendix 6 was intended to be a chapter in the book itself. Due to issues of space and economy, it has been turned into Appendix 6.
2. The *sources* used in this appendix are listed in the Bibliography of the book itself.
3. This Appendix 6 is the main root document in this folder. The other appendices in this folder are generated from and within Appendix 6.
4. There is an <xxxx> behind every section heading. You can move forward from heading to heading by <Find xxxx>.

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## MUSLIM PROPOSALS AND SOLUTIONS

*Is it Nigeria that has been Islamised or is it Islam that has been Nigerianized? --M. A. Bidmos<sup>1</sup>*

*The truth about Nigeria is that we have never been united, but have only enjoyed some prolonged period of calm, though not devoid of non-physical aggression -- Ahmadu M. Sabo<sup>2</sup>*

*In the final analysis, Islam is what Muslims make of it -- Hussaini*

*Holding the country together is not possible, except by means of the religion of the Prophet.... If they want political unity, let them follow our religion -- Northern Nigeria Chiefs<sup>3</sup>*

Muslims, this is the last chapter of this entire 8-volume series for you to be heard. I will do my utmost to be fair to you and ask you once again to do the same for Christians by reading the next chapter about their solutions and proposals.

The issue in this chapter are the solutions Muslims offer to the sharia impasse, putting an end to religious violence and, above all, to moving forward together. There is this strong awareness among Muslims that they are in a local as well as global battle over which they must gain the victory. The enemy is everywhere and, according to some, includes renegade or secular fellow Muslims, the West and its local Christian lackeys, who have bought into Christo-secularist imperialism. Muslim solutions have a wide range from personal piety to the rawest forms of aggression, including weapons of mass destruction. Some address the Muslim community itself; some, governments; others, Christo-secularists; still others, all of the above. Solutions, of course, always are based on certain goals, whether expressed or not. These goals are discussed towards the end of this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>M. Bidmos, 2 Nov/95.

<sup>2</sup>A. Sabo, "Adversary and Kukah...."

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in B. Mala, p. 7. This was their response to the West African Students Union in 1942.

I have chosen to place a special focus on Ibrahim Sulaiman by devoting an inset to him. Throughout this series he has featured prominently. So, rather than have his proposals scattered throughout the chapter, a special inset is devoted to him so that his proposals are all in one place. I do recommend that you read about him in Volumes 2, 4 and 6 to become familiar with his train of thought. You can locate him in those volumes by checking their indices. Lateef Adegbite deserves similar attention, but by the time that occurred to me, he was already woven into the chapter. As in Volumes 4 and 6, you will find him all over the map in this chapter.

### **Specific Sharia Measures xxxx**

Sharia being the main concern here, I begin with advice people offer about specific sharia measures to be taken. Suleiman Kumo urged caution. We should be circumspect, he suggested, by implementing sharia in stages. He wanted to begin with “the enlargement of the Sharia Courts of Appeal to cover all civil matters.” “A little tidying up” needs to take place at this level. If constitutional amendments are required, let it happen “to accommodate the wishes of Muslims.” Sharia governments should ensure “that hooligans and any ill-motivated persons” not be allowed to hijack sharia measures. Such people require extra vigilance and should be dealt with ruthlessly.<sup>4</sup>

Over against prediction that sharia will die a natural death, Isah Abdullahi of Sokoto advised what he called a “reasonable approach” to the sharia issue—adopt a “wait and see attitude.” Especially those who have no understanding of sharia, they should simply accept the promises and explanations made by Governor Sani and see how it works out in practice.<sup>5</sup>

### **Spiritual Revival xxxx**

From a Muslim spiritual point of view, the most natural solution to the sharia crisis lies in Muslims’ taking the spirituality of Islam more seriously. That should provide the most genuine guarantee for the success of sharia and, on the surface at least, the simplest. Hence, there are numerous calls for increased devotion to and knowledge of

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<sup>4</sup>I. Umar, 9 Nov/99.

<sup>5</sup>I. Abdullahi, 30 Nov/99.

both Qur'an and the *Hadisai* [traditions related to the Prophet], for those are after all the basis of spirituality. The BZ part of this discussion is found in Appendix 7.

An integral part of Nigerian culture, both Muslim and Christian, is the recitation of moralistic injunctions and calling Muslims back to Allah. It is practiced widely at every level of society, from the President down to the ordinary citizen, from every local pulpit to archbishop, whether Christian preacher or Muslim imam. In his letter to the editor of *GTFK*, for example, villager Abdulsalam Ado of Kafar Fada Durba in Kano State, recited a long list of laments about the common sins and misdeeds of the day at all fronts, actions that every Muslim knows to be unislamic. Many people say they want sharia, but they have no intention of obeying it. He reminded his readers that there is a divine reward awaiting those who obey sharia. For example, “*ta bangaren kasuwanci, ya kamata a rika sanya gaskiya a cikinsa. In kayan aunawa da sikeli ne, to, kai mai sikelin ka tabbata koda yaushe sikelinka kalau yake, kuma ka tabbata ka auna daidai yadda kuka yi magana da mai saye.*”<sup>6</sup> From there, Ado wrote about measurements, craftsmanship and similar common problematic market practices—all things everyone knew were bad. He wrote about forcing a young girl into a marriage she does not want and that will result in behaviour on her part that is *haram* [forbidden] in Islam. And then there is that evil practice of hoarding food stuffs for the season of scarcity and higher prices. “*Ya kamata mu bar irin wadancan dabi’u.*” “*Dole fa sai mu yi yaki da irin wadannan abubuwa in muna so sharia ta sami nasara.*” “*Don haka sai an tashi tsaye wajen tuntar da jama’a su guji aikata wadannan abubuwa domin sun saba wa Musulunci. Allah ya saka wa duk wanda ya taimaka wajen kafa shariar nan da alheri. Amin.*”<sup>7</sup> Such recitation of forbidden behaviour and encouragement for more Islamic behaviour is typical; it is heard and read constantly, especially at times of religious celebrations.

But such injunctions also came from more educated quarters. Badmus Yusuf of the Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, challenged Muslims “to

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<sup>6</sup>A. Ado, 15 July/2001. English translation: “When it comes to trading, we must act truthfully. As far as weights and measures go, be sure your scale always gives the proper weight and you weigh your goods exactly as you tell your customer.”

<sup>7</sup>A. Ado, 15 July/2001. English translation: “We must quit doing such things.” “It is absolutely imperative that we fight against such practices, if we want the sharia to succeed.” “Therefore, we must be serious about reminding the people they should avoid doing these things, because Islam forbids them. May God reward everyone who helps in the establishment of sharia with His grace. Amen.”

rise up and fight corruption and injustice as part of their contributions to the global war on socio-economic vices.” Islam, he preached, “has no place for corruption, injustice, nor does it condone violence and rascality.” “To contribute to the reformation of the country, every true Muslim must imbibe the teachings of Islam and practice them religiously.” He especially inveighed against murder. “Why should a Muslim be involved in any case of murder?” “Muslims should discourage ostentatious living, be in the vanguard to promote welfare of the people and avoid things that could inflict pain on the citizen.<sup>8</sup> In other words, mirror a constructive life style in the society.

Within much of Christianity, talk of religious revival does not usually include political revival. That is not considered religious. In wholistic Islam-- as well as the Kuyper tradition<sup>9</sup>-- it is a different story. A revival leading to a restored sharia must be political as well as religious, a distinction that in itself is dubious. Political revival can take many forms. During the first few months of the AZ era, Buhari Abdu from Kano City expressed his surprise that “there has been no serious attempt for Muslims to initiate an Islamic party in Nigeria. If Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries, say Uganda, have been able to organize themselves into Islamic parties, why not Nigerian Muslims, whose population is, according to an estimate, 80 million?” Abdu “gratefully recalled the vigorous attempts of former Turkish Prime Minister, Necmatin Arbakan, to unite Muslims globally for good.” It is a pity, Abdu wrote, that the country’s “secular system frustrated that attempt.” He ended his article with a challenge to Muslims: “Wake up and you have a lot to do in awakening others, if at all you are awake!”<sup>10</sup>

When we talk of religious revival, the subject of mosques comes to mind almost naturally. Buhari Abdu did not favour an emphasis in this direction. Arguing from the wholism of Islam, he asked, “Isn’t this too amazing that there are Muslim businessmen who build a million-naira mosque for their starving neighbours and friends? If I were

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<sup>8</sup>O. Ezigbo, 2 Oct/2004.

<sup>9</sup>Kuyper established a Christian political party that became a major player in his country. It has since joined with a Roman Catholic party. The new party continues to play a leading role with the current Prime Minister of The Netherlands being a Kuyperian. It has in a professional political way successfully struggled against secularism to make space in the market place for *all* worldviews and religions to express themselves. Only a few days ago that Prime Minister addressed the European Union. Neutrality in that context does not mean secularism, but government recognition of and support for *all* orientations, with secularism recognized as just one more with no special privileged position. It was both a spiritual and political revival.

<sup>10</sup>B. Abdu, 1 Mar/2000. Abdu was not quite right. Read about the Islamic Democratic Progressive Party in J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, pp. 108-109.

one of those neighbours, I might ask, ‘How can I pray better with an empty stomach?’ If I perish due to serious starvation, God will punish them. That is true Islam.” Further into the article, Abdu stated, “Unlike the Muslim businessmen in this country, I do not believe that scarcity of mosques is the major issue before the Muslim *ummah* at this moment. What we need first and foremost, is the awareness that Islam is beyond rituals. Islam represents our whole life perfectly!”<sup>11</sup>

The need for revival was recognized throughout the years covered by this series. Adegbite saw the need. There are a “growing number of nominal Muslims in the country,” a situation he attributed mainly to inadequate knowledge of Islam among its adherents. Muslims must “all move away from nominality to reality and authenticity,” he urged, for the situation was inimical to both expansion and unity.<sup>12</sup>

But the basic essence of revival is not to be found in politics or other social concerns; it is to be found in a revival of the heart. Abdul-Rah Adam, in his piece on youth, wrote that the Prophet said that “in the human body, there is a piece of meat. If this meat is clean, then the entire body is clean. But if it is dirty, then the entire body is dirty. Lo! This meat is the heart.” Adam then commented, “For peace to reign, our youth have a role of spiritual self-upliftment in that every youth should have a clean heart, free from envy, deceit, jealousy, distrust and hatred for his fellow human beings.” With such an “upliftment” “a peaceful community will be ours forever. All youth should go into a special covenant with God so as to let peace reign.”<sup>13</sup>

Musa Ibrahim, a law student at BUK, refers to the same passage. He laments the emphasis that people place on the punitive aspect of sharia. That aspect, he argues, represents only one-seventh of sharia, while the entire sharia has “seven faculties” or aspects. Yet people judge a sharia government only by the number of amputations and lashes as their benchmark. This is “fundamentally wrong.” “My advice to fellow Muslims is that we should strive hard to Islamize our hearts, acts as well as our omissions.” Then he quotes the same Hadith about the heart. “Islamizing our acts and omissions will take us to what Islam is.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>B. Abdu, 1 Mar/2000.

<sup>12</sup>A. Adedimeji and U. Abubakar, 29 Sep.2003.

<sup>13</sup>A. Adam, 2004, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup>M. I. Umar, 7 Oct/2005.

Shu'aibu Gimi from Abuja acknowledged that "machineries of government can, of course, be used to implement sharia. But individual Muslims are expected to be sharia-compliant and exhibit total commitment to all laws that govern our daily activities." He quoted Auwalu Yadudu of Bayero University, who once stated, "Sharia addresses the individual, working on his conscience to ensure compliance. Sincere believers are, or should be, their own policemen." Gimi further commented,

*It will be irrational to expect Ahmad Sani as the Governor of Zamfara State, to bring about total sanity, when Muslims in both their personal and official capacities fail to create an atmosphere in which good neighbourliness and healthy interactions can thrive.*

*Our attitudes towards our Creator, parents, families, neighbours and fellow countrymen should be transparent, reflective of the prescriptions of the shaira.*

*This is the only way to play our part in the implementation of the system and for which we shall be handsomely rewarded.<sup>15</sup>*

For this reason, the NCSCP called on all the major Muslim organizations "to intensify efforts in spreading the knowledge and understanding of sharia throughout the country," while "all Muslims" were urged "to work hard for the realisation of all the goals and objectives of sharia." At the same time, however, it warned Muslims neither "to dominate or allow others to dominate them in the realization of sharia."<sup>16</sup>

Tafawa Balewa has long been a restless place with occasional flareups of violence.<sup>17</sup> The cause has been the colonially-imposed Muslim rule over the indigenes, something that Muslim rulers have refused to address for many decades, much like the Southern Kaduna situation. It had flared up again in 2001. Governor Mu'azu explained the situation as follows to a high-powered group of FG officials in Abuja that included Professor Jerry Gana: "Only divine intervention can bring a lasting solution to the religious crisis bedeviling Tafawa Balewa LGA. Only prayers can solve the crisis, because the tolerance level of both communities is too low to bring about peace and unity in the area." In the grand governmental and Muslim tradition of the politically correct, he was very clever to avoid blaming either Christians or Muslims. As to Christians, their youth had "peacefully demonstrated against the introduction of sharia," but

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<sup>15</sup>S. Gimi, 1 Dec/99.

<sup>16</sup>I. Adamu, 22 Nov/99.

<sup>17</sup>J. Boer, vol. 1, 2003, pp. 82-89.

“some other ‘miscreants’ [read: “Muslims,” probably also youths] took the opportunity to fuel the current crisis. Seeking the President’s approval, he praised the latter for dousing the situation with his “wisdom and advice” dispensed over the telephone. Mu’azu reported to the officials that he had taken the bull by the horns by appointing a high-powered committee of Christians and Muslims to once more “look into the problems and proffer solutions. He had already visited the area and observed a “massive movement of people from the area. But by the time I had addressed them, they changed their minds and promised that they really wanted to live in peace with each other.”<sup>18</sup>

Obviously prayer did not mean simply waiting on Allah to do His thing; it was accompanied by vigorous activity on the Governor’s part. But the activities he described did not address the long-standing irritant of internal colonialism. There the politically correct kicked in. The Governor should ask himself whether he expects prayer to work if you consciously avoid the basic problem and engage in aggressive tinkering that may on the surface look like you are grabbing the bull by the horn. According to Numshi Augustine, a friend of mine with his roots in the area, the Governor did not fulfill his promise before he completed his term.

One traditional institution that has taken a beating in the course of the sharia struggle is that of emirs. They have not always played positive roles, often being guided more by money considerations than anything else, according to Zubairu Jibrin Maigwari II, the Emir of Birnin Gwari. He charged that Emirs had lost their relevance to the society by deviating from their role as “traditional leaders of Islam,” as “exponents of Islam.” “If we deviate from this noble path, anything can be done to us.” “We were busy doing the wrong things, going to Abuja, supporting *tazarce* and the rest of it.” We will regain our reputation “if only we always stand by our people as spiritual leaders.” “The moment a traditional leader loses respect in his religion or spiritual power, he is no longer relevant.” “Any traditional leader who wants to be respected and loved must embrace Islam first. If he fails to do so, I assure you he is on his way to self-destruction.” “All traditional leaders must embrace Islam first.” Then he adduced the example of Oni of Ife, a powerful Christian monarch among the Yoruba. What is the secret of his power? “He is a spiritual leader first and foremost.” So, according to this Emir, he and his colleagues need to revive their spirituality<sup>19</sup> and that means, among other things, generous and aggressive support of sharia.

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<sup>18</sup>NN, 25 June/2001.

<sup>19</sup>S. Obassa, 25 June/2002, p. 14.

Aliyu Tilde, a columnist, describes Nigerian religion and piety at some length in a Gamji article of his. There is too much there to summarize it all here. Hence, I urge you to read Appendix 8. It is a *must* read. He describes both the great religiosity of Nigerians and its opposite, the depressing level of corruption. Nigerian “places of worship are flooded with worshipers at a frequency and quanta that captures the admiration of the eye. Without any contention, the world conceded the gold medal of religiousness to us.” That same world also also “gave us a silver medal for corruption; last year, we won the bronze, notwithstanding our religiousness.”

Aliyu sees a “paradox:” “Religiousness is not the same as piety.” He defines “religiousness” as being surrounded by symbols of religion and attending religious ceremonies.

*Piety, on the other hand, is not the act of worship but the righteousness that is attained or improved upon by getting closer to God through worship and numerous other means. As the pious leaves his place of worship, he remains conscious of God in all his worldly dealings. In his relationship with other people, his actions are characterized by affection and sympathy, the precursors of kindness, tolerance, honesty, dedication and communality.... While belief remains in the heart, these acts are the expressions of piety, the ultimate goal of religiousness.*

“The relationship between religiousness and piety...is supposed to be a positive one.” Unfortunately, this is not the case with most Nigerians, according to Tilde. So what is/are the solution(s)? He prescribes changes among religious leaders that are found in the appropriate section below in this chapter. Writing as he does at a time Christmas and Ramadan are close to each other, as far as the people are concerned,

*let Christmas and another Ramadan return and find a better composition of worshippers among us. Let them meet Nigerians who are imbued with the fear of God and all what it engenders: the supremacy of God in belief and in action; the belief in the Hereafter and its reflection in whatever we do, belief in the universality of the human race nurtured by love and sympathy; and belief in dedication to duty and profession. The same fear of God dispels the ills of sin, crime, dishonesty, hate, bigotry, intolerance and laziness. God, the Most High, said: “Whatever good you do, God knows it; and make provisions (for the Hereafter); and certainly, the best of (such) provisions is the fear of God.”<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>20</sup>A. Tilde, n.d., Gamji. Appendix 8.

## Secularism versus Wholism xxxx

The natural consequence of the revival of sharia should be to efface the secular spirit that colonialism has planted in the Muslim community. The revival can be described as a reaction to secularism.<sup>21</sup> Many articles have been published during both the BA and AZ periods that express a deep longing for the restoration of the full sharia, an important step for which is usually seen to be the erasure of this secularism. An anonymous *Radiance* writer strongly urged a serious campaign to stop “the spread of un-Islamic social and moral values. We have reached a stage when we should say ‘No’ to secular values,” these being described as “luxury, materialism, prostitution, alcoholism, profiteering and all kinds of evils” that “have dehumanised our people, and turned them into a helpless and defenceless lot, incapable even of doing things necessary for their survival.”<sup>22</sup>

Tawfiq Ladan, in common with so many Muslim authors, traced the immorality and lawlessness that currently plague Nigeria to the secularism bequeathed by the colonial regime. Over against that, he wrote, “The minimum demand of Muslims is that the Islamic social morality, must be restored so that Muslim cities can regain their sanctity and integrity.” The secular value system “must be contained.” Since he wrote a decade before the Zamfara Declaration, the term “sharia” was not yet on everyone’s lips. He did not use the term, but he surely demanded its re-instatement by his emphasis on the restoration of morality. And whose duty would it be to accomplish all these laudable goals of the BZ version of the revival? It is the government’s function to promote the “morally right” and to eliminate evil. And thus his “minimum demand” was directed first of all to the governments in the country.<sup>23</sup>

Hamzah Dawood quoted Qur’an 3:109, which says, “You are the best nation raised up for men.” The Muslim community is to “serve as shining example to others in

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<sup>21</sup>J. Boer, vol. 4, 2005, pp. 40-41.

<sup>22</sup>*Radiance*, No. 4/83, p. 40. Living as I do in downtown Vancouver, Canada, I almost envision these comments addressed to my city of 2007 with its devastating epidemic of drugs, homelessness, prostitution, entitlement and welfarism. Authorities and ministries are powerless in their search for solutions because of their secular blindness and political correctness. *It is that very secularism that underlies it all. As long as that is not addressed, they will only end up spending more and more money while the epidemic continues to spread and absorb more scarce resources.* Nigerian Muslims see this clearly.

<sup>23</sup>T. Ladan, 13-27 Jan/89, p. 12.

all human endeavours.” In fact, “Allah established a model state of Islam in order that the administration of the Islamic state, under the leadership of the Prophet, will serve as a precedent.” Allah’s model was a success. Unfortunately, shortly after the initial period, an “animalistic tendency in man was let loose, the door was opened for godlessness, which was becoming innate in some Muslims of that time.”<sup>24</sup> However, “it is the promise of Allah that, if Muslims practise the real Islam, that is, a system that does not separate the spiritual from the mundane, they will regain their past glory; they will be free from economic and political shackles and the rest of the world will be taken to the promised land. The only solution is permanent adherence to the reality [of Allah].”<sup>25</sup> Be sure you recognize the lingo: Dawood was advocating the replacement of secular dualism with sharia.

The same Ibrahim Bello we met earlier, put it in global terms but definitely had the Nigerian situation in mind as well when he wrote:

*The Western world has succeeded in secularising the world through planting secular philosophy via colonialism. The world is today visually secular in outlook and orientation. This is the root of the weakness of the rest of the world. Until the third world realises the role secularism is playing in perpetuating their exploitation by the West, they will continue to be subjected, humiliated and perpetually exploited.*

*Their only way out of this deadly trap is to come to terms with Allah, the Creator of the world, to recognise and align themselves with His plan for this world. They will be doing this through embracing Islam as a faith and a way of life. It is only this path that will save the third world, for it will cause the hitherto exploitative relationship between the West and the rest of the world to come to an abrupt end. Bilateral and mutual relationship will then be the order of the day.*<sup>26</sup>

In a series of articles on secularism, Hamid Bobboyi, a Nigerian at North Western University in Chicago, USA, discussed the mental and spiritual bifurcation of the Muslim mind that the colonial virus of secularism has instilled.<sup>27</sup> After independence, “many

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<sup>24</sup>Does this amount to an affirmation of a fall into sin? That is not generally accepted in Islam.

<sup>25</sup>H. Dawood, 2 Nov/90.

<sup>26</sup>I. I. Bello, 13-27 Jan/89, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup>See J. Boer, VOL. 2, 2004, pp. 33-34; vol. 5, 2005, Appendix 19 for the first installment; vol. 6?

notable leaders in the North attempted to develop bridges between the two compartments of their bifurcated minds.” He upheld the Sardauna as a prominent example of this attempt. He expressed the hope that “this bridge-building will ultimately shatter this heinous barrier and usher in minds that are thoroughly perfused with the spirit of Islam and ready and willing to put the dictates of Allah first in both their private and public lives.”<sup>28</sup>

Hussaini Abdu described in his perceptive paper the attitude of both “Muslim secularists” and “Islamic populists” towards the state. Most of these are university lecturers or graduates, who have been berated by people like Ibrahim Sulaiman as having fallen victim to the colonial virus of secularism. Abdu intimated that both “advance a conception of the state that is quite similar in purpose and form to the very secular state they oppose.” Both “see the state as an instrument in the hands of ruling powers for imposing a particular conception of the world and specific values on the society. They insist that the Islamic state should be charged with the duty of imposing Islamic law on the larger society.” Abdu had come to the conclusion that “the position of contemporary [Muslim] populist movements stand in direct contradiction not only to Islamic values and beliefs, but are also contrary to political practices developed in historical Muslim societies.” Though the secularists and populists will undoubtedly have resented Abdu’s suggested similarity and disclaimer, his description of the popular views giving wide-ranging functions to the state are very much reflected in their writings.<sup>29</sup> Abdu himself preferred a more democratic society, but he did not represent the majority of authors. They preferred a government more pro-active in religion, one that nips the secular virus in the bud before it spreads and does its damage.

You may remember Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa as a strong opponent to secularism, both in its Western and its Muslim forms.<sup>30</sup> He identified Muslim secularists with ABU. He challenged their use of Shehu Danfodio for support of their theories by demanding thatg they should “come out openly” and quote “their own secularist authorities” and quit quoting Danfodio and others out of context lest they become guilty of manipulation of

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<sup>28</sup>H. Bobboyi, 13 Jan/89, p. 5. This is the major subject of vol. 4 of this series..

<sup>29</sup>H. Abdu, 7 Mar/2003.

<sup>30</sup>For information about Muslim secularists, see J. Boer, 2005, vol. 4, ch. 7; vol. 6, 2007, pp. 241-245.

religion themselves. He advised them to pay attention to the governors and, if they found them wanting, “flush them out and choose others.”<sup>31</sup>

Secularism among Muslims was often seen as a danger that must be marginalized or, in the words of Ado-Kurawa, “flushed out,” for it undermines the sharia campaign.

Ibrahim Umar did not hide his disdain for it:

*The greatest enemy the Muslim community has today in the attempt to live by the Sharia, according to Professor Tijjani El-Miskin, is not the Christian, the Jew or the Pagans but the secular fanatics who profess to be Muslims. According to the Holy Qur'an, “In their hearts is a disease; and God has increased their disease; and grievous is the penalty they (incur) because they are false (to themselves).” (HQ II:10) These secular zealots are real hypocrites who have been brainwashed and rendered renegades by Western education and propaganda such that, when Sharia is mentioned, their hearts are filled with disgust, contempt and horror. What are we to do with such as reject the establishing of sharia? This is what God told His Prophet (SAW), “O Prophet, strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is hell, an evil refuge (indeed)!” (HQ LXI:9)*

*Sincere Muslims should not allow themselves to be intimidated and cowed by this bunch of diehard renegades. I quite agree with Malam Yakubu Ali, former editor of the New Nigerian, that constitutionally in a Federal System like Nigeria, Zamfara State has the right to adopt Sharia, and that if for all the past decades Muslims were tolerant of secularism being forced upon them, why can't these secular fundamentalists also be tolerant of Muslims choice done through a democratic means? We now know who have zero tolerance.*

*Governor Makarfi and his likes should be warned of God's ultimatum. “Those who reject the Book (Qur'an) and the (revelations) with which We sent Our apostles shall soon know, when the yokes shall be round their necks, and the chains; they shall be dragged in the boiling fetid fluid; then in the fire shall they be burned” (Qur'an 40:70-72).<sup>32</sup>*

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<sup>31</sup>I. Ado-Kurawa, 2003, pp. 400-401.

<sup>32</sup>I. Umar, 19 Dec/99. Appendix 6 xxxx

I have found a surprising admission in Ado-Kurawa's report on a British conference that Western secularism can be tolerant, tolerated and even comfortable. The Ado-Kurawa we overheard in Volumes 4 and 6 almost cursing secularism and its fallout could also write that in the UK environment secularism gives Muslims

*enough space to practice their religion more than in most Muslim countries. One could meet an immigration officer with Islamic dress in a British airport. This is not possible in Turkey, Tunisia or Nigeria. British Muslims can start a housing project and name the streets after Muslim leaders. For example, in London there are areas named after Danfodio, Bello and Abdullahi. This is not possible in some predominantly Muslim areas of Nigeria,<sup>33</sup> where tribal xenophobes have vilified these great Muslims leaders. Britain is acknowledged as one of the most liberal states.*

It would seem that, away from the charged sharia atmosphere at home, one can suddenly feel free to drop one's guard of ideology and be honest about the facts. Ado-Kurawa even referred somewhat sympathetically to another scholar's term "weak secularism" that would separate "state from religion but not politics from religion." *So it is possible for Muslims to feel comfortable under certain forms of secularism, even in a largely non-Muslim environment.* Ado-Kurawa being a serious pro-sharia Muslim scholar, his admission of this important point deserves wide dialogue and exploration in Nigeria!

Though the Muslim community in Nigeria has long advocated multiculturalism,<sup>34</sup> there are unacceptable varieties of it. Ado-Kurawa, with cautious and limited approval, summarized an analysis of the British variety explained by an unidentified scholar at a conference in Britain. The British type has one culture superseding others. "Senior officials of the British Government believe in some form of supposedly 'British norms and values' that cannot be contested. For example, the Home Secretary demands that ethnic and religious minorities accept what he calls British 'norms and values.'" Ado-Kurawa approved of the description but obviously did not like that kind of inequality, even though it is very close to the model Nigerian Muslims advocates of pluralism have

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<sup>33</sup>It is possible in some predominantly Christian states. The central shopping street in Jos is called "Ahmadu Bello Way."

<sup>34</sup>Look for "multi-culturalism" and "multi-religion" in the indices of vols. 4 and 6.

in mind, but now with Islam in the saddle. I am not sure he recognized the parallel or how he would react if confronted with it. But he definitely did not favour a multicultural arrangement with another culture, presumably secular, superseding that of Islam.

The same unnamed lecturer also spoke on Islam and liberalism, for our purposes just another synonym for “secularism.” He confirmed a point I have made several times in this series, namely that they have some striking similarities: “They both have universal claims and answers to the organization of society.” Ado-Kurawa found this a “brilliant presentation,” especially because the speaker did not intend “to find some theoretical or formal integration of Islam and liberalism.” Instead, he tried “to find spaces of accommodation on both sides that may recognize the specificities and sensitivities of Islam within the social structures that have been profoundly shaped by liberalism [secularism].” Here Ado-Kurawa surely hit the jackpot: This is *the* big question between Islam and secularism and, therefore, of Nigeria. Both proudly claim universality for themselves and despise all who do not recognize it as ignoramuses or *jahilai*, as the Hausa Muslim would put it. And both expect the world to accept their perspective as the only natural and enlightened way to go. Ado-Kurawa apparently found it acceptable in the UK for majority liberalism and minority Islam to seek accommodation that would give space to both. But would he find that acceptable in Nigeria as well? Perhaps not, for, as you can read under the heading “Census Issues” in this chapter, he thought of Islam as the majority in Nigeria. There he would likely recommend the opposite, possibly with secularism finding accommodation within the majority culture of Islam.

Ado-Kurawa had much positive to say about the Enlightenment in his paper of 2003, but then he asked, “Does Islam need any Enlightenment?” It is the same question as to whether Islam needs secularism. The answer has been extensively treated in Volume 4. Actually, he answered his own question: Islam already had its own enlightenment long before the West did. Without our going into the details of that enlightenment, he made it clear that

*Muslims are not willing to accept the elevation of Man to the status of God as was done in the West, where human desires were elevated to transgress God’s bounds. And what is the price? The atrocities committed in the world today are as a result of this elevation. The barbarian instinct survived under the layer of*

*humanistic civilization of the West, facilitated by the Enlightenment. All the evil 'isms' were products of that elevation of Man to the status of God—secularism. It gave birth to Fascism, Nazism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, communism and the current American imperialism.*<sup>35</sup>

Muslih Yahya of UJ gently emphasized the need for dethroning secularism, especially its strong resistance to religion in the public square. Though such scholars think of themselves as free from bias, tradition and “preconceived notions,” these characteristics in fact play a significant role in their attempts to keep religion out of the region. In fact, history is proving them wrong in that religion has made a strong comeback, if, indeed, it ever left. He approvingly quoted John Witte of the Emory University School of Law, who saw “the shift to more public religion as both inevitable and necessary.” Yahya expressed his agreement also with Rosalind Hackett, to whose paper he responded and who declared “the need to historicise and contextualise the concepts of secularism and religion,” herewith calling, I believe, for relativising or dethroning its ruling position in the world of academia. Among other things, Yahya recommended that “religion be granted recognition in such a way that the atmosphere is conducive for the practice of religion” at all fronts. “A person should not be forced or compelled to be involved in practices that are contrary to the injunctions of religion, simply because he is a public officer.” “Liberal democracy should enable people to sit down together and fashion out their constitution and codes of conduct in such a way that they would take care of logical and contestable interests of all concerned.” In other words, public arrangements should be inclusive, not only sexually but also religiously. But this development “unavoidably necessitated an overdue rethinking of the role of religion in this regard,” one that should avoid the “emergence of ‘new forms of spartationism and demonisation of religious others.’”<sup>36</sup>

Ali Ahmad has an interesting take on secularism and state neutrality. At the 2004 UJ conference, Abdullahi An-Na'im, a Sudanese scholar at Emory University, USA, strongly opposed government enforcement of sharia.<sup>37</sup> Ali Ahmad preferred the former's choice of “state religious neutrality” above secularism. It was a step in the right direction,

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<sup>35</sup>I. Ado-Kurawa, July/2003. Appendix 9

<sup>36</sup>M. Yahya, 2005, pp. 101-106.

<sup>37</sup>A. An-Na'im, 2005, 327-357.

though not the final solution. He argued that, even if such neutrality were acceptable in principle, it would not fit the Nigerian situation. Currently, “the rhetoric of state neutrality is misplaced,” because “the state structure, its organs and processes are biased. Neutrality is a mere façade where vestiges of colonialism and foreign currents of globalisation run amok.” In Nigeria, the colonial government distorted sharia and imposed Christo-secularism so that, before government can establish neutrality, it has to undo the harm. It has to remove the imposition and correct the distortions. That would mean a lot of work.<sup>38</sup>

In Islam, the demise of secularism is meant to lead to the restoration of a wholistic perspective, probably the most important issue in the sharia campaign. In this context, the relationship of sharia and the Constitution becomes a pivotal point. Sani Salih Mustapha dug fairly deep into the question. I reproduce a few quotes from him: “No sensible and reasonable person endowed with the power of discrimination will accept the Constitution as a *charia* and *Din*.” “No history can trace the origin of the Nigerian Constitution from a Supreme Authority.” He had little use for Western educated Muslims who considered sharia and the Constitution “synonymous terms.” But if they are not synonymous, *there is a close relationship with the Constitution being derived from sharia. Mustapha advanced a bold view here that deserves our full attention and which I therefore quote extensively:*

*The Constitution is part and parcel of the sharia and Din of Allah.*

*It is embedded in the unity and design of Allah. Natural law, as conceived by the West, is not independent of the sharia and Din of Allah. The classical theory of natural law, as Hart puts it, is that “there are certain principles of human conduct awaiting discovery by human reason, with which man-made law must conform, it is to be value. Mr. Hart did not know that sharia has called for the Muslims to use their mental faculty of reason to seek that which is not mentioned in it. All rulings taken on the basis of reason will not differ from the injunctions of Allah and His last Apostle. Mr. John Austin in his lectures on jurisprudence says, “Of the divine laws...some are revealed or promulgated, and others are unrevealed. Such of the laws of Allah as are unrevealed are*

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<sup>38</sup>A. Ahmad, 2005, p. 367.

*not infrequently enoted by the following names of phrases: “the law of nature,” “natural law,” or [simply as] the law manifested to man by...nature or reason....*

*The fundamental position of Islam is that there is no such thing as a natural law or constitution outside of the realm of sharia, on which we can rely as soon as we discover that a rule of law is not directly discoverable from the texts. Such a rule needs to be discovered directly or indirectly from the principles of Islamic law, and not from some ominous brooding in the sky.*

Mustapha then gives an example of the prescribed three-months waiting period after divorce. This was in order to determine pregnancy. With the advance of medical technology, this waiting period is no longer necessary. Different governments may rule differently on this issue. Hence, variation has always marked the Muslim world and its various constitutions.

*The relationship between sharia and constitution is that of a matured tree with living roots, trunk, branches and leaves free of any viral infection. As long as the roots are present, the tree will continue to bear leaves, flowers and fruits. The leaves shed from time to time and are replaced by new ones. The roots, trunk and the branches are sacred and are not interfered with, provided the tree is to bear leaves, flowers and fruits. The shedding of the leaves is seasonal, as well as their colour and size.*

*If this analogy is acceptable to Nigeria, there is no justification for Christians and Muslims to oppose the sharia. Muslims should stop disparaging the Nigerian Constitution, because it is part of the sharia and Din of Allah, revealed to us through His last Apostle. If the Constitution of Nigeria and the world generally is part and parcel of the sharia and Din of Allah, what is then their relationship? If it becomes necessary for Muslims to define the relationship....<sup>39</sup>*

We have here, it would appear to me, a bold statement about the relationship between knowledge gained from sharia and from human reasoning that does away with the classic Western dichotomy between faith and reason and is in some way parallel to the Kuyperian view of an underlying unity. For a healthy sharia regime, Mustapha demands a redefinition of that relationship in terms of a more classic Muslim tradition from before its being rent asunder by Western secularism Muslims. To Mustapha deepened philosophical reflection and redefinition is a must for a healthy sharia dispensation.

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<sup>39</sup>S. Mustapha, 10 Dec/99.

**DA'WAH**    xxxx

This section deals with the Muslim *da'wah* or extension programme that various Muslims believe to be necessary for a positive sharia situation. Extensive BZ material is found in Appendix 10 and has a strong section on Tijani El-Miskin. The more recent AZ stuff is located here and in an inset down below in this chapter.

Recently, the National Conference on Sharia and Constitutional Process (NCSCP) called on all major Muslim organisations “to intensify efforts in spreading the knowledge and understanding of sharia throughout the country.” It further proposed the establishment of a body to “co-ordinate the initiatives of various organs working for the full implementation of sharia and urged all Muslims to work hard for the realisation of all the goals and objectives of sharia.”<sup>40</sup>

Governor Sani made a recommendation that made him sound like a 20<sup>th</sup> century Kuyperian, when leaders of the National Association of Islamic Medical Association of Nigeria paid him a courtesy call. He suggested that “Islam is growing in all ramifications and as such , faces a lot of challenged worldwide.” He pointed out “that all hands must be on deck in all professions to confront the challenges.” Muslims in all professions must promote Islamic culture through *da'wah*.” For this reason, he wanted “Muslims in all professions to establish associations with a view to promoting the ideals of Islam.” He further urged them to extend their organization throughout the country “so as to unite Muslim medical practitioners.” He ended up promising the Association his assistance.<sup>41</sup>

Muhammad Hassan Tom wrote: “It is especially important that Muslims and non-Muslims alike be enlightened about human rights. Genuine seekers of human rights for all have tried virtually all options—except Islam, which has been buried in near anonymity and at best presented in unpalatable perspective.” And then he added the clincher: “Another reason is that the sharia model does indeed represent the ultimate model of its kind. Considering what God has already given, mankind does not even need to look for any rights. We just have to awaken to them, exercise and enjoy them to their God-blest fullest.”<sup>42</sup> That is genuine Muslim *da'wah*.

The Assembly of Muslims in Nigeria, an organisation of which I have not heard previously, organised a lecture to which they invited the general public, ostensibly both

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<sup>40</sup>I. Adamu, 22 Nov/99.

<sup>41</sup>DT, 11 Aug/2003.

<sup>42</sup>M. Tom, 3 Jan/2000.

Christians and Muslims. Under the title, “The Challenges of Islamisation: The Sudanese Experience,” I understand this to have been an attempt to wake up the people to the Muslim mission and, possibly, to alert them to some traps along the way. Given the personalities involved, it could not have been an anti-sharia effort. They were Sadiq El-Mahdi, a former Prime Minister of Sudan as guest speaker, Ibrahim Sulaiman as a “discussant,” Sultan Maccido as guest of honour and Lateef Adegbite as chairman.<sup>43</sup> Their presence constituted the highest recommendation for the event.

It should be noticed that this public announcement came during the height of sharia tensions, when I would have expected Muslims to be more circumspect and play down sensitive issues like Islamisation. But here it was, right in the face of the Christian public without any attempt at disguise, rather brazenly contradicting their denial of the Christian accusation of Islamisation. Someone in the strategy department was making his money elsewhere, it seems.

The main sampler of recommendations for *da'wah* is found in the Ibrahim Sulaiman inset later in this chapter. That is where you get a real and extensive taste of Muslim *da'wah*, together with its ambiguities.

### **A Cluster of Life Style Attitudes xxxx**

There is a whole cluster of ideas that can hardly be separated from each other. A writer who deals with one invariably brings in the others. Though I tried to separate them into different sections, they resisted such compartmentalization. So I treat them together here in this section. The cluster includes tolerance, co-existence, co-operation, compromise, respect, sensitivity, forgiveness and similar notions.

A basic solution offered by the Muslim community is the need for tolerance. Christians do not recognize or experience the tolerance of which Muslims boast so much. Neither do Muslims recognize the same in Christians. Hence, Christians are warned that “Muslim tolerance demands reciprocity. Fanning hatred and peddling unfounded rumours are both counter-productive and injurious to their status in the Muslim communities in which they reside.”<sup>44</sup>

For some, tolerance does not cut it: It does not go far enough. Imam Ashafa, the Chief Imam of Ashafa Central Mosque in Kaduna and the Joint Executive Director of the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) of the Muslim/ Christian Dialogue Forum, spoke “with passion on the need for

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<sup>43</sup>Assembly of Muslims in Nigeria, 29 June/2001.

<sup>44</sup>MSS, *Radiance*, no. 4/83, p. 44.

peaceful coexistence. He said people can work harmoniously with one another without losing their religious and cultural identities. ‘In our work, we say no compromise and nobody should compromise any thing. And there is no tolerance; tolerance is not in our dictionary. Instead of tolerance we have acceptance, accept people as they are not tolerating them, tolerance is negative but acceptance is positive.’”<sup>45</sup>

In 1989, Jacob Olupona from the Obafemi Awolowo University, in cooperation with the Council for the World’s Religion, convened a conference on “Religion and Peace in Multi-Faith Nigeria,” the title of the book he edited and published privately in 1992.<sup>46</sup> Participants included Christians and Muslims. One M. A. Abdu-Raheem presented a general set of Muslim concepts and rules that he expected to go far in overcoming the crises the country was facing. Yes, talk of crisis preceded the Zamfara Declaration by at least a decade. The Muslim duty to maintain peace with God, with neighbour and with other creatures, he explained, is the “essence [of] his responsibility as *Khalifat Allah* (vicegerent of Allah) on earth. You cannot get more basic than that in Islam or, for that matter, in Christianity. Basic as this message is, for many Nigerians, grown up in an atmosphere of violence, it was a revolutionary message that needed to be pushed if peace was to be achieved. “Nobody can claim to be a Muslim, if he does not maintain a cordial and peaceful relationship with neighbours and fellow men in general,” Abdu-Raheem declared. Having emphasised this basic principle, he went on to list various attitudes to maintain and things to do in the search for peace.

First of all, he rejected all notions of compulsion. Islam “does not sanction forcing people to convert to it. He who forces or intimidates anybody to become a Muslim is guilty of a great sin against the Qur’an, which says, ‘There should be no compulsion in religion.’” “Muslims are enjoined to be sympathetic while discussing with people of other faiths. They should appreciate their point of view and reason them out of their un-islamic views with convincing argument.” “They should extend hands of goodwill and cordiality to them.”

Abdu-Raheem referred to the disadvantages colonialism placed upon Muslims.<sup>47</sup> Though that history has angered many Muslims and provoked them to hatred and violence, he rejected that approach. His concern was “to suggest ways and means of seeking redress without recourse to

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<sup>45</sup>R. Muhammad, 3 Nov/2007. Appendix 11. For more information about Ashafa and the Centre, turn to Christian Appendix xx pp. xxxx. And Boer chapter on Religion (6?), p. 18 xxxx Get final page from actual book

<sup>46</sup>See also Appendix 35, pp. 104-106.

<sup>47</sup>See vols. 2, 4 and 6 of this series for details.

violence and disturbing the public peace.” “Force is not the proper means of bring about the desired change. It is when there is peace that lasting solutions can be found.”

At the same conference, R. Deremy Abubakre of the University of Ilorin similarly called for tolerance and mutual fairness. He insisted that “it is wrong to subsume non-Muslims in the jurisdiction of sharia. That any Muslim leader at any point in history and at any place did that, does not accord such error legitimacy. The sharia itself is unequivocal on this.” But, he continued, “it is equally unfair for non-Muslims to reject sharia dispensation as long as this applies only to Muslims. The issue {solution?} is simply to take non-Muslims out of the sharia, but not to take sharia out of the Constitution.”<sup>48</sup>

Throughout this chapter and, in fact, this entire series, the importance of education has always been recognized by Muslims. Islam “abhors ignorance,” Abdu-Raheem insisted. Hence,

*if every Muslim is aware of how important peace is in Islam, it will go a long way in reducing incidents of violent clashes between Muslims and others. The Government owes it as a responsibility to Nigerians to provide for the teaching of each religion in all institutions of learning. The mass media should also make adequate provisions for religious instructions, not only to make everyone better informed of one’s religion, but also to make the citizens have an idea of the religion of one another. This will promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance.*

By now it will be clear that Abdu-Raheem is your average Muslim, certainly not the average *Northern* Muslim we have been reading about. No hint of violence or rancour. While especially the more militant Muslims may reject any sense of allegiance to the Constitution and the legal system, Abdu-Raheem strongly advocated obedience to “the constituted authorities” on basis of Qur’an 4:59:

*This verse clearly prohibits taking laws into one’s hand, no matter what the situation. It strictly commands all Muslims to settle differences between them and others through the proper channels. This is a lesson for the Nigerian Muslim. It is time we learnt that two wrongs do not make a right. A Muslim must learn to exercise self-restraint. That is why the Prophet says, ‘He is not strong who throws down another, but he is strong who controls his anger.’”*

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<sup>48</sup>R. D. Abubakre, 1992, p. 131.

A negative action Abdu-Raheem listed was that avoidance of rumour mongering. In Nigeria this has been a particularly dangerous feature of life. He considered it “one of the factors responsible for most of the conflicts between religious groups in the country. Many blatant lies are fabricated to incite one group against the other.” Muslims should guard against it. If people had done so, “many crises would have been averted. It is hoped that other religious groups will identify this problem and find an effective solution to it.”

Another cause for friction has been the distance between the two communities. There “is a lack of interaction between them.” This distance creates suspicion. “Efforts should be made to close ranks and to see each other as brothers and sisters.” He recommended holding “seminars, symposia, public lectures and workshops to provide avenues for religious groups to discuss matters.” Such activities will teach them to accommodate each other.

Finally, there is the familiar demand for the government to encourage harmony. “To achieve this, it must strive to create a conducive atmosphere by not favouring one group at the expense of the other.” This should be a serious consideration in the matter of appointments and in the distribution of social amenities.

Though Abdu-Raheem did not claim to have the full solution to the crises, he entertained the hope that those listed above “will be useful to formulate a kind of general approach.”<sup>49</sup> This was the hope of a man who seemed to be “without guile,” a truly irenic man without any hidden agenda. This was a Yoruba with their customary tolerance but without the syncretism. A very similar lecturer at that conference was Muhib Opeloye, whom we have already met above. His attitude of tolerance was similar as were his list of recommendations and his hopes that, if followed, they would lead to peace and harmony.

*The teachings of the Scripture on tolerance, if properly digested, could be utilised as a means of welding the adherents of the two religions into one feeling of universal brotherhood under one benevolent God. The teachings could be utilised to bring about mutual understanding and harmonious co-existence among Muslims and Christians. Islam and Christianity are both religions of tolerance and forgiveness, of mercy and compassion, of benevolence and goodwill to all. The two religions hold the love of others as the sine qua non of piety and righteousness. It is of their essence to seek man's*

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<sup>49</sup>M. Abdu-Raheem, 1992, pp. 70-80.

*reconciliation and co-operation. This was why the Prophet was prepared to enter into the treaties of co-operation with peoples of other faiths.*

*What the present-day Muslims should learn from Prophet Muhammad's treaty with the Jewish tribe and the Christians are the spirit of tolerance and co-operation with other faiths. The adherents of other religions should similarly learn to recognise the legitimate rights of the Muslims. These are the essential ingredients for peaceful and harmonious co-existence in a pluralistic Nigeria.<sup>50</sup>*

Abubakre of Ilorin University affirmed that “right from Arabia” Islam has been marked by “consistent tolerance.” It was a mark of tolerance that led the Prophet to allow non-Muslims “to decide their cases according to their customary laws and practices. It is laid down in the Qur’an itself: ‘Let the people of the Gospel decide cases by what God has revealed in the Book’ (5:50).” As Islam spread into areas where Christians or Jews were dominant, it became a “necessity to cooperate [and] compromise.” When it conquered Hindu territory, instead of treating that great mass of people as requiring *jihad*, since they were not among the approved “People of the Book,” Muslims treated them as *Dhimmi*, as a protected people. That was toleration beyond the letter of the Book. Abubakre concluded, “sensitivity and respect for each other’s views should be an important recipe to mutual tolerance in a multi-religion state like Nigeria.” Whether respect can co-exist with a kind of pride that Abubakre, along with Muslims in general, displayed is questionable. He proudly quoted one colonial governor Moloney who reportedly said that “Muslims were the most orderly, intellectual and respectable class of citizens” among the Yoruba. Or one Governor Carter who declared that Muslims were “as a rule the most intelligent portion of the country.”<sup>51</sup>

“Peaceful co-existence” is part of the cluster. Bashir Tofa, Chairman of the Bureau of Islamic Propagation (BIP), the publisher of both *The Pen* and *Alkalami*, praised the FG very much when it interfered in the proceedings of the CA by stopping the discussion on sharia.<sup>52</sup> His praise was opposite to the Christian negative reaction. Nevertheless, Tofa took this controversial interference as an opportunity to call upon both Christians and Muslims to “start working for genuine peaceful co-existence.” He furthermore prayed for God’s guidance for all who work for such cooperative peace. This, in spite of the rather vitriolic language with which he would

<sup>50</sup>M. Opeloye, 1992, p. 91.

<sup>51</sup>R. Abubakre, n.d., pp. 60-62, 65-66, 69-70.

<sup>52</sup>J. Boer, vol. 7, 2007, ch. 5, p. xxx. *Alkalami*, “*Tsai de Mahawara....*” 9-23 Dec/88, p. 1.

sometimes berate Christians. As to those who sought to foment antagonism between the two religions, well, for them it's a different story: "May hell fire be their abode."<sup>53</sup>

Christians have often been suspicious of another former military dictator, Muhammad Buhari, but, when the occasion called for it, he could recommend an attitude of goodwill and co-operation. A good year before the Zamfara Declaration, he stated:

*We must forcefully resist those who wish to set our society on the path of religious conflict. The recent past was unfortunate; the present is not good enough; and it is our duty to create a future that should become a model for all multi-religious societies. We must get together or we shall all get it together. Our two principal religions share a heritage that ought to be used to forge links between our Muslims and Christians. Both are revealed, monotheistic faiths that teach tolerance and peaceful co-existence. The recent visit of the Pope was a good sign of tolerance and mutual determination to put past mistrust aside.*"<sup>54</sup>

Sometimes this call for tolerance is found in unexpected contexts. Ibrahim Bello wrote a report on the launching of a book on Shehu Dan Fodio, the great jihadist of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the report, the Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, was quoted as saying that a careful study of Dan Fodio's works could "bring about the desired religious tolerance in the country." There was much to learn about "how Muslims and non-Muslims can live together in harmony." But side by side with these comments in Bello's article you read about "the works of the 18<sup>th</sup> century jihadists whose path must be followed by contemporary Muslims for the restoration of Islam and Muslims' glorious days."<sup>55</sup> Those were the days of Muslim hegemony over the North and the days of horror for the Middle Belt targets of Muslim slavery.<sup>56</sup>

Ibrahim Sulaiman similarly appealed to Dan Fodio's heritage:

*Our Imam, Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, taught us that the Sharia under which our Caliphate was being administered imposes on us, the duty to safeguard, preserve and defend the "six universal principles": namely, faith, life, lineage, intellect, honour and property. The most important of these principles, he emphasizes in Bayan, is the preservation, defence, protection and propagation of the faith, i.e., Islam, because, the*

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<sup>53</sup>B. Tofa, 16-30 Dec/88, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup>M. Buhari, Fourth Annual Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Lecture, 19 June/98 (*Vanguard*, 24 Apr/2003).

<sup>55</sup>I. I. Bello, 27 Oct/89, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup>J. Boer, vol. 3, 2003, pp. 203-204.

*preservation of life, lineage, property and honour are predicated solely and purposely upon the preservation of the faith. The defence of Islam, our way of life, is according to Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, the most important duty of our Caliphate, and indeed of every Muslims. No other task or endeavour is greater or more critical, or yet more strategic. The way of life we Muslims are asked to foster, promote and defend is a universal system, not parochial, not racist, not white, not black, not western, not eastern, but simply one bestowed by the One, Universal God, who hold the whole human race as His Family. The values we cherish, imbibe and propagate are transcendent values, not pedestrian, not profane, not immoral, not sinister, but values of utmost benefit to human beings - benevolent, compassionate, sincere and sincere.*

*Shehu Usman told us that in the defence of Islam, we must “mobilize all human potentials.” We understood that to mean first of all the harnessing of our intellectual potentials to build our society and our Caliphate and make them strong and unassailable. Then we must harness our natural resources in order to equip our society with all that life required, so that our people could enjoy a life worth living for, and worth dyeing for - abundant, decent, clean, noble. Thirdly, we should make our Caliphate militarily strong, able to defend itself against those who would wish to attack our way of life, or subject us to plunder and genocide. We were to spare no effort in establishing and strengthening the Islamic way of life, and make it prevalent and predominant. We therefore must preserve and enhance the dignity of Islam and defend the sanctity of our faith, our principles, our values, our homeland.<sup>57</sup>*

Another concept included in tolerance is “multi-religion.” Readers of Volume 6 should remember how often Muslims advocate it as a reality and as desirable policy for religions to pursue.<sup>58</sup> Balogun represented the mainline opinion well in his submission “that a multi-religious society is an ideal state for Nigeria.” Whether or not the content he poured into that term also represents mainline opinion is another question. To him it meant “a state where one religion is not super-imposed on the other; a society where people will have freedom of worship; where no government makes a proclamation in favour of one religion to the detriment of other religions; and a society where government does not promote any religion as the official

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<sup>57</sup>I. Usman, 20 Aug/2005.

<sup>58</sup>J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 109-110, 213, 228, 242, 283.

religion.”<sup>59</sup> His content would seem to be very close to the Nigerian Christian notion of secularism.

Because of the increased tensions that arose from the Zamfara Declaration and its aftermath, the need for tolerance became more acute and calls for it more frequently heard. During the birth pangs of the new era, Justice Oredola observed that religious tolerance in general is not well understood.

*Religious fanaticism and extremism are gaining higher grounds. This should be checked. Nigerians who are true and sincere will not allow religions to tear apart the very fabric of our mutual existence. It is thus disheartening that adherents of religions adopt irrational postures, because, according to them, in matters of religion people have to be irrational, since faith is involved. Nothing could be further from the truth and nothing more damaging in our circumstances.*

A few paragraphs further, taking into consideration similarities and differences between the two religions, Oredola concluded that “these differences do not in any way preclude co-existence and co-operation between the two. What is paramount is to learn about each of the two religions and to understand their similarities and dissimilarities. The differences need not be accentuated or exaggerated for co-existence to occur. They should co-exist happily.”<sup>60</sup>

Only a few months into the AZ era, Zubaire Kazaure, a one-time Nigerian diplomat in Tanzania, exhorted both religions that it was “high time that they freed themselves from this mentality of mutual enmity. After all, Christianity stands for most of what Islam stands for.” They are both monotheistic and heirs of Abraham. In addition they share eschatological hopes and “almost identical standards of ethical behaviour,” emphasis on love, egalitarianism and brotherhood. Kazaure noted that the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) officially recognized these commonalities and officially adopted them during the Second Vatican Council. The Church claims to have “high regard for Muslims.” “The Second Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding for the benefit of all men. Let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.” Yoonus Abdullahi appealed “to the good Christians of our land to imbibe the principle of tolerance and apply dialogue in all we do and say as brothers and sisters in Nigeria.” After all, the Pope himself has recommended this attitude. He cautioned, “To tolerate a thing from which

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<sup>59</sup>K. Bolagun, 12/86, p. 65.

<sup>60</sup>M. Oredola, 25 Dec/99, p. 20.

we differ, to allow free expression of views and opinions contrary to our own, is becoming rare in our society today. The idea of a few vocal individuals that every deviation from their ways of thinking must be opposed tooth and nail, even with the threat of strike, demonstration and violence, will not be good for the democratic posture of Nigeria.” The British Council of Churches supported the spirit of these RCC statements in its Guidelines of 1979: “Christians affirm those things which they believe to be true, good and wholesome within Islam, thanking God for them. They count it a privilege to help Muslims to discharge the obligations which they believe they owe to God.”<sup>61</sup>

Lateef Adegbite promoted “religious tolerance as a cardinal rule” for Christian-Muslim interaction. “Tolerance consists in the recognition of and respect for such differences as exist between them. In this regard, the teaching of Islam on inter-religious relationships is very instructive: ‘To you, your religion, and to me, mine.’ In other words, it is improper for one religious group to impose its ways on others.”<sup>62</sup> Isma’ila Zakariya encouraged Christians “to show understanding in the implementation of sharia.” It “would not mean the cancellation of all transactions between Muslims and Christians.” For example, other courts and banks “would continue to exist for the use of Christians.” Sani Mustapha of Abuja appealed to Christians and their leaders to “seek the co-operation and support of those who know what Islam and the sharia are telling us about for the betterment of our society, peace and progress. The Christians must cooperate in seeing that the sharia is established. They should be its principal advocates, while keeping to their faith, because they should benefit from it more than the Muslim community.”<sup>63</sup>

Nafi’u Baba-Ahmed, General Secretary of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria, predicted that Kaduna State “would not know peace unless the two warring groups allow the other to practise its religion as it deems fit and in as much as it does not infringe on the rights of others.” He was of the opinion that the contemplated division of Kaduna State in two, a Muslim and Christian section, would only “compound the problem rather solve it, as it will create another set of religious minorities” within each. The only answer is “respect for religious right and tolerance. Otherwise we should learn to live with riots, violence and death, because each group will always lose its head once its religion is perceived to be on the defensive.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Z. Kazaure, 22 Mar/2000. Appendix 12. Y. Abdullahi, 31 Dec/99.

<sup>62</sup>L. Adegbite, CCC, 2000, p. 81; NIREC, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup>S. Mustapha, 4 Nov/99.

<sup>64</sup>I. Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003.

Muslim calls for this cluster of attitudes were numerous, day after day, lecture after lecture, conference after conference. Sheikh Ishmaila Zakariya, founder of *Jama'atu Izalatil bid'ah Wa'ikamatis Sunnah*, called on Muslims "to live in peace with non-Muslims."<sup>65</sup> Abdullahi Adamu, Governor of Nasarawa State, speaking to the Northern [Governors'] Peace Conference at Kaduna, on December 1, 2004, pronounced as follows: "But we cannot search for peace outside ourselves. Peace resides in the mind of men and women. Wars and disagreements begin in the mind. The same mind that hatches wars and disagreements also hatches peace. A meaningful search for peace must begin with an honest admission that there is absence of peace. Let us so admit. Things have fallen apart. The north has become a killing field as a consequence of growing social, ethnic and religious intolerance." That is the problem as the Governor saw it. The solution? It was to go back to the mythical past of a unified House of the North with benight father Ahmadu Bello in charge.

*We must get back to those times when our tribes and religions were instruments of unity and peaceful co-existence and not a source of discord and strife. The Premier of the then Northern Region and our revered leader, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardaunan Sokoto, of blessed memory, always spoke fondly and genuinely of the North as a family. He saw himself as a father of the region. And he showed that he was an ideal political father. The sense of family infused all his actions and decisions. He promoted a Northern family in which the sons of the rich and the sons of the poor ate from the communal bowl like blood brothers. He brought the sons of royalty and the sons of commoners together to forge a common purpose in the Federal Republic. He promoted religious tolerance and inter-ethnic harmony. He sought for the best for the region. He fought for what was best for the people. For us, he gave his life in the prime of his political career.*

*The house he built has more or less fallen. The region is in disarray because the bond of the Northern family has snapped. The North has degenerated into an atomistic society in perpetual conflict with itself; a vampire sucking its own blood. It has been the North against the North. Even Northern military men turned their guns against the North. The concept of the core North and the Middle Belt is something we cannot run away from. Some of us believe that the attempt by the people of the Middle Belt region, also known as the North-Central zone, to create their own identity is inimical the northern*

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<sup>65</sup>NN, 22 Nov/99.

*interests. Its leaders are accused of attempting to divide the North. It seems to me that we have judged them without trying to find out what their problems or their worries are.*

*This agitation has a long political history dating back to the years before independence.*

Adamu suggested,

*If there are fears about the agitation in any quarters, the most sensible thing is to discuss these these fears and find a remedy to them. The Northern Peace Forum is a clarion call on northern political, business, traditional and community leaders to rise up and shoulder the task of restoring the house the Saradauna built. This meeting raises the hope that we have heard and answered the clarion call. The house will not be ruined by either the short sightedness or the self-centredness of any one of us. We must draw the line in the sand at this forum.*

*Let us be prepared to tell one another the bitter home truth where necessary. Let us have the grace to accept the truth. This forum is not an inquisition. No one is on trial here. As we begin this meeting, let us also bear in mind that the failure of a society is not the failure of the gods but of men and women who choose not to call a spade by its correct name. The times call for brutal frankness. Let us be frank. Conscience is wounded by dishonesty and pretensions.*

While the Governor pleaded for Northern unity, including the MB, he made the following amazing statement: “The special mark of our cultural training is to respect and support those in positions of authority. Our religion teaches that power comes from God. It also teaches us that God cannot make mistakes. It is our moral and religious duty to support the leader that God chooses. The will of Allah must always remain supreme. That is the foundation of our religious faith.” He clearly assumed that Islam defines the North, but that very attitude is a major reason for the breakup he so bemoans!<sup>66</sup> Unbelievable! Some Muslims, it seems, never learn. You will read of the attitude of MB leaders in Appendix 35.<sup>67</sup>

Baba Lemu of Jalingo called “on all non-Muslims to co-operate with their Muslim brothers over the issue of sharia, as it is not a jihad or time bomb as popularly ascribed by its antagonists to a peaceful and united Nigeria.”<sup>68</sup> In a communique, the Kogi State Council of

<sup>66</sup>A. Adamu, 2004. Appendix 13.

<sup>67</sup>Appendix 35, pp. 56-58.

<sup>68</sup>B. Leme, 31 Dec/99. The reference to bomb is probably a reminder of Osa Director’s article, . “Sharia Akbar! Sharia Ak-bomb!!” in *TELL*, 15 Nov/99. See also Ayodele Akinkuotu’s “Defusing the Sharia Bomb,” *TELL*, 17 Apr/2000, p. 12.

Ulama “advised Christians to give sharia a chance “as the system is only meant to ensure moral rectitude” and other virtues such as “peaceful co-existence which Christianity itself preaches.”<sup>69</sup> The recently appointed Sultan Muhammad Merced, President of the NSCIA, “appealed to non-Muslims to seek legal redress if they feel threatened by it.” The Council insisted that Christians “are not subjected to sharia.”<sup>70</sup>

Hussaini Abdu of the Nigerian Defence Academy in Kaduna, bundled a whole range of political and social virtues together. “Islam advocates numerous nonviolent and peace building values and expects Muslims to live by them.” They are “supported by the Qur’an and the Hadith (the Prophet’s sayings). One of these is the duty to pursue justice” (Qur’an 5:8). Islam is firmly against oppression and insists on helping the needy. Another important set of principles “is that all humans are God’s creation, have sacred lives, and thus are all equal (Qur’an 7:11).” Islam rejects “special privileges based on race, ethnicity, or tribal affiliation. All Muslims are to respect and preserve human life (Qur’an 5:32).” Islam stands for “peace, which is a state of physical, mental, spiritual and social harmony (Qur’an 5:64)” Then there is the emphasis on “tolerance and kindness to other people (Qur’an 16:90).” The Prophet himself used “nonviolent methods to resist those who persecuted him. He never resorted to violence or force. Peacemaking and negotiation are considered more effective than aggression and violent confrontation. In fact, the meaning of the word ‘Islam’ itself connotes peace.” Another Muslim virtue is forgiveness (Qur’an 23:96). Thus, “Muslims are urged to live in harmony and peace with all fellow humans.”<sup>71</sup>

We have heard the many Muslim complaints about lack of respect and sensitivity towards them on the part of Christians, hatred even and strong prejudice. Such complaints have solid ground. If you have read the Christian-oriented volumes in this series, you have come across many instances of it. In view of this situation, there were/are many calls from Muslim to Muslim to shore up relations with their Christian neighbours. Such calls come especially from emirs and chiefs. The Shehu of Borno, Mustapha Umar El-Kanemi, encouraged his subjects “*da su cigaba da zaman lafiya da*

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<sup>69</sup>S. Gaya, 19 Dec/99.

<sup>70</sup>CC, “Nigerian State...,” 13 Nov/2000, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup>H. Abdu, 7 Mar/2003. Some of these claims are open to serious challenge!

*aminci tsakaninsu da sauran al'ummomi na kasar nan.*” His motivation was that such positive relationships with others are helpful in evangelism.<sup>72</sup>

Muhammad Gashua argued that “nothing short of according each other the deserved respect” will bring peace and stability to Nigeria. “Such respect must include allowing each faith the healthy atmosphere to put on their fundamental requests by avoiding emotions, insularity, etc. and, especially, the selfish desire to oppose requests for mere opposition sake. Muslims, more than anybody, deserve such respect, realizing the fact that they are taken too far for a ride by their Christian brothers.” Nigerians and their leaders, including members of the CA of the day, “must learn to respect each others’ sensitivities, especially on emotive issues like religion, in order to allow a healthy atmosphere to reign.” Fair enough, but one wonders how serious Gashuwa was about this respect when in between these commendable statements, he threw in the following: “It is ironic that Christianity, a child of imperialism and an agent of neo-colonialism, has no blueprint of its own making, other than transplanting the neo-colonial traits.”<sup>73</sup> That hardly betrays respect!

P. A Dopamu observed,

*No religious understanding and cooperation can be achieved, if we think that others must subscribe to our own religion. All religions must be allowed and encouraged to go on with their beliefs and practices. There must be no idea that a particular religion must superimpose its tenets on others. Since religion should guide the human family into wholeness, we should always inspire in men a wholesome respect for other people’s religion so that religion may achieve this goal. If men have the right to seek salvation through their own religion, others also have the same right. In doing this, we have to demonstrate a certain level of emotional maturity.*<sup>74</sup>

Citing Usman Bugaje, Ibrahim Umar declared that “sharia should be implemented with absolute wisdom and sincerity. “Euphoria and emotion” should not becloud “our vision.” “If we reduce our march to the ideal Qur’anic state to mob action, terror and

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<sup>72</sup>Alkalami, “*Shehun Barno...*,” 31 Mar/89-14 Apr/89, p. 16. English translation: “They should continue to live in peace and trust with all the people in this land.”

<sup>73</sup>M. Gashua, 2 Dec/88, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup>Quoted by K. Balogun, Dec/86, pp. 66-67. I do not know Dopamu’s religion, but I include it in this Muslim chapter, since Balogun appropriates him.

violence against others, we will end up doing more harm than good in the exalted name of sharia.” He then quoted from Qur’an, chapter 5, which reads, “O you who believe, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others in you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety; and fear God.”<sup>75</sup> Please do observe Umar’s reference to the “march to the ideal Qur’anic state,” something that in other contexts is strongly denied.<sup>76</sup>

In the eye of the sharia storm created by Zamfara, the State’s AG, Ahmed Mahmud, suggested that along with dialogue, a climate of “good faith, respect for others’ rights and beliefs and recognition of Nigeria as a pluralist society that is unified in diversity will help. Non-Muslims must have the courage to reciprocate the respect which the Muslims have for Christian beliefs.”<sup>77</sup> Five years later, Sheikh Zakariya Dawud, chairman of the Council of Ulama in Plateau State and legal advisor to JNI, aired the same demand. He said that Islam teaches Muslims to live in peace with Christians so long as they allow us to live in peace with them, and allow us practice our religion. “However,” he added, “we are enjoined to fight to defend Islam if we are not allowed to practice our religion.” He declared, “Nigerian Muslims and Christians can live together peacefully only if the rights of Muslims are respected. These rights include the right to vote and be voted for and equal representation in government. Our religion and culture as Muslims must be respected.”<sup>78</sup>

There is another *huge* issue related to co-existence that perhaps did not get enough attention in Volume 6, at least, not in the context of Plateau State. I refer to the settler/indigene dichotomy. It was a major issue in Zangon Kataf, in Tafawa Balewa and, more recently, in Plateau State.<sup>79</sup> Most Christians and Traditionalists in these areas think in terms of this opposition. Governor Dariye’s statement is a classic: “Even if I spent 150

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<sup>75</sup>I. Umar, 19 Dec/99.

<sup>76</sup>J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 200-209 and others (see index).

<sup>77</sup>A. Mahmud, 6 July/2000, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup>O. Minchakpu, 10 Oct/2005; 23 Sep/2005. J. Boer, 2008, vol. 7, Appendix 19.

<sup>79</sup>Please scour the indices of previous volumes for entries like “settler” and “indigene” or their derivatives to be see how this issues cropped up repeatedly.

years in Bukuru, I can't become an indigene.”<sup>80</sup> In the minds of the Plateau people, the issue was directly related to the sharia tussle.

Addressing the volatile Plateau situation, former Military President Babangida, describing himself as a “nationalist,” stressed that the state “belongs to any Nigerian wishing to live in peace and in accordance with the laws of the land.” “All the people of Plateau State should be able to move freely and unhindered in any part of the state without fear of being attacked, harassed or obstructed.” He was “convinced that peaceful co-existence is a necessary ingredient to development and is the fastest track to enshrining true and representative democracy.” He urged the Plateau people “to embrace dialogue as an instrument of conflict resolution.” An interesting question is whether this former Muslim President would make the same claim and give similar advice in the context of the sharia states. Of course, this politician may have had his own political future in mind. Since it has been rumoured that he has his roots in the Republic of Niger, the national idea would give him better grounding for his expected bid for the civilian presidency in 2007, a bid that in the end did not materialize. His signed statement included an appeal to “the belligerent factions to kindly sip the milk of forgiveness and settlement by sheathing their swords and allowing for a ceasefire.”<sup>81</sup>

Sani Garba offered the following clear recipe for peace on the Plateau:

*The hard way and the only way to the final roadmap to peace in Plateau is to accord the Muslims and every body what the Constitution enjoins them to, namely freedom of worship, association and whatever, in as much as it does not contravene rules and regulations of the land. The issue of indigene/settler must be discarded, as the people that the so-called Peace Conference regard as settlers, are even founders of Jos and other towns in question. Therefore, the issue of indigeneship is diversionary. Unless Hausa/Fulani and their ilk like the Nupes,*

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<sup>80</sup>E. Bello, 8 May/2004. For a lengthy treatment of the settler versus indigene issue turn to *Plateau State of Nigeria Gazette*, “Plateau Resolves...,” 11 Nov/2004, pp. 23-64. Apart from names and similar concerns, the settler/indigene issue takes up 40 out of 150 pages, an indication of the predominance of this issue over all other matters. Religion takes up a mere 6 pages; politics, 17. However, it must be recognized that the settler-indigene divide largely coincides with the Muslim vs Christian-Traditionalist divide. The two issues really constitute two sides of one coin. Those who operate with political correctness dwell mainly on the on the settler-indigene question and ignore the other side of the coin. It is so much easier to deal with and avoids blaming a particular religion or religion in general. By thus avoiding the real root of the Plateau problem, they also avoid the real solution.

<sup>81</sup>DT, “IBB Condemns...,” 8 May/2004.

*Kanuris and others who have been in Plateau since time immemorial are regarded as indigene, that Plateau will have no final peace. If not, with all the relative peace that the state is now enjoying, it is a time-bomb which sooner or later will explode, unless the contentious issues (like the indigene/settler dichotomy and the poverty/socio-economic status) are either neglected or addressed unsatisfactorily.*

*Also all those affected by the recent crisis and even by the now sporadic attacks against Hausas and others, must be compensated using Plateau State Government resources. This becomes necessary, for all the assistance these people got is from outside the state, because [there is] not any Christian in the entire refugee camp. Anyway, all eyes are there, and should anything happen again, then only Allah knows the dimension it will take.<sup>82</sup>*

In his excellent Gamji paper, “Politicians, Press and the Indigene/Settler Question,” Mohammed Haruna wrote that eliminating the dichotomy would constitute an important solution to the religious problems Nigeria faces. On the surface, his proposal seems similar to that of *The Comet*<sup>83</sup>. If Nigerians did not make the distinction during their independence struggle, why has it become so important now?

*It is clearly retrogressive and reactionary for them to do so in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The fact, indeed, is that, in the end, we are all settlers. History is about the migration of the various peoples of the world as well as about the conflicts and resolutions arising from such movements. The difference then should lie not simply on who got where first, but in what value they have added to the community.<sup>84</sup>*

*Last, and perhaps most important, it should be obvious to us by now that our emphasis on group identity rather than merit and individual rights and responsibilities for the resolution of our socio-economic problems is an emphasis*

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<sup>82</sup>S. Garba, Dec/2004. For further references to the indigene- vs- settler issue see entries in indices of previous volumes. It has cropped up in various states and often leads to violence.

<sup>83</sup>M. Haruna, Dec/2004. J. Boer, vol. 7, 2007, ch. 8, pp. 277-278 xxxx.

<sup>84</sup>Muslims have more than once boasted about their contributions to the development of the North in contrast to those of the former ATR folks. They have no doubt that theirs far outweighs that of the latter.

*in vain. The emphasis in looking for solutions to our problems should be on our humanity, not our tribes or religions.*

Haruna was not suggesting that eliminating this dichotomy would solve all problems and bring the perfect peace. “All this, of course, is not to say that there are not religious or ethnic questions begging for answers. The trouble is that all too often we ask the wrong questions. The big question is not who settled where first.” He then quoted from the executed Ken Saro-Wiwa, a well-known Nigerian poet and challenger of oil companies: The big question is rather, “Why do incompetent, failed politicians, poor managers of the political economy try to create a schism between Nigerians of different faiths to mask their failures and inanities?” To which he added still another question: “Why do pressmen, the supposed watchdogs of society, allow themselves to be pressed into the service of such incompetent, failed politicians and poor managers?”

A Kaduna-based NGO, Even Development Projects (EDP), ran a workshop in Kano for 35 people to explore avenues to permanent peace. Participants represented both State Government and LGs. It ended up advising the Government “to provide legal codes to accord native status to those who have lived in an area for up to 50 years.”<sup>85</sup> Though that was some distance removed from the stand discussed by Haruna in the above paragraphs, it was moderate compared to the extreme view of Governor Dariye who would make no concession even after 150 years.

Patience is a highly-valued virtue in both Christianity and Islam, as well as in Nigerian tradition, though in current culture may be another question. At any rate, little of it came to the surface in the long sharia ruckus. As a result, Muslims served plates heaped with advice to Christians to be patient. The words of two scholars and an activist come to mind. First, the words of Professor Aminu Mikailu, Vice-Chancellor of Usman Dan Fodio University of Sokoto, who, upon the heels of the Zamfara Declaration in 1999, advised Muslims “to continue to exercise patience and show understanding in the face of current criticism and outright provocation by opponents of sharia,” while he also advised opponents to sharia that they “should be patient and give the sharia project a chance to take off and mature, after which they could decide whether the idea has positive

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<sup>85</sup>S. Obassa, 28 June/2001.

implications.”<sup>86</sup> Second, the words of Sheikh Amin Abdullahi as reported by Abubakar Yakubu. At a Muslim celebration in Kuje, the Sheikh

*called on Muslims to imbibe the spirit of forgiveness. The best virtue which a good Muslim can possess was to emulate the Holy Prophet, who had the spirit of forgiveness and patience. It is against the spirit with which Prophet Muhammad lived his life for a Muslim to think of paying evil for evil or to regard a fellow human being as a permanent enemy. The Prophet so practised the art of forgiveness that, when he had ample opportunity to retaliate on the people of Mecca for the bad treatment they meted out to him at the early stages of his prophethood, he rather forgave them. The religion of Islam is always seeking the best alternatives for the existence of peace, and he advised Muslims to always adhere to such tenets. Whoever was floating the idea of violence in the name of Islam, could never be regarded as a true Muslim, because at no time and nowhere either in the Holy Qur’an or Hadith is violence encouraged.*<sup>87</sup>

Ibrahim Umar agreed

*wholeheartedly with Dr. Usman Bugaje who cautioned that the sharia should be implemented with absolute wisdom and sincerity. We should not allow euphoria and emotion to blind our vision and perception. If we reduce our march to the ideal Qur’anic state into mob action, terror and violence against others, we will end up doing more harm than good, more so in the exalted name of sharia. God Himself warns: “O you who believe, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just; that is next to piety, and fear God. For God is well acquainted with all that ye do” (Qur’an 5: 9).*<sup>88</sup>

Patience, yes, and a lot of related good attitudes, but that did not mean easing up on the sharia campaign. Lawal Gano, a Kaduna lawyer, recommended that Muslims “remain dogged about sharia.” In view of its divine origin, it is the vehicle that provides

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<sup>86</sup>S. Gaya, 17 Nov/99.

<sup>87</sup>A. Yakubu, 18 Apr/2007. It is very interesting that this occasion of such a pious sentiment and further marked by Qur’anic recitations also included groups that “sang and danced in praises to Allah.” Such activities, you may remember from vol. 6, p. 255, are considered by some as highly impious and could result in the accusation of suspension of sharia..

<sup>88</sup>I. Umar, 19 Dec/99. Appendix 4.

the best judgment. Governor Sani “has lightened our candle again and there is no going back. *Insha Allah*, we shall remain inexorable. This clarion call for sharia to reign shall continue from our generation to generations yet unborn.”<sup>89</sup>

But at the end of the period covered by this series, in response to the Jos mayhem of November, 2008, Kayode Ogundamisi is very negative and despondent about Nigeria’s future: “I have been combating myself over the weekend, my mind undertaking a marathon cum 100 meters race between, anger, despair, desperation, disgust and others.”<sup>90</sup> Such despondency does not bode well for the future.

### Unity xxxx

One of the common Muslim complaints is that secular colonialism has broken up the unity of the global Muslim *ummah*. It is a cry that is echoed throughout Nigerian Muslim writings as well as throughout Volumes 2, 4 and 6 of this series. It holds for the global as well as the local Nigerian situation.<sup>91</sup> Joseph Kenny, an American Dominican scholar of Islam based in Ibadan for some decades, claimed that “there are hundreds of Muslim associations and societies in Nigeria” of which he briefly described a few.<sup>92</sup> Kenny sees this development as an indication of increasing disunity, a fragmentation of the *ummah*.<sup>93</sup> Volume 6 demonstrates the terrible rancour with which Nigerian Muslims berate and even curse each other, let alone berate Christians.<sup>94</sup> There is no doubt that a weakening of the sense of *ummah* is occurring. It has led to a weakening of Islam itself that can be overcome only by restoring unity.

An early call for unity came from the pen of that anonymous *Radiance* author we met under the heading “Revival” above.

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<sup>89</sup>L. Gano, 1 Dec/99.

<sup>90</sup>K. Ogundamisi, Dec/2008.

<sup>91</sup>M. bin Mohamad, 25 May/2007. Appendix 15.

<sup>92</sup>J. Kenny, 1984.

<sup>93</sup> It may also be possible to regard this development positively as a normal process of cultural differentiation of a formerly closed primitive society now in the process of opening up.

<sup>94</sup>For example: J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 220-223. Vilification of each other by Nigerians is not restricted to Muslims. Chudi Ikwueze, a Nigerian professor of accountancy in New York, tells how a fellow Ibo Christian, Eddy Oparaoji, totally vilified him on <[www.Kwenu.com](http://www.Kwenu.com)> as “a jihadist apologist, whose only aim is to serve his jihadist masters.” It is hard to imagine worse vilification than that among Ibos (C. Ikwueze, “Whoever is Pro-Oba-Na-Eze’s 2006 Declaration Speaks for Ndiigbo: It is that Simple,” (<[www.Gamji.com](http://www.Gamji.com)> and <[www.Kwenu.com](http://www.Kwenu.com)>).

*The unity of Muslims, and especially of Muslim scholars, has become absolutely necessary. It is the lack of unity among them that creates the opportunity for false principles to gain ground. It is the same disunity that is responsible for the loss of spirit and courage among Muslims, making it impossible for them to fight moral vices and curb dangerous social values. The present squabbles on issues that are frivolous, futile and unrelated to the fundamentals of Islam are signs of more troubles—and a warning that they have to stop.*

The author recalled that it was frivolous issues that divided Muslim scholars during the hay days of Andalusia in Spain that weakened the Muslim community and led to their being wiped out by Christian armies. These scholars

*should understand that their role is not to divide the Muslims, but, rather, to be the guardians of the Islamic message, the educators of the society, the champions of the people's welfare and promoters of justice and human dignity. But now they have diverted the attention of Muslims from their own welfare, from justice, from genuine education to issues which have never been resolved in Muslim history. One would only hope that they realise their folly and start doing something constructive.<sup>95</sup>*

“Today,” Justice Mustapha Akanbi lamented, “the wider Muslim world has been torn apart. Everywhere there is visible lack of unity and fragmentation. Muslims killing brother Muslims in senseless wars of attrition—all in defiance of Allah’s injunction.” At home, in Nigeria, there is no single voice, either individual or group, that can speak for the entire Muslim *ummah*: None is “really acceptable all over the country,” whether North or South. The national organizations JNI and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs are about as national as they come, but they do not enjoy nation-wide support due to tribal factors. Akanbi suggested the vacuum should be filled by “one single Council of the Ulama that is capable of speaking for all religious rights and obligations.”

At the same time, Akanbi warned that the unity he called for was “not that which seeks to divide or compartmentalise our society. It is not that kind of unity which teaches ‘we’ on one side and ‘they’ on the other’. It is not a call on the faithfuls to ‘gang up.’” Muslim unity should make it “possible for Muslims to be able to play a more effective

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<sup>95</sup>*Radiance*, no. 4/83, pp. 39-40.

and meaningful role in our society, to be their brothers' keeper, to give each according to his due deserve to be able to actualise what Allah said in Qur'an 3:110....” The end result should be that others will gladly join us.<sup>96</sup>

And why this strong emphasis on unity? According to Akanbi above, to make Islam attractive to others. According to Ibrahim Alfazazi Adamu, the world's imperialists know that if Islam becomes a united front, they would lose and disappear with their imperialism. Though Muslims make mountains of their differences, they are considered mere molehills by imperialists. Nevertheless, these differences are fueled by imperialists.<sup>97</sup> The Muslim “inability to sink our differences has been greatly instrumental to our being unable to voice serious support for the establishment of the sharia despite our majority.” Adamu concluded his article with the truism, “And most indisputably—‘United we stand (against all forms of oppression); divided we fall.’”<sup>98</sup>

The twin papers, *The Pen* and *Alkalami*, contain article upon article that call for unity. *The Pen* of 27 October, 1989, published Magaji Galadima's article, “Only Islam Can Unite Nigeria” and a full-page feature by Ibrahim Alfazazia Adamu, “Muslim Ummah and the Question of Unity.” *Alkalami* ended its editorial about the tenth anniversary of the Iranian revolution with a note of regret for the war waged between Iran and Iraq. It strongly advocated that rifts between Muslim countries be reconciled: “*A wannan matsanancin hali da ake ciki bai kyautu a ce kawunan Musulmi a rarrabe yake ba. Musulmi duk ‘yan’uwan juna ne ko a wace kasa suke. Don haka hadin kai da zaman lafiya da juna shi ne kawai zai kai mu ga cin nasara.*”<sup>99</sup>

Bashir Tofa explained various reasons for the establishment of his Bureau for Islamic Propagation (BIP), publishers of the above twin weeklies, one of which was the “promotion of unity.” This was to be achieved by “the protection, preservation and promotion of the religious, cultural and political life of Muslims” as well as “the development of better understanding of Islam and Islamic culture so as to be able to

<sup>96</sup>M. Akanbi, 1 July/88, p. 15; 15 July/88, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>97</sup>For a good example, see T. E. Lawrence of Arabia in J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup>I. A. Adamu, 27 Oct/89, p. 7.

<sup>99</sup>*Alkalami*, “*Sharhin...*,” 17 Feb/89, p. 1. English translation: “Under our present circumstances, it is not good to observe that Muslims are divided. Muslims from all countries are brothers. Therefore, in order to gain the victory, they must unite and live in peace with each other.”

obliterate the divisions among Muslims”—and note well: “as well as among non-Muslims in Nigeria.”

Bashir Sambo, at the time the Grand Khadi of Abuja, addressed the same need. There have always been differences among Muslim leaders in the past, according to him, but that did not bring disunity among them. So why should such differences divide us today?<sup>100</sup> Dahiru Bauchi, a well-known Muslim scholar and preacher, ditto: “He appealed to the Muslims to stop being at each other’s throats simply because they understand issues from different angles. He argued that difference in understanding has been in Islam since before now and wondered how people should now lose sleep over it.”<sup>101</sup>

Moving into the AZ era, Sultan Maccido stressed the need for the many different Muslim organizations to respect each other, co-ordinate their work to avoid overlapping and, in general, to face the world with one united front. Islam cannot afford fragmentation. Each organization must have “as one of its cardinal principles to identify, liaise and develop a harmonious working relationship with similar bodies at both national and international levels.” He suggested that the OIC was “well placed to provide leadership in this direction.”<sup>102</sup>

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano was deeply aware of both “internal and external forces working against the implementation of the sharia, but vowed that no amount of pressure would make him rescind.” He then called on Muslims “to be united and come under one umbrella so Muslims can speak with one voice.” At the same occasion, Ibrahim Umar Kabo, Chairman of Kano’s Sharia Committee, called on the Ulamas in the State “to be united and preach only peace and love among their followers, rather than inciting members against others.”<sup>103</sup>

But there was also the call for unity *between* adherents of different religions. Balogun wrote,

*It is necessary that the citizens of all religious persuasions should change their way of looking at each other. They must seek a basis of unity that brings them together without destroying difference in religious application or political*

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<sup>100</sup>M. Sirajo, 14 Apr/89, p. 1. M. Zubairu, 7 Apr/89, p. 1.

<sup>101</sup>*The Pen*, “Dahiru Bauchi...” 5 May/89, p. 16.

<sup>102</sup>M. Maccido, 9 June/2003.

<sup>103</sup>T. Anthony, 6 Jan/2004.

*alliance. This vision presupposes a resolute will to leave the ways of conflict, and embark on a new way that carries its own tests of the spirit and share of risks. There and then, they can create a common ethos of understandings and expectations concerning the shape and form of the new Nigeria, whereby godly virtues of each religion would be seen as the rallying points of peace, unity, understanding and cohesion.*<sup>104</sup>

It was in this spirit that Lawan Danbazau, a NEPU politician and member of the Kano Elders Forum, cautioned sharia advocates “to avoid sowing the seeds of discord and hatred among Nigerians.” The haste with which sharia was adopted “was capable of giving enemies of sharia and Nigeria the chance to turn the country into a war zone.” Hence his warning against sowing discord between the two religions. He added, “The need to keep Nigeria one is a duty for every patriotic Nigerian. My call for caution is based on my love for Islam, for peace and for Nigeria.” He advocated the establishment of a committee to which every Nigerian, regardless of religion, can present his view on the Constitution. Such structures, he lectured, are not new to Islam and he presented some early examples.<sup>105</sup> Sheikh Isma’ila Zakariya, a well-known founder of a Muslim order, “called on Muslims to unite and strive to live in peace with non-Muslims as ordained by Islam.”<sup>106</sup>

And then there is the disunity caused by tribalism, an absolutising of ethnicity, blowing it up out of all proportion and making one’s ethnic group the central focus of all values. I have dealt with it in earlier volumes, especially in the context of Plateau State where the terms “indigene” and “settler” became so important. It had become difficult to separate religious and ethnic issues, for in the North their boundaries tend to coincide. The difficulties many Christians have experienced in the core Northern states is often exacerbated by the ethnic factors. Though I do not accept the thesis that ethnicity is the basis for all of it, I do readily acknowledge its prominent role in these developments.<sup>107</sup> Ambassador Kazaure suggested that, since “religious ill-feeling is invariably exacerbated

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<sup>104</sup>K. Bolagun, Dec/86, p. 66.

<sup>105</sup>NN, “Danbazau Cautions...,” 18 Nov/99. L. Danbazau, 28 Nov/99. For more on Danbazau see vol. 2, pp. 109-114; vol. 4, p. 143; vol. 6, pp. 73-74, 79.

<sup>106</sup>NN, “Christians Told...,” 22 Nov/99, p. 2.

<sup>107</sup>J. Boer, vol. 5, 2006, pp. 36, 111-112, 116-118, 211; vol. 7, 2007, pp. xxxx (page to be determined from proofs of vol. 7)

by ethnic tension, where the division between the two religious communities runs along ethnic lines, efforts towards achieving national integration as well as a sense of participation and belonging should be sustained and intensified.”<sup>108</sup> So, unity is a multi-faceted issue that needs high priority in a country divided along so many lines. It needs serious attention from the religions, from ethnic authorities and from governments at all levels.

However, there are a few who call into question the usefulness of the continued unity of the country. We all remember, of course, the challenge from the failed Christian coup plotter, Gideon Orkar, to excise the core North. There is also the call from Mary Anfani Joe to divide the North into Christian and Muslim sectors.<sup>109</sup> Bashir Yahaya of Gombe reminded us of the complex pluralism of the Nigerian population that is so “intricately intermingled” that any thought of “undoing” Nigeria is out of the question. The situation

*necessitates unity in diversity and tolerance for peaceful coexistence. If, however, the feelings and thoughts of a particular religious or cultural group are despised, disrespected and treated with contempt and suspicion, then the desired unity will forever remain elusive. The idea of corporate existence, which will only be a euphemism for supremacy of particular tribal groups and of benefit to only a small percentage of Nigerians, is meaningless.*

*We came together as one country not out of our choice but as the result of an accident of history. The most realistic option will be to restructure the policy along geographical, ethnic or religious lines. Let each unit adopt whatever system of government it desires. After all, we have witnessed the disintegration of many countries greater than Nigeria—e.g. USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, and it is business as usual.*

*We as Muslims feel proud of our religion and we shall sacrifice all it takes in order to uphold its honour and glory. If people out there feel disgusted or find it repugnant, then it's too bad, but let them realise that we owe them no apology for that. We cannot continue to accommodate the ungodly and sensational journalism of the South-Western press that mocks us, spits venomous criticism on*

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<sup>108</sup>Z. Kazaure, 1987, p. 17.

<sup>109</sup>See ch. 4, p. 59xxxx.

*us and preaches the gospel of hate against us under the pretext of safeguarding the corporate existence of Nigeria, just because we want our lives to be governed by divine and not mundane laws.*<sup>110</sup>

In other words, no national unity at the cost of Islam.

During the closing months of the writing of this series, end November, 2008, a new flareup of violence took place in Jos. Of course, it again evoked calls for unity. I give the closing words of this section to Kayode Ogundamisi: "...we all know killings based on ethnicity will keep recurring in Nigeria until the day we all sit down on a round table under a sovereign national conference and decide on how we want to live together as brothers, sisters or otherwise. Until we do that the blood to keep Nigeria together will flow more..."<sup>111</sup>

### **Dialogue by Word and Deed   xxxx**

As with other topics, so this one is divided into BZ and AZ, with the former relegated to Appendix 16, while here we treat AZ developments. A few paragraphs appear in both.

The subject of dialogue is an umbrella topic that covers a host of issues that are scattered throughout this chapter, often without reference to dialogue. Nevertheless, dialogue underlies most of these discussions. I could have chosen "Dialogue," understood in its widest sense as "relationship," as the heading for this entire chapter. At a sharia seminar organized by JNi, Ahmed Bello Mahmud suggested that the *only* way out of the difficulties created by the adoption of sharia is "through constant dialogue."<sup>112</sup> If that is true, then dialogue is the most important project leaders and adherents can engage in. I am not about to dispute it.

#### **1. Dialogue of the Word   xxxx**

I begin with a definition/description of dialogue provided by Muhammad Sani Umar of Unijos during BZ days:

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<sup>110</sup>B. Yahaya, 3 Dec/99.

<sup>111</sup>K. Ogundamisi, Dec/2008.

<sup>112</sup>A. Mahmud, 6 July/2000, p. 9.

*Religious dialogue entails exchanges of ideas and information between followers of two different religions. It should not aim at conversion, but be a genuine attempt at empathetic understanding of the religious beliefs, practices and other concerns of the other partner to the dialogue. It should induce better appreciation of one's own religion as well as of the other religion. Where religious differences occasion conflict, religious dialogue ought to identify the source of and the solution to such conflict.*<sup>113</sup>

As ecumenism, multi-culturalism and multi-religion became increasingly prevalent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dialogue between various religions gradually developed into a veritable industry.<sup>114</sup> During 2007, probably the most famous global dialogue was initiated by world Muslim leaders, who wrote an open letter to world Christian leaders. The latter responded in various ways, liberals positively and Evangelicals mostly negatively. I urge you to read some of the documents on the *Companion CD*.<sup>115</sup>

Nigerian Christians and Muslims were not excluded from this trend and interest in it.<sup>116</sup> Ambassador Kazaure observed the growing interest of Western Christians in dialogue with Muslims and attributed this interest partly to the influx of Muslims into their countries and “the steady conversion of Europeans and Americas into Islam.” He took note of international initiatives by both the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) as well as more local efforts in various countries.

Turning to Nigeria, he observed, “Given the frequent expression of religious intolerance in this country, the need for Muslim-Christian dialogue and cooperation is obvious.” He went on to list a number of such efforts over the years. These included

*the 1978 seminar on Religious Understanding and Cooperation in Nigeria, sponsored by the University of Ilorin; the Presidential Panel which met in Abuja in 1985; the Reconciliation meeting of Patriotic Christians and Muslims held in the wake of the*

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<sup>113</sup>M. Umar, 1993, pp. 66-68.

<sup>114</sup>See, e.g., website of the American Muslim Interfaith Dialog Center—<http://idcnj.org>. Be sure to tap into its archives to see the almost dizzying range of activity. For reports on interesting dialogues see Folder <Dialogue> on *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Dialogue/>, especially those held in during 2007 in Canada between the Mennonite Central Committee and a group of Iranians and for one in Washington, DC, between American Evangelical Fundamentalists and Arab ambassadors in 2007 at <Misc Arts/Dialogue/ , files <2007-06-08> and <2007-07-10>.

<sup>115</sup>*Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Dialogue> files <2007-10-13> and <2007-11-27>.

<sup>116</sup>See vol. 6, p. 22 for sharia conferences. Most of them have a dialogical element.

*Kafanchan riots; and another reconciliation meeting of Muslim and Christian elders which took place in Kaduna on 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1987. All of these initiatives indicate a desire on the part of men of goodwill to promote peaceful co-existence of the two religious communities.*<sup>117</sup>

There are barriers to dialogue, some of which are discussed in Appendix 11. It does not always go smoothly. Auwalu Yadudu of Bayero University described the Nigerian version of it as “dialogue of the deaf as each side was talking to itself, avoiding to take a hard look at the issues.” “The contenders have till now avoided facing the issues head on, preferring to play the role of the demagogue on the one hand or the immaculate on the other.”<sup>118</sup> Sanusi L. Sanusi used the same term a few years latter, when he described the exchange between Nigeria and the West as “stretching” the dialogue idea “to encompass total hysteria, best defined...as a dialogue of the deaf,”<sup>119</sup> a term that has become common currency. Sanusi applied that term to stubbornness on the part of the West and its sense of superiority. Is-haq Oloyede described the dialogue between Islam and the West as “between two unequal and mutually suspicious parties who, in an attempt to acts as partners, which they ought to be, suppress, more often than not, their real feelings, the substance of the matter and the actual objectives of the encounter between them, by digressing into secondary issues and gigantic co-operative projects, which are realisable only with a firm foundation of sincerity, genuine dialogue and mutual respect.” For him, indeed, it was a “discussion with the dumb.”<sup>120</sup>

But there were also barriers to dialogue internal to Nigeria’s Muslim *ummah*. Sanusi referred to the familiar accusation that sharia advocates are politically motivated, not religiously. Apart from the fact that these motivations cannot be separated in faithful Muslims, neither is it true across the board. “While this may indeed be the case among...segments of the establishment, it does not necessarily apply to everyone.” This “blanket allegation” has called up “genuine indignation” among the true defenders of sharia. Such “unjust aspersions cast on their motives” is an additional case of the deaf. Such suspicions and accusations make dialogue impossible. Dialogue in such situations “can be [Boer: *must* be] facilitated through recognition of and respect for the honesty and good intentions of at least some, and perhaps many of them.”

<sup>117</sup>Z. Kazaure, 22 Mar/2000; “Strategies for Promoting...,” pp. 14-16. Appendix 12.

<sup>118</sup>A. Yahudu, 2000, p. 34. For Christian use of the term see Appendix 35, p. 95.

<sup>119</sup>S. Sanusi, “The West and the Rest...,” 2005, p. 254. The exact quotation comes from the pre-publication conference paper.

<sup>120</sup>I. Oloyede, 2005, pp. 292-293.

Such genuine dialogue “offers an opportunity for progress,” Sanusi suggested, “through reciprocal absorption of the ideas and viewpoints of the other. By adopting a dialogic approach to social problems we are able to move the views of the other towards our own, while we in turn find our own views fashioned or altered somewhat through contact with foreign views.”<sup>121</sup>

I will here introduce you to two currently major dialogue *institutions*, in distinction from conferences that tend to be single events. The first is the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC). As to the origin of NIREC, during September, 1999, a delegation of CAN paid a visit to the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Maccido, who was also the President of JNI. Their meeting resulted in the establishment of NIREC to be composed of 25 Muslims and 25 Christians. The aim was to organize occasional meetings “to forge an understanding amongst ourselves with a view to peaceful co-existence.” President Obasanjo inaugurated the Council on September 29, the day of their first meeting. Almustapha Haruna Jokolo, Emir of Gwandu, who provided us with this founding history, commented, “We now hope that with the creation of NIREC we shall bury our inglorious past.”<sup>122</sup> These NIREC papers are an important collection of dialogue documents. In this chapter I will refer to and quote from the Muslim papers only.

After his election as President, Umaru Yar’adua reconstituted NIREC in October, 2007, for it gone moribund. In the meantime, there were frequent calls from many Muslims on the FG and state governments to establish some mechanism for consultation and dialogue. You will come across them frequently in the subsequent pages of this chapter. It is now co-chaired by Sultan Sa’ad Abubakar and John Onaiyekan, National President of CAN, with Prof. Ishaq Oloyede the Executive Secretary and National Co-ordinator. Oloyede announced that two lead papers would be presented on “NIREC and Nation-Building.” Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of the Anglican Communion and Prof. Muhammad Tabiu of the Faculty of BUK would speak on the theme.” Some members wanted to expand its programme to include social issues like poverty. Falalu Bello, Managing Director, Unity Bank and nominee from the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, said the Council should also focus on other issues, such as poverty, unemployment and governance. “As a non-political and non-governmental organisation, I think

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<sup>121</sup>S. Sanusi, “The West and the Rest...,” 2005, pp. 265, 268, 270.

<sup>122</sup>A. Jokolo, 10 Dec/99. This article also provides significant information about JNI and CAN. It is very critical of JNI and charges that, until its recent re-organization, it had lost its way and become a tool for vested Muslim interest groups. His positive attitude towards Christians is surprising in view of his apparent hostility in ch. 2, pp. 32-33 (exact pages to be determined from proofs xxxx) See also I. Ka-Almasih and B. Ladan, 29 Nov/99.

we should equally have the courage of questioning political instability in the country, " he said. During his 2007 trip to the US, Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar even spoke of a global role for NIREC.

Addressing an

*audience of professionals, diplomats, academics and the business community, Sultan Sa'ad disclosed that the NIREC was set to mediate in the Darfur crisis." He said NIREC was preparing "to intercede and dialogue with the inter-religious council of Sudan through which it hopes to convince the government of Sudan to resolve the Darfur crisis amicably and urgently. He explained that the Council in Nigeria had full support from Muslims and Christians and the Federal Government of Nigeria as a platform for resolution of religious crisis, both in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world."*<sup>123</sup>

In Appendix xxxx Chapter 4, we will see that Christians members also wanted to expand. Judging from the October theme, it seems as if its programme has already expanded.<sup>124</sup>

The second dialogue institution is the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC). This group identified itself only by the list of its participants, who include both Christians and Muslims, many of whom feature national honours behind their names. So, a stellar group that must be taken seriously. A common theme running through all the papers featured in its privately published collection of papers is that of dialogue. In this chapter I frequently refer to and quote from the Muslim presentations, while the Christian ones will feature in Chapter 4.

If the Zamfara Governor Ahmed Sani, along with his AG, Ahmed B. Mahmud, can be considered the central figures in the sharia campaign, NIREC should probably be regarded as the most important body for dialogue, it being launched by President Obasanjo, re-launched by successor President Yar'adua and founded by personalities of the highest rank in both Muslim and Christian communities. The collection of papers that emerged from CCC's first seminar on 21-22 June, 2000, may legitimately be regarded as a close second dialogue document in rank. It is time to enquire what participants in these efforts expected or demanded from dialogue. We have already heard what Emir Jokolo hoped from NIREC. Lateef Adegbite was all agush over the first NIREC seminar in 2000. He began his presentation with the following remarks: "This Seminar is a step in the right direction. Indeed, it ought to have held long before now, as the dialogue would certainly enlighten all concerned on the sharia issues. It should in particular

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<sup>123</sup>P. Nyam, 16 Nov/2007.

<sup>124</sup>*D/Triumph*, 17 Oct/2007. *Vanguard*, 19 Oct/2007. *The Tide*, 21 Oct/2007. For more information on NIREC, turn to *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Dialogue/NIREC/> and Google "NIREC."

assist in dousing tension on the matter. It should also facilitate the quest for a permanent solution of the recurring but avoidable problems associated with the application of sharia in Nigeria.” He was hopeful that it would result in increased understanding on the part of Christian participants. The event would give them a chance “to know sharia better, its place in Islam, its status and application in Nigeria.” Adegbite entertained the hope that Christian participation in the NIREC seminar would result in their enlightening “their followers on the need to embrace tolerance and to end once and for all their sustained resistance to sharia.” They should realize that their decades of opposition “have not produced an abandonment by Muslims of sharia,” but have, instead, resulted in more vigorous insistence on sharia.<sup>125</sup> Adegbite proposed that non-Muslims, instead of “persisting in their opposition to sharia, should seek safeguards from its application.” One such mechanism might be a “Religious Relations Committee” that would receive complaints. The procedures of such committees should be simple, inexpensive and thus within the reach of all.<sup>126</sup>

A BZ example of the negative results of opposition instead of dialogue is the OIC controversy. “A top Muslim scholar close to the Sultan of Sokoto” suggested that “if Christian leaders had quietly consulted with Muslim leaders, the issue would probably have been amicably resolved. The Muslim determination to keep Nigeria in the OIC was precipitated by an equally extreme opposition taken by the Christians to have the country unconditionally withdrawn from the organisation.”<sup>127</sup>

In his capacity as Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Lateef Adegbite was invited to deliver a goodwill message to the Nigerian Conference of Catholic Bishops. In his speech, he acknowledged “the good gesture of your Council in extending an invitation to me.” This was the second such occasion for him, he reminded his audience. “This form of practical inter-religious dialogue is most desirable as it helps to promote better understanding among religious leaders for the benefit of their respective communities and the nation.” Adegbite reminded his audience that Islam actually “enjoins such interactions, as Allah specifically calls on Muslims to invite Christians and Jews to constructive spiritual discourse from time to time, with a view to striking common grounds for the betterment of mankind. We should avoid an adversarial approach to religion and using cut-throat tactics to win or retain

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<sup>125</sup>L. Adegbite, NIREC, 2000, p. 1.

<sup>126</sup>L. Adegbite, CCC, 2000, p. 79.

<sup>127</sup>A. Akpaka, 6 Apr/87, pp. 22-23.

souls.” “It is imperative that we understand and tolerate one another, respecting our differences and spreading goodwill at all times.”

Pope John Paul II came in for “a glowing tribute for his sustained commitment to dialogue through the Special Commission instituted by him, under the leadership of our [Nigerian] Cardinal Arinze.” And then Adegbite really stretched himself with his appreciative recognition of the appointment of Anthony Okogie as Cardinal and even called it a “well-merited elevation.”<sup>128</sup> Okogie, that former National President of CAN who so frequently had bitter and acrimonious head-on collisions with JNI and other Muslims and who was called all kinds of uncomplimentary names by them.<sup>129</sup> Well done, Adegbite! Dialogue demands that such attitudes in the past should be forgiven, forgotten and replaced with more positive mutual resolve.

Other Muslim speakers had similar hopes for the seminar. Justice Abdulakdir Orire was every enthusiastic over the opportunity given to him to present his paper. He expected to “be doing yeoman service to break the barrier of ignorance and misunderstanding surround sharia.” He was disappointed to read Christian documents against sharia and Islam and described them as “distortions deliberately made to confuse and create hatred and ill-feelings.” Hence, he “decided to put something down to explain what sharia means.”<sup>130</sup> That should put an end to all that nonsense. That was, after all, the aim of the NIREC seminar. Justice Bashir Sambo began his paper by commending NIREC for the seminar “with the sole intention to make sharia understood in view of its misunderstanding which has recently caused unnecessary tension.” “It is my earnest belief that misunderstanding is our worst enemy and as soon as we manage to do away with it, almost all our problems will be amicably solved once and for all.”<sup>131</sup>

The Introduction to the CCC report states that the Committee concluded “that the best and most effective option open for the solution of the problem is to make arrangement for dialogue among interested parties.” In fact, “*only* a dialogue can produce a satisfactory solution.” Dialogue is especially useful between the older generation who created the current situation and the newer generation that is now taking over. It will give the younger generation a chance to understand the reasons and motivations of the past and the older the direction for the

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<sup>128</sup>L. Adegbite, 14 Apr/2004. Appendix 17.

<sup>129</sup>See the frequent Index entries to Okogie in the previous volumes. Seldom peaceful or flattering.

<sup>130</sup>A. Orire, 21 June/2000, p. 1.

<sup>131</sup>B. Sambo, 21 June/2000, p. 1.

future.<sup>132</sup> The Committee issued a short communique that was signed by its Chairman, Chief S. I. Edu. The core of the document is this one paragraph:

*After very anxious and serious consideration of all aspects of the matter, we have come to the conclusion that the best and most effective option open for the solution of the problem is to make arrangements for dialogue among leading citizens who are interested in the progress and stability of this country on the one hand and supporters and opponents of the proposals for the incorporation of sharia into the legal system of some of the states in the country on the other hand.*

About the same time as these major efforts, various others were conducted as well. The Assembly of Muslims in Nigeria (AMIN), for example, was established in October, 2000 “to promote national unity through tolerance and religious dialogue. It intended to organise national and international conferences, symposia and other visitations to articulate differences and reach concrete and amicable resolutions in areas of conflicts and crises in the country.” “AMIN seeks to reach out to other Nigerians to encourage tolerance, harmony and peaceful co-existence,” according to Chairman Ibrahim Saleh. The organization was about to “embark upon a nationwide public education and enlightenment programmes that would preach unity and brotherhood among Muslims and promote understanding with members of other faiths.” It was understood that “without thorough understanding, peace and unity among members of different faiths, there will be no tangible growth and development in Nigeria. So we are going to use the tools of contact and dialogue to reach out to all Nigerians.”<sup>133</sup>

Early 2004, Alhaji Inuwa Ali, Chairman of one of the Jos branches of JNI, took “a bold initiative to bridge the unhealthy and suspicious gap” that existed between Christians and Muslims in Plateau State.<sup>134</sup> He led an unannounced JNI delegation to visit Catholic Archbishop of Jos, Ignatius Kaigama to bring the “message of peace and love in the spirit of *Eid-el-Kabir*. Ali noted that there was little difference between the religions and he therefore saw “no reason why adherents of both should not work in unity.” He recalled that during the Plateau crisis on 7 September, 2001, the bishop gave shelter to fleeing Muslims, while Muslims who “sought refuge in the church were adequately taken care of.” He wanted by this visit to “cement the relationship

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<sup>132</sup>CCC, 2000, pp. 1-2.

<sup>133</sup>NN, 5 July/2001, p. 16.

<sup>134</sup>J. Boer, vol. 7, 2007, ch. 7.

between the two groups and enhance the peace in the state. He also mentioned that the two religions abhor the same social vices.

In response, Kaigama said “he was overwhelmed by the visit” and commended the JNI for this bold step. He stressed that “religious leaders must enlighten their followers not to use religion for political ends or to settle old scores.” He continued, “Religion is about piety and good works; it is about showing love to one another, no matter your religion or ethnic background. Everybody deserves freedom of religion wherever he/she is.” He condemned the notion of Muslim states” and “Christian states.” “We should be able to worship anywhere and anytime without molestation. We are all the same and worship the same God and should therefore work together in fellowship.”<sup>135</sup> A wonderful moment of fellowship initiated by the Muslims. I think the bishop would have been wiser not to bring up the hot buttons, but simply to embrace and leave the rest for another visit.

You may recall Sanusi’s earlier comment in this chapter about the “dialogue of the deaf.” He justifiably described the Western response to sharia as “hysterical, characterised by widespread condemnation in the name of human rights of what the West terms ‘cruel and dehumanising,’ even ‘barbaric’ punishments. The West speaks to Islam from a position of arrogance, demanding not a dialogue but capitulation to its values.”

*Muslims view [Western] criticism as merely one more opportunity taken to open a new flank in the battle against Islam. The use of adjectives like “barbaric” and “inhumane” in describing the punishments of the Muslim code are considered value-judgements, reflecting a certain element of cultural arrogance and unacceptable claims of superiority. In general, the West demands from other cultures unconditional acceptance of its concepts and values<sup>136</sup>, showing little respect for their desire to protect their own cultural integrity. This makes dialogue difficult, if not impossible.*

As a result, instead of engaging in dialogue with each other, “the West has so far only succeeded in alienating Nigerian Muslims.” “The missing element in the West’s attempt at dialogue,” Sanusi wrote, “is its unwillingness to conduct this dialogue under conditions of reciprocal recognition” and of respect for the right of other cultures....”<sup>137</sup> Well, yes,

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<sup>135</sup>F. Peter-Omale, 9 Feb/2004.

<sup>136</sup>See R. Peters, “Review....” Peters, a European himself, describes the European Union as “committed to elevating European libertarian values to universal values.” It is a common Muslim complaint, but it cannot simply be dismissed as mere Muslim paranoia! Muslims, of course, do the same.

<sup>137</sup>S. Sanusi, “Intercultural Dialogue....,” 2005, pp. 260-263.

that's what happens when *both* parties to a dialogue are arrogant! Dialogue becomes impossible.

But did Sanusi not recognize that the Muslim attitude towards dialogue with Christians is very similar? When we overheard Muslims saying earlier on that the purpose of dialogue with Christians is unilaterally to make them understand Islam, we were essentially dealing with the same attitude. The old adage applies: Do unto others....

Not unexpected, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) also entered the discussion. The Kaduna State branch called a one-day conference to which both Christian and Muslim groups were invited. Once again, CAN declined the invitation. The conference ended up encouraging CAN, JNI and other groups to put their heads together anytime violence threatened and before they go public with their respective explanations. It demanded that the two organizations keep checking with each other to ensure peace and the edification of their respective constituencies.

Dialogue was not to be restricted to religious organizations. NUJ also advised the Kaduna State Government to organize meetings in the rural areas to enlighten villagers on the importance of living in peace with each other: "*Ta rika shirya taruka a yankunan karkara domin wayarwa da jama'a kai game da muhim mancin zaman lafiya.*" In addition, the Government should prepare courses at primary school level to teach children how to live peacefully, as is currently done already at universities.<sup>138</sup>

Muhammad Buhari was an ardent advocate of dialogue and the relationships that are supposed to emerge from it. Continuing with his speech about leadership we have heard earlier, he insisted that everyone must "learn that his rights end where those of his neighbours begin. Everyone must be made to accept that we are all one vast family under the Lordship of God." For this reason,

*We should try to heal the wounds of past conflicts. I wish to suggest that Christians and Muslims must break down their barriers of suspicion, hostility and misunderstanding. The best way to do this is by directly talking to each other. It is certainly time to begin a dialogue between Christianity and Islam at all levels— individual, communal, national and even international-- to reassure ourselves,*

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<sup>138</sup>M. Awwal, 29 Apr/2004. English translation: ""They should continue to organize meetings in villages to enlighten the people about the importance of living in peace."

*save our present, preserve our future and have a basis for hope here and in the hereafter.*<sup>139</sup>

The previous paragraph deals with the opinions of a prominent Nigerian politician discussing *religious* dialogue. This paragraph deals with a Muslim cleric speaking primarily about *political* dialogue, though the religious angle is not left out. Sheikh Imam Abdulrahman Ahmad, a national official of *Amsar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria*, after berating the political class for their part in grinding the nation to a halt, called upon them to return to sanity by organizing a national dialogue that did eventually take place as the “National Political Reforms Conference.” Believing that the Nigerian crisis was not one of religion but of irresponsible and selfish politicians, he naturally turned on them to deride them with sharp words. They “think they have all the wisdom in the world, thereby not listening to the voice of reason, but I can tell you here categorically that, unless we all come together, the problem would persist.” “Stakeholders should come together to discuss the way out of this mess. Even in the Holy Qur’an, when there seemed to be a problem between Christians, Muslims and Pagans, Allah brought them together to discuss the problem and eventually put a stop to it. Tell me, why is it that our leaders are afraid to talk with the people, if they are not having skeletons in their cupboards?” The end of the report was a call to religious leaders to organize “meetings from time to time on the way forward in the country.”<sup>140</sup> The sheikh also had some advice for the FG, but for that we turn to the section on government..

Towards the end of the period covered by this series, we find Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar III in Washington, DC, talking about co-operation and dialogue with Christians in upbeat tone. In the language of news anchors, *TD* has the report:

*Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar III, weekend in Washington, DC, said Nigerian religious leaders have been holding crucial meetings to put a permanent end to the incidents of religious crises in the country.*

*The Sultan of Sokoto, who made the disclosure during a visit to the Voice of America (VOA) said: “Leading religious leaders from Nigeria’s two major religions are fervently working at bringing about better tolerance, understanding*

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<sup>139</sup>*Vanguard*, “Buhari on Democracy...,” 1 May/2003.

<sup>140</sup>Y. Akinsuyi, 17 Oct/2004.

*and peace amongst their followers. I have visited Jos, Plateau State, the Niger Delta and a few conflict prone areas in the country, since assuming the throne, preaching the message of peace. "These areas are not necessarily Muslim states in my effort to create better understanding. I am the first Sultan to make such visits to these areas"*

*The Sultan who is on a visit to the US at the invitation of the US Institute of Peace, also explained that the contacts were some of the ways adopted by the leaders through which they communicate to make sure religious tension is reduced. He said: "Islam is a religion of peace, we must respect our neighbors and love them"*

*In his treatise on the topic "Islam and Democracy in Nigeria," the Sultan reiterated the need for peaceful co-existence of all peoples of Nigeria and the Human Race. Advancing reasons for his stand, he emphasised that extremism and violence have no place in Islam. The religion, he said, is a way of life premised on social justice and equity as well as tolerance and moderation in everything we do.*

*Reacting to questions on "the state and religion", he emphasised that there is no conflict as the Constitution of Nigeria dictates that democracy is the form of government to be practiced and this is in line with modern trends, he also explained that traditional institutions play a vital role in enhancing peaceful co-existence of all peoples irrespective of tribe and religion as well as support all government institutions, from ward, local, state and federal authority.*

*The Sultan is expected on Tuesday to talk about the state of Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria and the efforts being made to maintain religious peace and harmony. He is expected to also discuss the extent to which so-called religious conflict in Nigeria is actually religious in character. This event is co-sponsored by Center for Strategic and International Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the Africa Program at Johns Hopkins SAIS*

The Sultan found a ready ally in VOA and had positive words for and from them:

*Earlier while on a visit to the Voice of America Africa Division and the Hausa*

*service, the Sultan said the radio was a major means of information relied upon by millions of people in Northern Nigeria.” You will find out that almost every Fulani herdsman has a small radio in one hand while shepherding his cattle...” He expressed happiness that the VOA was in the business of providing important news and information.*

*The Director of the VOA, Dan Austin and Director, Africa Division, Gwen Dillard both received the Sultan and in private talk informed him that suggestions from him will be welcomed. They also reinforced the fact that VOA was in the business of accurate news dissemination and regard Nigeria as a major audience market.*

*Gwen Dillard and The Chief of the Hausa Service, Sunday Dare announced the plan to start a new religious program that would look at how the Islamic religion is being used as a vehicle for economic and social empowerment and as a tool of education and healthy living. The program will focus on Islam at work in different Nigerian societies. The Sultan thanked the VOA for this initiative and pledged his support for the programme.<sup>141</sup>*

These last few paragraphs represent a switch from dialogue emphasis to that of Muslim *da'wah*. As emphasized previously, dialogue does not mean to suppress the essentials of participating religions. Since outreach is an essential part, genuine dialogue must allow for continuing mission on the part of all partners. So, I can only imagine the joy of the Sultan at the *da'wah* plum VOA threw into his hand and can hardly blame him for accepting it without qualms—except.... Yes, there is an except here. Unconfirmed reports from reliable sources have recently told me about efforts of the Northern Muslim leadership to find legal ways to stop the Christian *da'wah* among core Northern people. The VOA programme of Muslim *daw'ah* will be covering the entire country, Christian, Traditionalist and Muslim alike. How, in the names of pluralism, freedom of religion, democracy<sup>142</sup> and dialogue, all things that Sultan touted during his visit, can he square these two directions? Honourable Sultan, the world is awaiting a satisfactory explanation!

## **2. Dialogue by Deed ddddd**

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<sup>141</sup>TD, 11 Nov/2007.

<sup>142</sup>For the Sultan on democracy during his US visit, see T. Hallah, 12 Nov/2007.

Dialogue is not only a matter of words, discussions, conferences and publications; it is also a life style. Muhammad Ndagi may not have used terms like “sharia” and “dialogue,” but writing as he did in that context, it is clear that he was aware of the negative fallout of the sharia controversy. It has produced an ugly atmosphere that has made it difficult for many Muslims and Christians to be civil to each other. He wrote an article in which he encouraged Muslims to be civil, courteous, helpful and friendly to Christians. “The dislike that is sometimes expressed, especially by non-Muslims towards Islam, springs from the attitude of some Muslims,” he declared. “The beauty of Islam would become invisible if those who practise the religion are impolite, rough, hard and violent in their words and actions.” He then proceeded to tell the stories of some non-Muslims who converted because someone was good to them or they admired a certain kind of behaviour. He concluded his article with the prayer that Allah may “grant us the ability to demonstrate manners that would build bridges of understanding among people, especially in a multi-faith society like Nigeria.”<sup>143</sup> This is life-style dialogue—building “bridges of understanding.”

Still another form of dialogue takes place when individuals or organizations purposefully organize joint projects between members of the two religions. As sociologist K. A. Balogun already suggested during the BZ period,

*all religious bodies should work hand in glove to identify and solve the fundamental aspects of religion in relation to the issues. For instance, what does religion know about family planning, embezzlement of public funds, corruption and human rights, to mention but a few? They should come together to fuse their knowledge and fight these issues in union rather than broad generalizations and mere sentimental statements of concern from different religious bodies*

Such joint actions may not only lead to solving social problems together, but should also result in greater understanding of each other as they discuss, plan and work together. To this end, Balogun advised the FG that it

*should give directive to the governors in all the states to form a religious council, similar to that at the Federal level, which will comprise all the representatives of the major religions in the country. This, undoubtedly, will augment the efforts of the [pre-NIREC]*

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<sup>143</sup>M. Ndagi, 29 Jan/2005. Appendix 18.

*National Religious Council. It will also provide a forum where many religious problems can be checked and tackled before they get out of hand.*"<sup>144</sup>

From his earlier BZ perch, Ambassador Kazaure advocated that "regular meetings should be arranged between the Muslim and Christian leaders to discuss matters like the falling standard of morality. In order to create a favourable atmosphere for dialogue, arguments about fundamental theological issues should be avoided. Discussion on the grievances of both groups should also be put aside for the time being." As and when the religious groups understand each other, an inter-religious organisation for Christian-Muslim friendship should be set up at the national level with branches in all the state and with the following aims....<sup>145</sup>

After preparing the ground for dialogue Kazaure, moved on to some suggestions for interesting dialogical actions. The first:

*The Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (SCIA) and CAN should engage in regular constructive dialogue, with the view to building mutual confidence and promoting tolerance and peace among Muslims and Christians. With goodwill on both sides, it is not beyond the ingenuity of the religious leaders, with help of the FG, to work out a resolution of the sharia crisis that would satisfy the aspirations of sharia proponents and allay the fears of non-Muslim communities. Such resolution could ensure that the sharia affects only Muslim communities and has jurisdiction only in predominantly Muslim areas, while guaranteeing that the rights of non-Muslims to religious freedom are not trampled upon in any way. Should there be no agreement, the matter can be settled through referenda in all the states planning to ream [?] the sharia.*

Kazaure had more, a mixture of word and deed. The above two organisations should hold discussions in the media about common elements they share and about current social problems. "Mutual understanding and confidence" can also be enhanced by joint social action such as assisting the poor and provide joint aid during disasters. They can even establish permanent joint hospitals, orphanages, mental homes, low-cost housing, and so on. All levels of government have a special responsibility for bridge-building. The establishment of NIREC is a step in the right direction. And then an interesting one: Christians, Muslims and adherents of ATR "who are members of the same family should be encouraged to hold televised discussions on how they live together peacefully, notwithstanding their different religious affiliation." I

<sup>144</sup>K. Balogun, "Religious Fanaticism...", p. 189.

<sup>145</sup>Z. Kazaure, 1986 p. 18. Appendix 12.

believe I detect something of the diplomat in Kazaure with these suggestions. He relayed the comment of the late Tanzanian President, Julius Nyerere, who said that *Nigerians “were more aware of our weakness than of our success or strength.”* A “disturbing example” of this tendency, according to Kazaure, is “our perception of our religious, cultural and ethnic differences as sources of division and conflict rather than as catalyst for deliberate effort to promote unity and co-operation.” He concluded his paper with this admonition: “Let us completely change this attitude and use the power of religion to promote social harmony instead of disorder, so that we may build a fully cohesive nation.”<sup>146</sup> While most people of goodwill, including myself, would like to see his proposals put into gear, it is too bad that Kazaure failed to unearth the barriers that have so far prevented such projects.

In his address to the Catholic Bishops mentioned earlier, Lateef Adegbite also went beyond the realm of words onto dialogical or joint action. Having laid the groundwork for goodwill, he went on to declare it incumbent on religious leaders “to reverse the misfortune of our people.” He first of all exposed the basic reason leaders had failed in this respect by tracing the root of the “rot” of corruption that is “brutalizing Nigerians.” He mentioned the heart of secularism without using the term: “Consciously or otherwise, religion has been split into two, the spiritual and the material, with the vast majority giving attention to the latter.” That was true even for the Muslims who have ruled Nigeria. They should have known better. Adegbite properly derided his fellow Muslims in this Christian audience, a very unusual occurrence. He then proposed an 11-point joint project that, in summary, included advocacy with governments on behalf of the poor, the disabled and other vulnerables; critique or condemnation for wrong government policies; re-enforcing the spirit of toleration on the part of adherents by uplifting sermons; calling on NIREC to help resolve differences; avoiding and discouraging the fanning of religious conflicts; preventing the anger that goes with them, and--yes, of course—praying for all to live by God’s law. A plate full of veritable challenges to dialogue by deed for both religions.<sup>147</sup>

A fine and practical example of dialogue in action is that of the International Centre for Gender and Social Research (Inter-Gender). Though it began as a centre for gender studies and action, it has expanded and is currently very engaged in bringing Muslims and Christians together in the search for peace and reconciliation. The programme includes seminars and workshops for

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<sup>146</sup>Z. Kazaure, 22 Mar/2000; 1986, p. 20.

<sup>147</sup>L. Adegbite, 14 Apr/2004.

various social groups, encouragement of reconciliation among groups in conflict, the promotion of dialogue with a special focus on women and youths. In front of me lies a copy of the *Inter-Gender Peace Bulletin (IGPB)* of November, 2004, the front page of which has reports on both a Christian-women and a Muslim-women conference, both sponsored by Inter-Gender. Some of their events are separate; many, joint occasions. A unique element were “16 novelty football matches between Christians and Muslims in Plateau and Kaduna States to give adherents of the two faiths the opportunity to play together while learning to ‘work’ and ‘walk’ in teams.” They even gave me an opportunity to introduce this series of studies to a mixed audience of Christians and Muslims in Jos early in 2005. I was gratified to note how warmly it was received by both groups.<sup>148</sup>

Among the latest *de facto* dialogue projects is that of the Nigerian chapter of the African Anti-Abortion Coalition. In a reaction to President Obasanjo’s alleged move towards legalising abortion, Cardinal Okogie called for a strong anti-abortion movement. The Coalition’s Chairman, Philip Njemanze, announced plans for a “one-million man march” against abortion on 14 February, 2007. “He called on Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to organise local marches as ecumenical and multi-faith efforts and urged contact between religious leaders to fight against abortion.”<sup>149</sup> This is dialogue in action: The primary concern is not to encourage dialogue so much as to support a common social cause.

One of the first practical things AZ NIREC did was to send a delegation of Muslims and Christians to bring reconciliation to the tribal conflicts between the Jukun and Tiv in Taraba State. Plans were also underway to send similar delegations to other trouble spots in the country.<sup>150</sup> Later in the same month, we find the two co-chairmen, the Sultan and the National Chairman of CAN, in Ilorin to calm the community’s spirit after a 4-day riot in which churches were vandalised and burned down. Sultan Maccido warned that violators of peace and perpetrators of violence would face the opposition of both religions. “Nigerians must embrace peace and co-operate with one another to see that law and order in the society were not disturbed.” He also urged the Kwara State Government, represented by the the Deputy Governor, Deacon Simon Sayomi, to thoroughly investigate and punish the perpetrators. And would they please give NIREC a copy of the report. Sound familiar?

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<sup>148</sup>See D. Ityavyar, 1 Aug/2005, p. 9, for a more complete description of the programme.

<sup>149</sup>U. Kalu, 16 Jan/2007.

<sup>150</sup>A. Jokolo, 10 Dec/99.

Professor Yesufu Obaje, a senior official at the Presidency, underscored the foolishness of religious conflict and destruction of churches by reminding his listeners that the Prophet Muhammad “allowed Christian to use a mosque to pray. The Emir of Gwandu, Mustapha Jokolo, also present at the occasion, indicated that the Prophet Muhammad “actually wrote against the burying of churches and the destruction of Christian properties, saying Islam does not support any form of religious bigotry.”<sup>151</sup>

For a while NIREC was dormant, but when it revived in 2007, the demand rose to go beyond reconciliation activities. In an early meeting with the Sultan and other representatives of NSCIA, President Yar’adua said

*that the FG would build bridges across religious divides to create harmonious relationships among them. Yar'adua said no country could thrive under religious disharmony. He identified the need to make religious studies compulsory in schools, as a way of preparing the young ones morally, saying that moral training was crucial to government's efforts. “Without the necessary moral training and authority, no government can achieve its missions,” the president said. “A body such as this and CAN always serve to guide the leaders of the country; your guidance will provide government direction and wisdom that will improve the quality of governance.”*

At this point, the Sultan reminded the President of the dormant NIREC. He called for the strengthening of NIREC to make it more effective.<sup>152</sup>

The President listened. Things soon began to move. In August, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), a Federal body charged with combatting corruption, held a meeting with Muslim and Christian leaders to begin a joint war against corruption. As such meetings go, a communique was published with many brave sentiments and resolutions. One of the recommendations read, “A national inter-faith advisory committee on corruption should be established by EFCC in collaboration with Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC) to coordinate the fight against corruption.” The document was signed by Onaiyekan, Adegbite and Isiaq Oloyede, Secretary General of NIREC.<sup>153</sup>

Within a few months the President convened a NIREC meeting at which members made calls for going beyond the earlier reconciliation efforts. Sultan Mohammed Abubakar, chairing

<sup>151</sup>M. Lamidi, 30 Dec/99, pp. 1-2. See p. 91 in ch. 4 for the Christian contribution to the visit.

<sup>152</sup>TD, 19 June/2007.

<sup>153</sup>First National Inter-Faith..., 16 Aug/2007. Appendix 31

the meeting, “described peaceful co-existence as the key ingredient of nation-building and socio-economic development.” He furthermore stated the following:

*Religious harmony and respect for one another embody not only the commitment to national goals but also express our common humanity and affirmation of the benevolence of the Creator who has put us together in a common abode.*

*He observed that religious difference should serve as a source of national strength to live together, work together and co-operate with one another as well as resolve any misunderstanding that may occur in day-to-day activities.*

*The Sultan, who called on religious leaders to re-dedicate themselves to the noble cause of peace-building and mutual co-existence of the people, urged them to serve as worthy shepherds and provide necessary spiritual and moral guidance to engender a God-fearing society and God-conscious nation.*

*He said: "We must extol the virtues of tolerance, charity, respect and forgiveness as well as promote the universality of common bonds, which bind us together. We must, as religious leaders, champion the cause of truth, honesty, accountability and justice and ensure that our followers, be they in public service or as private individuals, embody these virtues and put them into effect.*

*"We must, above all, serve as a source of succour to the weak and the poor in our societies and provide hope and confidence to our people to face the social, economic and moral crises, which they are bound to encounter in their collective existence."*

*Noting that peace and religious harmony are not the concern of religious leaders alone, Sultan Abubakar warned politicians, opinion leaders and those charged with authority at all levels of governance to exercise utmost restraint in all their actions and utterances as well as ensure equity, fairness and social justice at all times.*

*He explained that the formation of NIREC was occasioned by the incessant ethno-religious crises, which punctuated the nation's socio-political landscape in the last few years, stressing that the establishment of the council was because the usual responses to these crises, which were mostly ad hoc in nature, could not get the nation far.*

*Abubakar submitted that the body would provide religious leaders with a veritable form, which would promote greater interaction and understanding among themselves and their*

*followers and establish the foundations of sustainable peace and religious harmony in the country.*<sup>154</sup>

Ado-Kurawa wrote extensively about dialogue issues. A Muslim, he quite naturally tended towards wholistic solutions. That is to say, solutions that go beyond narrowly-conceived religion and involve other sectors of culture. However, such wholistic perspective can also lead to paralysis and thus to *de facto* failure. When your perspective takes on the entire world—wholism with a vengeance!—the challenge can simply become overwhelming. This may have been the case with Ado-Kurawa. Though he has, to the best of my knowledge, never rejected dialogue in principle, the complications arising from a wholistic worldview that encompasses global politico-economics seemed so insurmountable to him at one stage, that it almost paralysed him that he almost threw in the towel. In the concluding chapter of his *Sharia and the Press in Nigeria*, the first section heading reads “Muslims Versus Christians: Between Tolerance/ Dialogue and Confrontation.” He emphasized that “:tolerance and dialogue between Muslims and Christians are as old as Islam.” However, it has largely been a unilateral relationship with Muslims tolerating Christians but not vice versa. I believe we all know that history, at least, the history of some centuries ago. He then put the issue on hold to move on to political considerations that led him to the question, “Is there any basis for dialogue or tolerance between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria?” As citizens we have no choice but to tolerate each other, but beyond that.... His answer: “Muslims will never abandon the sharia....” From here on it is only about politics: the old discussion about colonialism and the role of the Nigerian Christians. We have been through all that in Volumes 2, 4 and 6. Much of it is right on, including his views on missionaries with respect to colonialism and on Nigerian Christians with respect to neo-colonialism and globalism<sup>155</sup>--but Muslims participate as enthusiastically in globalism, a fact he did not readily acknowledge until his venture in London. At the end, Ado-Kurawa sideswiped the question of dialogue, while tolerance was only seen as an obligation but without any real hope for it as long as the politico-economic system is not radically changed. His last question was not about dialogue or religion but about the Nigerian economy: “Any hope?” One of his last suggestions was political and negative. He did not believe “the Western Christian world [will] allow sharia to exist in Nigeria.” *From his perspective, the sharia issue will not be solved by*

<sup>154</sup>Association of Nigerian Abroad, 17 Oct/2007. In view of Ado-Kurawa’s complaints about the anti-Muslim bias in the Southern press, it is interesting to note that at least *TD* and *Vanguard* give much more coverage to the Sultan than to his co-chair John Onaiyekan—and respectfully so.

<sup>155</sup>See J. Boer, 1979 and my two publications of 1992 for details on both counts.

*dialogue, unless the term is broadened to include the entire world of politics and economics. There is something to be said for that, especially in terms of the wholistic perspectives of both Islam and Kuiperianism, a movement of which he seemed faintly aware.*<sup>156</sup>

Throughout much of these discussions, Ado-Kurawa assumed a greater bond between Western globalist politico-economics and Christianity than in fact exists, an assumption that is basic to all his earlier theorizing but which he did eventually tone down. What if, in fact, a wedge of growing tension between these two forces is pushing them in different directions? The WCC has long talked in terms of their opposing logic. Though from a wholistic perspective, religion and politico-economics are theoretically to travel together, in fact there is considerable dissonance between the latter and the Christian religion, perhaps with the exception of the American Christian rightwing. Western politico-economic forces are more in sync with the regnant secular worldview than with Christianity. That being the case, it may be more possible for Muslims and Christians to work towards dialogue than Ado-Kurawa allowed. Perhaps the *major* joint project should be to take on the politico-economic regime together! But this project would be a long-term project. In the meantime, smaller projects could prepare us for that major one. What do you say to that, Ado-Kurawa? I, along with a whole crowd of Kuiperians, would be prepared to jump in the boat with you—though my age may prevent me!-- and there would be plenty of other Christians, perhaps including the WCC and the RCC. This could be an exciting journey. If ever there was a challenge, here it is!

Subsequent to writing the above, I stumbled upon a paper by Ado-Kurawa from July, 2003. It represents his reflections on a British Conference in which he displayed much greater nuance with respect to the West that, in turn, appears to have led to greater optimism concerning dialogue on his part. I have attached the document as Appendix 9 because of its rich and wide-ranging reflections. Without going into all the details of the change of nuance, I am going to summarize his dialogue thinking as reflected in this more recent paper.

“For dialogue to be successful,” Ado-Kurawa warned, “Muslims must not behave like dogmatic Westerners,” the children of the Enlightenment. He agreed that “there are indeed many Enlightenment ideas that are laudable,” but they “must be separated from those that promote colonialism and exploitation.” Furthermore, Muslims had their own enlightenment long before the West did. He praised the British for organizing this conference precisely because this

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<sup>156</sup>I. Ado-Kurawa, *Sharia and the Press...*, 2000, pp. 423-435, 411-412.

dialogue avoided those common traps. “The effort of the British Council in encouraging this discourse is commendable,” he wrote. “It is in the spirit of the English tradition of seeking understanding or the third way of humility and rejection of arrogance.”

*With this background of accommodation of Islam in the British establishment, the British Muslims who attended the seminar have every reason to be proud of being British and resist attempts by Muslims, especially from the repressive societies of the Middle East, to export their militant version of intolerance into Britain. Muslims, especially from Nigeria, have many things to learn from British Muslims, since we both speak the same language.*

The following statements surely indicate his increased openness, especially to the UK:

“Muslims and Westerners have many things in common” and “Both have enriched each other.” But then he warned, “What is essential is dialogue and not imposition.” Over against Americans, who always “attempt to use their power at every given opportunity, the British have since realized the futility of this arrogance. Hence this seminar by an important cultural arm of the British society.”

*Dialogue between Muslims and Christians is not only desirable but also essential. So, the issue is the motive. If it is to arrive at a theological middle ground, then it will fail, because of their theological differences that cannot be solved and any attempt to do that would lead to conversion. Therefore the only acceptable motive should be utility named peace, which could be achieved by the recognition of each other's faith. The dialogue is therefore brief, because of Islam's rejection of the libertarian culture of modernity as evil and decadent. “The fact that Islam has a strong legal side and that sharia defines the permissibility and the limits of human activity leaves no room for a gray area in which a dialogue” on these limits “can occur.” Muslims cannot compromise the integrity of the Prophet (SAW). This does not limit freedom of speech. Muslims also recognize the integrity of others. Hence blasphemy under Islamic law extends to other Prophets and Muslims are not allowed to disparage other religions. Decency, therefore, demands that other societies also respect Islam. Therefore, in this respect the British polity must recognize the integrity of the prophet of Islam. After all, the British Muslims have responded to the Rushdie affair within the limits of British law.*

*British Muslims have a great responsibility to the world in their efforts of negotiating their identity in the British society, because they serve as models for others to follow. It is commendable that their efforts of securing better representation of Islam in the media is recognized by the mainstream British society through the British Council. They have every reason to be proud of being Muslims and British because of the opportunities they have, which are more than those in Muslim majority countries.*<sup>157</sup>

Ado-Kurawa foresaw that Islam can gain if the various traditions, relying on their respective “ancient prophetic traditions,” join as allies in growing opposition to “the project for a new American century.” *“Such an alliance, breaking free both from the Pentagon’s vision of human civilization and from that proposed by Saudi, could have immense healing power. It would facilitate a better understanding of Islam in the West and greater appreciation of the West among Muslims, who for too long have assumed that greed, hegemony and godlessness are the only active principles of Western civilization.”* In addition, he now publicly acknowledged that there were dangerous Muslim preachers of terror and intolerance who brought shame to Islam. The Jews were no longer the only or even the worst of economic sinners, that is, usurers. It is wrong to blame only Jews for such gross evil. Muslims and Christians are involved as well, but “one of the greatest usurers and by far ahead of many Jews is a Saudi prince.”<sup>158</sup>

By now it is a far cry from the earlier angry Ado-Kurawa to a more balanced and congenial one who recognizes virtue and vice on both sides, without relenting on his principial opposition to major aspects of the West and Christianity. It appears that his venture from the isolation of Kano into the more cosmopolitan environment of London helped him develop greater balance and made him more open to genuine dialogue. Well, that’s what dialogue is *supposed* to accomplish.

So, Ado-Kurawa asked again, “Is there any basis for dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria?” This time he is more positive. Indeed there is: “As citizens of one country, adherents of both faiths must live together.” Though “Muslims will never abandon the Shari’ah, whether the personal or its criminal aspects just to please Christians, both the majority of the

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<sup>157</sup>For this comparison, please check his earlier materials in this volume but also in vols. 4 and 6 by checking his name in their indices. The quotation within the last quote is from M. Aminrazavi, 1996 “Medieval Philosophical Discourse and Muslim-Christian Dialogue,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 13: 3, p. 386. I strongly recommend that you read Ado-Kurawa’s wide-ranging paper (Appendix 15).

<sup>158</sup>I. Ado-Kurawa, July/2003.

Muslims and Christians in Nigeria have indicated their wish to live peacefully because they have no option other than their present structure.”

In distinction from his earlier writings, he now approved of “some Muslim intellectuals” who have acknowledged the role of the Vatican in promoting understanding<sup>159</sup>. “Pope Paul IV did his best to promote understanding between Muslims and Christians by stating clearly that the Vatican does not support proselytization in Muslim countries. But according to him, “There are some extremists who would like to undertake that in much the same way as you have extremists in the Muslim world”. The Pope, according to Ado-Kurawa, called for cooperation to bring in those who do not believe in God.<sup>160</sup> Ado-Kurawa appears to have scaled down in his own mind the previously unsurmountable obstacles to dialogue and affirmed both its desirability, necessity *and* possibility. There remain the three conditions of acceptance of sharia, rejection of proselytism and an attitude of humility on the part of dialogue partners. For me there also remain some questions: If proselytism by Christians is an obstacle to dialogue, how about proselytism by Muslims? When is mission or *da'wa* legitimate and when has it degenerated to proselytism? Another related question: Can both religions live with such a restriction? Can Islam forego *da'wa*? Could Norwegian Christians and Muslims have found the answer with their joint proclamation to allow free and unobstructed conversion from one to the other?<sup>161</sup>

*Selected Quotations: xxxx*

So many people talk about dialogue that I cannot possibly discuss it all. So, as I have done in previous volumes, I will here simply reproduce a few statements without further comments.

Khalid Aliyu Abubakar at the Muslim-Christian Dialogue on Peace in Jos: *“It is through interaction, dialogue and gatherings of this nature, we would be able to iron out or settle our differences, and better understand the religious doctrines of one another.”*<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup>For more information see Braibanti 1999: 31

<sup>160</sup>I. Ado-Kurawa, 2002. The rest of this endnote as well as endnote 159 refer to Ado-Kurawa’s own endnotes: Pope Paul VI made his statement at the “Islamic-European Dialogue,” a conference held at the Vatican, which was attended by Christian clergy and the Ulama from the Muslim World. See Yamani, M. A. 1997 ‘Islam and the West: The Need for Mutual Understanding AJISS 14:1: 94.

<sup>161</sup>Sultan and Tveit, 2007. Appendix 19.

<sup>162</sup>K. A. Abubakar, 2004, p. 10

D. S. Dauda: *“I share in the belief that it is only through objective dialogue that we can learn to live together in peace and harmony, values without which our continued co-existence and collective progress will forever remain...”* [last word missing].<sup>163</sup>

Sanusi L. Sanusi: *“My thesis was and remains that Islam requires Muslims to join hands with other Nigerians in the struggle to create a better, more religious and human, more liberal, honest and fair political environment in which all Nigerians can improve their lives—economically, culturally, intellectually, spiritually and morally. The struggle is for me, a revolution against our collective oppressors rather than a crusade against our fellow oppressed.”*<sup>164</sup>

### **Pluralism xxxx**

Pluralism, according to its spokesmen we have overheard in Volume 6 is an important mark of Islam. More than a decade before the Zamfara Declaration Auwalu Yadudu argued for plurality on basis of federalism. “There are as many legal systems in the USA as there are states. That is good for their federation. It should not be bad for ours.” “A federal system must recognize and accommodate regional and ethno-cultural diversities. This is a necessary ingredient of a federation.” Legal plurality should be suppressed no more than Nigeria’s enormous linguistic plurality. He warned that those “advocating for uniformity in our legal system” are in fact “leading to the ultimate destruction of other systems of law.”<sup>165</sup>

Thus, Christians should be allowed to practise what they believe in, proclaimed Ibrahim Sulaiman. Those whose culture allows them to drink alcohol, should be free to do so. In modern Nigeria with its emphasis on “democracy, federalism and human rights, there must be divergent views and demands. The only way to guarantee that different groups have what they want is to encourage pluralism and provide alternatives.” This means that the “responsibility of the FG is not to impose unitary laws on states but to find ways of managing the different yearnings and aspirations of the different units of the federation. Co-ordination of the conflicting interests is the responsibility of Abuja.” In the context of this pluralism discussion, Sulaiman seemed to

<sup>163</sup>D. Dauda, “The Politics of Religion...,” Apr/2003.

<sup>164</sup>Quoted in Alkali Bello, “The Islamic Movement...,” Aug/2003. Appendix 21

<sup>165</sup>A. Yadudu, 16 Dec/88.

favour limited government: FG should concentrate “mostly on foreign relations, external security and monetary issues.” State governments had more detailed responsibilities that include a list of random examples such as standardizing weights and measures, ensure decent dress for school children, prevention of illegal drug trade. Every state government has the right to “administer laws that are acceptable to the people who voted them into office.”<sup>166</sup>

Umar therefore advised the FG “that it should allow the component parts of the Federation—the states—to exercise their rights under a federal system. Any attempt to sabotage or halt Governor Sani from carrying out the sharia, will bring an unpleasant backlash. Any attempt to suppress Islamic way of life, will breed the type of violence we have in the Middle East.” He ended his article with a quote from Malcom X, who allegedly said, “It is either the bullet or the ballot.” Umar: “We prefer the ballot.”<sup>167</sup>

### **Majority and Census Issues    xxxx**

Due to the history of this subject in the development of this project, Christian and Muslims writers and issues are so intermingled that the material fits neither in this Muslim chapter/appendix nor in Appendix 35, its Christian equivalent. For this reason, I have relegated the material to Appendix 20.

### **Compromise    xxxx**

The Muslim-oriented volumes in this series sometimes present the impression of a predominantly hard-line approach to sharia issues. The recommendation of the Muslim Corpers’ Association of Nigeria of BZ vintage is typical: “The sincere implementation of sharia as the only solution to the predicament of the country.” It warned, “Any attempt to neglect it (sharia) in the Nigerian Constitution would be futile.”<sup>168</sup>

More recently, Abdullahi U. Bello quite strongly rejected compromise as impossible. He asked,

*How can we build a more religious society when we have many religions that are sometimes diametrically opposed to each other? How can we have a fair political environment, where the idea of a political environment differs between individuals and groups in the country. And how can we improve our lives, where the concept of some is*

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<sup>166</sup>I. Umar, 2 Nov/99.

<sup>167</sup>I. Umar, 19 Dec/99.

<sup>168</sup>A. Ahmad, 21 Apr/89, p. 16.

*completely different from that of others? Some would argue that in this situation, compromises would have to be made and each one should follow his own religion and culture, so that we can co-exist peacefully. But at what expense are we going to do that?*

Bello then turned to the example of differences in economic thinking. Compromise would require Muslims accepting interest, but doing so would amount to being “possessed of the devil” [Qur’an 2:275]. The whole of the Nigerian economy is anti-Islam. “How can we be comfortable with a system that places people, not God, as sovereign?” How can we place a human constitution above the divine law? “We cannot afford to compromise our identity and accept the present arrangement with its roots in imperialism.” “Are we going to compromise our noble ways because we want to flow with the tide?” “We have to address these painful questions now or we have to accept the consequences in the hereafter. Granted that there exists a law of necessity, but for how long are we to hide under this law? At least, if we try and fail, God is a witness to our actions, but it is not an excuse to accept the present imperfections and do nothing to change the situation.”

Bello suggested a restructuring of the nation. The population consists of large blocks. The Yoruba with a population of over 25 million are a big nation. “What sense does it make to deny such a people autonomy of their choice? Why should anyone today in Sokoto, Maiduguri or Makurdi raise a finger against a new Biafra? What moral imperative or interest would compel the North to ‘save’ the oil-rich Niger Delta, if its people strongly feel they will be better off with an autonomy that gives them exclusive control over their oil resources?” Likewise, the North with its Muslim majority “can unite and form a completely Islamic state under a restructured Nigeria.”

But it appears Bello would not wish to stop at this. Once such an arrangement has been established, it would become possible to export the Islamic model to the rest of the nation “with the help of God, the force of reason, moral uprightness, [and] leading by example.” That is how the Prophet “conquered the whole of Arabia and beyond.” “We can use his methods to achieve what we want to achieve.” In other words, divide the country into autonomous regions, each free to adopt its own ways. This, suggested Bello, would open the way for the now truly Muslim North to carry out a *da’wah* programme to the other regions by example and persuasion. the North, that would shine over the rest of Nigeria as Old Testament Israel was to shine over the nations.

Bello left some questions unanswered. If his scheme were introduced, what would happen to non-Muslims in the North? He completely ignored the significant Christian presence there, including the indigenous ones. It seems he was ready to sacrifice them. His proposal would “lay to rest some aspects of the debates, since ‘non-Muslims in a contemporary Islamic State’ is no more a fundamental issue.” The plan would create serious problems of human rights that would once again attract the attention of the world—and pressure.

Furthermore, his proposal contained a serious contradiction. He upheld Australia and South Africa as “countries ahead [of Nigeria] in almost all indices.” But these are secular countries, each in their own way. After equating secularism and imperialist structures with the devil on one page, how can these nations now suddenly emerge as desirable examples on the next? Bello, though I admire your enthusiasm for the beauty of a wholistic Islam, you have some serious issues to work out. Your scheme does not take sufficient account of the restrictions multi-religion force upon you. You seem suddenly prepared for a compromise that would, in your own words, lead you straight to the devil<sup>169</sup>

Fortunately, there were *more temperate, pragmatic voices*. Abubakre insisted that compromise and adjustment have frequently been forced on Muslims in order to survive. Adapting to the worldviews of West Africa enabled Islam to survive not only but to spread. This attitude “has been helpful to its spread more than any form of organized proselysation.” This attitude was displayed already early in the history of Islam. “They could hardly have done otherwise at that stage.” It is “the characteristic of Islam, a sort of bending your head at the right time in order not to bruise the head, so to say, which did tide Islam over” in West Africa. Yoruba Muslims made “friends with Christians to mutual advantage,” something that is approved, provided Islam is not injured or it leads to conversion to another religion. Yoruba Muslims also developed “positive relations to the British.”<sup>170</sup>

Yoruba Muslims, along with their fellow Christians and Traditionalists, have long been a different breed from other Nigerians. In an earlier volume I have already indicated that the Yoruba are by nature more syncretistic and more tolerant. The alleged reason for that is that at bottom both Yoruba Christians and Muslims continue to adhere to the basic worldview of ATR.<sup>171</sup> Deremy Abubakre, a Yoruba himself, referred to several Yoruba cases of syncretism

<sup>169</sup>A. U. Bello, Aug/2003. Appendix 21

<sup>170</sup>R. D. Abubakre, n.d., pp. 60-61.

<sup>171</sup>J. Boer, vol. 3, 2004, pp. 66-68. Kehinde Faluyi wrote, “A good number of Nigerians who embrace Christianity or Islam during the day, play activer roles in ATR practices under the cover of

and concluded that “the Yoruba are not only dynamic but rather pragmatic to a fault; a people whose response to changing circumstances is extremely elastic.”<sup>172</sup> It is thus not surprising that Yoruba Muslims were more open to compromise with respect to sharia. Lateef Owoyemi was prepared to suggest that “given the impact of globalisation and the import of international human rights conventions and agreements to which we subscribe,” sharia “may not be fully applicable in Nigeria.” “I believe the Qur’an contains enough provisions for modifying laws to suit local cultures,” as long as the basics of Islam are adhered to.<sup>173</sup>

As you can read in the section on Government further down, the Northern Governor Makarfi of Kaduna State seemed very prepared to compromise by adjusting the political borders and structures within his state to finally bring a semblance of peace to his people. He made at least one Archbishop happy.

Sometimes compromise leads to distortions. Ali Ahmad admitted to “a feeling of unease from attempts to create symbolic equality” between the two religions. The reference was to “equal treatment by government of issues of unequal theological or spiritual significance in the two religions.” Islam “has no symbols, images or icons which it particularly venerates.” Not even the crescent. Islam does not have an equivalent to the symbol of the Christian cross.

“Nevertheless..., in order to put the two religions formally on a par, symbols of both must be accorded equal treatment. Hence, the Muslim crescent...is elevated publicly to the same status as the Christian cross.”<sup>174</sup> Similarly, the treatment of religious holidays. Under colonialism, three annual Christian holidays were established. “To create equality in number of holidays for Muslims, government...chose the Prophet’s birthday in addition to the two Islamically

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darkness” (K. Faluyi, 1987, p. 123). P. Williams: “Deep down, each Nigerian is still tied to his [ATR] roots.” She summarized missionary descriptions of the dominant Yoruba attitude as “a brazen display of syncretism” (P. Williams, 1987, pp. 166, 170). As Pini Jason put it some 20 years ago, “Nothing has stopped men of God from hopping from holy communion to the native doctor for most of their mundane problems. Not even the universities, that have become the centres for religious fanaticism, have been spared the battle of red, green and yellow lizards thrown by lecturers at each other for promotion and positions” (P. Jason, 27 Apr/87). C. O. Williams likewise has “confessed” that Christians and Muslims tend to continue their basic adherence to ATR (*Nigerian Christian*, 12 Dec/95, p. 5). As to an explanation regarding the native doctors issues, see J. Boer, 1989, pp. 3-5 and J. Boer and D. Ityavyar, vols. 1 and 2, 1994, throughout. Actually such situations are not unusual at all. Western Christians have a long history of syncretism with Greek Paganism and with their own rationalism and secularism. Probably it is an inescapable feature of religion.

<sup>172</sup>R. D. Abubakre, 1992, pp. 124-127.

<sup>173</sup>L. Owoyemi, 12 Apr/2000.

<sup>174</sup>Muhammad Haruna holds the opposite view on the status of the crescent. He wrote, “So even though Arabic is linked to Islam, it does not symbolize the religion like, say, the Crescent which is the equivalent of the Cross for Christianity (M. Haruna, Gamji 329).

recognised holidays of Ramadan and the Eid of Sacrifice.” Thus government created “a parallel between the Prophet’s birthday and Christmas.... This is done without regard to the view of some Muslims that marking the Prophet’s birthday has no theological basis and could, in fact, be unorthodox.” It was Ahmad’s opinion that such attempts at equality are downright silly. Allow Christians their extra celebration, since it is so firmly rooted in their theology.

Ahmad advocated the same approach to other issues that have been argued in earlier volumes. The Muslim pilgrimage or *hajj*, e.g., has deep roots in the religion unlike the Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Rome. Christianity has “no corresponding theological imperative” to support pilgrimage. “Attempts to equal Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem with *hajj* can only be explained in relation to pretentious equality.” Parallel issues are those of dress codes for female Muslim nurses, work-free days on Fridays and Sundays, and, of course, sharia versus canon law. Such pseudo-equalization exercises are a mockery, as long as the real inequalities caused by colonial distortions in both religion and government remain in place.<sup>175</sup>

Western educated Muslims are often accused of being secularized. Many of them were very critical of Governor Sani of Zamfara and his colleagues. Though they are Muslim either by culture or at heart, they often critiqued the implementation of sharia without an awareness, according to Sanusi, that they were in fact applying Western secular standards—in other words, compromising. He advised them to “be more critical of their own views” and recognize their source. He described their condition as “West-oxification.” Secondly, these critics must distinguish between those who seek to apply sharia for genuinely pious and religious ends and those who “consciously manipulate religion for ideological ends.” This distinction will help prevent them from “wholesale judgement of Muslim society by the standards of Western capitalist societies.” The distinction can also lead to more open discussion among Muslims that in turn will somehow “lead to a more liberal, egalitarian and progressive application of Muslim laws.” Finally, these Muslim critics must move away from constant negative criticism to an emphasis on “more constructive comments aimed at using Islam as a driver of social justice and human development.” The sharia discussion—“discourse,” as Sanusi preferred to call it in academic jargon—could yield positive reforms without the Muslim community caving in to Western cultural pressures.” They “can preserve essential elements” of Muslim “authenticity by

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<sup>175</sup>A. Ahmad, 2005, pp. 368-370.

selective adoption of those modern values that satisfy the yearnings of the modern Muslim for emancipation, justice and equity.”<sup>176</sup>

Actually, opinions about compromise did not really change much over the years. There is no noticeable difference between BZ and AZ thinking. Justice Abdulkadir Orire once compared the Nigerian situation “to two people agreeing to buy a house together and then having to compromise about how it is used.” He said, “Nigeria does not belong to non-Muslims alone. Muslims should give non-Muslims their own concession and non-Muslims should give Muslims their own concession. And Muslim concession is Allah’s concession.” No worthy Muslim, he explained, would agree to any compromise that removed him “from Allah’s order.”<sup>177</sup> I take this to mean “yes” to the principle of compromise; as good as “no” to its practice.

### **Education    xxxx**

First, a basic issue. Ahmed Lemu emphasised two facts of Islam that should form the foundation of Islamic education. First, there is man’s office of *khalifah* or vice-gerent.<sup>178</sup> Secondly, “God has endowed man with the faculty of logical definition and thus conceptual thinking.” “It is on the basis of this philosophy that Muslim educational aims and methods of instruction should be formulated.” Over against secular education, Muslim education combines a moral dimension with science, without which “it is likely to create widespread havoc and death.” As has been explained in previous volumes, Islamic education gives great emphasis to science, but only in combination with a Muslim worldview. The curriculum should not separate the “religious” from the “other” subjects. It is not to be taught as a separate subject but infused through and integrated in all the courses.<sup>179</sup> If Islamic education is to overcome the legacy of immoral secularism, it must be designed on basis of these principles. As Omar Bello, a one-time Acting Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies at the University of Sokoto, put it, “True decolonization lies in islamization of knowledge.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup>S. Sanusi, 2005, pp. 271-272.

<sup>177</sup>J. Fearon, 1992, p. 7. The story is culled from APS Bulletin, 27 May/91.

<sup>178</sup>For further explanation of these terms, see J. Boer, vol. 4, 2005, pp. 184-185; vol. 5, 2006, pp. 184-186.

<sup>179</sup>A. Lemu, 7 Apr/89, p. 4. The Kuyperian tradition sees the integration of religion with the entire curriculum in exactly the same way.

<sup>180</sup>I. I. Bello, 7 Apr/89, p. 16. Remember the new Al-Ahmanah Academy in Kaduna that was established precisely to “combine Western and Islamic education” (J. Boer, vol. 4, ch. 2. S. Babdoko, 29 Apr/2004). For a Christian discussion on the islamization of knowledge see Barnabas, “The Battle for Truth” in Bibliography, but here it is seen as a threat without appreciation for a basic integration of religion and knowledge as a whole. At bottom there is a worldview issue here of an unacknowledged

If colonial education has instilled the virus of secularism in the minds of Muslims, that virus needs to be excised by Muslim education.<sup>181</sup> Though the Northern Muslim community is often berated for its ignorance and its lack of education, there is a keen desire for proper Muslim education as the way to overcome their problems, education at every front. There is a strong feeling among Muslims that rejection of Islam or its sharia is caused by misunderstanding, often rank ignorance that may be supported by “false phobias.” Adegbite frequently called on sharia opponents to “show more understanding.”<sup>182</sup> There is no need to repeat what I wrote about it before,<sup>183</sup> but do be aware that the general climate of opinion on education changed little from BZ to AZ.

If you have read Appendix 7 about BZ educational developments, you will know there was an urgent concern to integrate Qur’anic education with the public primary system. By 2003, some success was apparently booked in this area. Aliyu Musa Kardi, a zonal co-ordinator for the FG’s Universal Basic Education (UBE), “applauded the integration of Qur’anic education and Western education in the North, saying it has boosted enrolment.” Governor Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano similarly stressed that “only imparting a combination of Islamic and Western education could save the society from the series of trials Muslims the world over are experiencing.” Other necessary ingredients of the education process, according to the Governor, were discipline and moral conduct. His entire educational package represented classic Nigerian mainstream Islam. Some of these so-called ‘Islamiyya schools’ had already begun to teach Mathematics, Science and English.” In one such school in Sokoto females outnumbered males!<sup>184</sup>

Ibrahim Dan Halilu proposed the restructuring of the support system of Qur’anic schools. He wanted them “funded jointly by the community and local government councils.” He did not state which problem this would solve, but presumably he was aiming to end the plague of begging *almajirai* on the city streets, since they would no longer need to support their teachers.<sup>185</sup> Educational thinking was not restricted to the teaching of Muslims in Muslim institutions. Already during BZ days, Muhib Opeloye wanted all children in secondary schools to be taught the fundamentals of both Islam and Christianity in order to “encourage interaction.” This should

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dualism between religion and “secular” subjects that reaches into the depth of history as far back as the Scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas. See J. Boer, 1979, pp. 192, 449-456, 454-455; 1984, pp. 78, 132-137.

<sup>181</sup>J. Boer, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 37-48

<sup>182</sup>M. Mumuni, 15 Nov/99, p. 17.

<sup>183</sup>J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, pp. 22-23. For example, A. Binji in J. Boer, 2007, vol. 7, Appendix 1.

<sup>184</sup>I. Okpani, 25 Sep/2003. A. Abdullahi, 23 May/2005.

<sup>185</sup>I. Dan Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003.

lead to children of the two faiths to regard each other “as friends rather than foes.” The traditional hostility is “because they are ignorant of the other religion.” The school system must correct this situation, especially by emphasizing commonalities.<sup>186</sup>

This idea survived into AZ days. Adegbite advised that children “should be exposed to the fundamentals” of both religions “from early age.” The teaching of both should be made compulsory at both primary and secondary levels. The purpose would be “to inculcate better understanding and tolerance among Christians and Muslims.”<sup>187</sup> This popular suggestion was in direct contradiction to the colonial practice of opposing “giving religious instructions to a pupil other than his own religion.” Hopefully, this newer policy would include teaching the limits of tolerance, so that no one would entertain any false hopes of coalescing religions.<sup>188</sup> Adegbite was not alone. Dan Halilu wanted to place comparative religious studies in the secondary school curriculum, so that every young Nigerian will know a little about the two major religions in the country. This is to guard against abuse of religion and to promote religious tolerance among our youths.”<sup>189</sup>

The Kogi State Council of Ulama, lamented that Muslim secondary school students in the state are suffering “continued intimidation and molestation” and “no Arabic or Islamic teachers are employed to teach them their religion, especially in private missionary schools.” The solution, the Council suggested to the State House of Assembly, was “to enact an edict making it mandatory for schools to employ teachers for all religions practised by the students.”<sup>190</sup> I wonder whether the Council would also welcome teachers of CRK in Muslim schools? Demand it they did, but would they be welcome? I have not heard similar demands from their colleagues in sharia states!

You have read Abdul-Rah Adam’s statement on the revival of the heart. As it is, lack of education stands in the way. Youths have no awareness of “the true tenets of their religions.” This lies behind a lot of the violence. The Kano spillover of the Yelwa violence in 2004, for example, “was in part due to lack of proper religious education. Kano youth had no reason to fight innocent ‘settlers’ in Kano. According to the Qur’an, ‘Allah does not forbid you from those who don’t expel you from your home from being righteous towards them and acting justly

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<sup>186</sup>M. Opeloye, 1992, p. 90.

<sup>187</sup>L. Adegbite, NIREC, 2000, p. 17.

<sup>188</sup>K. A. Balogun, Dec/86, p. 61.

<sup>189</sup>I. Dan Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003.

<sup>190</sup>S. Gaya, 19 Dec/99.

towards them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly (60:8).” The same, Adam asserted, can be said of Muslim youth involvement in the Kaduna sharia riots: lack of proper awareness.<sup>191</sup> Aliyu Dauda wrote a very powerful article about the serious problems Muslims were having with ABU, the university that was supposed to help develop the Muslim community. Among other things, he reviewed a speech delivered at the 1972 ABU Convocation by the *Wazirin Sakwato*, Dr. Junaidu, outlining the problems not only but also pointing to a different direction for ABU. The University “should arrest the process of endorsing our personality out of our lives, education and upbringing.” Junaidu warned the ABU scholars, “Let not your degrees, researches and publications be an excuse to feel haughty amongst your own people. Always remember that knowledge is at its best when it is universally useful and that the best scholars are those whom the ordinary man fears neither to encounter nor to address.” Junaidu called on “all revolutionary-minded Muslim youths” “to remain on the alert, be very vigilant and monitor the activities of such foreign subversive clubs, societies, associations and women libs, as well as all other dubious social groups, so that, whenever necessary, we can mobilize the already disenchanted and bitter silent majority against satan and his agents.” Dauda insisted that the situation at ABU’s daughter university, Bayero University, Kano, is the same.<sup>192</sup>

Auwalu Muhammad Karaye of Bayero warned that the proposed Kano State University would be similarly derailed into a non-Muslim direction unless care was taken. Existing universities are all “based on anti-Islamic principles and doctrines.” Islam may be taught, but not the true Islam. So, planners must introduce courses that cover the entire Muslim waterfront, including Qur’anic sciences but also Islamic banking, political science and jurisprudence. This is a list similar to that offered by Professor Mahdi Adamu at a workshop at the Usman Danfodio University on the “Islamisation of knowledge.”<sup>193</sup> Karaye called on “all Muslims to wake up and realise the dangers contained in our system of education and call for immediate changes so that it will be in conformity with Islam.”<sup>194</sup>

Most of these ideas may seem reactionary and conservative to the secular mind that tends to berate everything non-secular as backward and reactionary, but that is not really the case.

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<sup>191</sup>A. Adam, 2004, p. 47.

<sup>192</sup>A. Dauda, 1, 15 July/88.

<sup>193</sup>On this subject see also *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Persecution/Barnabas/Islamisation of Knowledge>.

<sup>194</sup>A. Karaye, 7 Apr/89, p. 3. I. I. Bello, 7 Apr/89, p. 16. See A. Dauda for the non-Muslim secular conditions of ABU (1 July/89, p. 12 and 15 July/89, p. 11). See also J. Boer, Index entries under “Education,” “Universities,” “Elite” in vols. 2, 4, 6.

When you fit these ideas into the framework of serious modern Muslim perspectives, there is plenty of room for creativity and progress. Even the call on FG by MSS to devise a programme of continued education for young married women or, actually, married girls, is not as unusual as some might think. The Northern Muslim custom is to marry girls off as soon as maturity sets in—and that is usually the end of any thoughts of education. The MSS wanted the early marriage custom to continue, since it helps prevent “irregularities,” but it should not prevent further education.<sup>195</sup> An interesting mix of tradition and progress that has within it the seed for the demise of the custom.

Another badly needed educational improvement was for legal training in the proper administration of sharia itself. We read about this need back in Volume 6, but it was already keenly recognized during the BZ period. To advance this goal, a national workshop was held at the University of Sokoto on “Teaching of Islamic Law in Nigeria.” Be aware that such events were held more than a decade before the Zamfara Declaration. In order to fully appreciate the papers at this conference, you must be familiar with the problems and complaints treated in Volumes 2, 4 and 6. The proceedings were published under the title *Islamic Law in Nigeria* with Syed Khalid Rashid as editor. In his Foreword, Mahdi Adamu, at the time Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sokoto, wrote that “in order to restore the dignity of the sharia in this country, the teaching of this form of law should be stepped up and be firmly entrenched in Nigerian universities and colleges.”<sup>196</sup> Editor Syed Rashid spoke of the need for Nigerian lawyers to “become more aware of the Nigerian and Muslim social realities.” Hence, he felt that “it is highly desirable that some elements of Islamic Law should be taught in Nigerian universities that presently ignore it completely.” He then proceeded to outline “the ideal course content” that was to “be made compulsory in such universities.”<sup>197</sup>

Though this section so far has emphasized Muslim sources and perspectives along with science, there is also a strong sense that education and knowledge can be gained from everywhere and every culture. Some militants with their strong antithetical bias may reject knowledge from any source beyond Islam and science, but on the whole Muslim writers are much more cosmopolitan than that. As Abubakre put it, no “race or group of people” has a monopoly on knowledge. “The Qur’an commends the wisdom of a Nubian.” Knowledge can be sought anywhere, even as far as

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<sup>195</sup> *Alkalami*, “*Daliban Musulmi...*,” 31 Mar/89-14 Apr/89, p. 16.

<sup>196</sup> M. Adamu, “Foreword.” In S. K. Rashid, 1986, p. vii.

<sup>197</sup> S. K. Rashid, 1986, pp. 93-102.

China. Islam exalts “learning without discrimination against the place or the person from whom it is obtainable.” He told of the “golden age of Islam” during which one al-Ma’mun dreamt he met Aristotle. He “patronized Hellenistic ideas and adapted Aristotelian philosophy.” Islam, in fact, created the bridge over which Greek philosophy was introduced to the West.<sup>198</sup> In similar vein, Aliyu Dauda referred to a “Prophetic *Hadith* which commands Muslims to go in search of knowledge even if it means travelling to China.” Again, “the geo-political area where knowledge comes from is immaterial; that should never be a barrier.” Kiser Barnes recalled how the Prophet urged upon his followers “the principle of learning in these clear, emphatic statements: ‘Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.’ ‘Seek knowledge, be it even in China.’ ‘The ink from the pen of the scholar is more worthy than the blood of the martyr.’ ‘He who leaves his home in search of knowledge, walks in the path of God.’ And the Qur’an declares: ‘Are they equal: those who know and those who know not?’” (Qur’an 39:12).<sup>199</sup> Even Western knowledge is welcome, provided it is stripped of its secular trappings.<sup>200</sup> Islam can enrich itself by embracing knowledge from every quarter.

The late Sultan Muhammadu Maccido, in a lecture delivered to the Co-ordinating Committee on Joint Islamic Action held in Mecca, brought up the need for Muslims to “have knowledge of non-Islamic ideas and ideologies” and understand them in order “to sift out what is beneficial in other ideologies and guard against their harm.” He was thinking of notions like “democracy, freedom and evolution theory.” So, no closed-mindedness to external knowledge and ideas as marks some of the more extreme exponents of sharia. “Closely related to this,” he continued, “is the challenge to understand and stem the tide of other religions like Christianity in order to guard the *ummah* from the affront of their missionaries” as well as being “able to communicate the message of Islam and call others to the true path.”<sup>201</sup>

As previously observed, there is no end to the solutions offered. Ibrahim Dan Halilu wanted to overhaul the educational system in order to “address the serious issue of

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<sup>198</sup>R. D. Abubakre, n.d., pp. 62-63. K. Barnes, 1992, p. 57. For an alternative interpretation of this history see *Barnabas Aid*, May-June/2007, pp. ii-iii. The argument here is that most of the work for which Islam claims credit was in fact done by Christians.

<sup>199</sup>K. Barnes, 1992, pp. 56-57.

<sup>200</sup>A. Dauda, 1 July/88, p. 11.

<sup>201</sup>M. Maccido, 9 June/2003. It is interesting that he wanted to harness the OIC for this very Islamic purpose. During the OIC membership controversy some years earlier, Muslims all argued that the OIC was not a religious but an economic and developmental organization like the UN and that Christians would feel at home in it. When the Islamic nature of OIC is no longer the issue, the cat is allowed out of the bag! See indices for “Organization of Islamic Conference” in vols. 2, 3, 4, 5. Which is its true face?

unemployment. We should concentrate in producing technicians, artisans, craftsmen and the like, instead of students of liberal arts and drop outs that have no useful skills to generate wealth.”<sup>202</sup> Such a development would, of course, also narrow the market for recruiting youth for violent purposes.

In general, there is a strong feeling that governments are responsible for education, though throughout the country individuals and organizations have established a myriad schools. They usually see themselves as assisting the government in these projects. Nasir El-Rufai, Minister for the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, was one person whose focus was less on the government. He “suggested the deregulation of the educational sector” “to enable institutions generate more funds for their running, instead of depending solely on government allocations.’ He advocated private sector involvement in the management of the educational system.” He “decried the assumption of some people, particularly those from the North, that it was the responsibility of government to fund the educational needs of their wards. ‘This belief is un-Islamic,’ he stressed. ‘Even when our Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAN) said we should travel as far as China to acquire education, he did not say that government should finance or sponsor the journey.’”<sup>203</sup>

Shehu Sani is a well-known Muslim political activist in the country. I encourage you to check him out on the Web and discover the scope of his activities. He set out to educate the public, especially the public of sharia states, about what was all wrong with the way sharia was implemented. In the process he gave a counter interpretation of Shehu Danfodio, the greatest icon of Northern Muslims—their Abraham Kuyper, if you wish. He chose drama as his means and wrote the play “The Phantom Crescent.” Alas, at the time of this writing, he is prevented by a Kaduna Sharia Court decision from doing a public presentation. I refer you to an interview of Shehu Sani by Segun Alatunji where you can read the story in Sani’s own words. It is all about how the sharia and religion in general are used by politicians and clerics to exploit and oppress the people. His story really is a summary of all the Muslim complaints about sharia you should

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<sup>202</sup>I. Dan Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003.

<sup>203</sup>*Vanguard*, “500 Churches...,” 30 Dec/2003.

have read in Volume 6.<sup>204</sup> Here is an example of an attempt at informal education of the masses through the means of drama.

### **Religious Leaders xxxx**

It is widely recognized, of course, that religious leaders play a crucial role in these affairs, also that their role sometimes is negative. Human nature being what it is, that should not surprise anyone. The same is true for leaders in politics, business, sports and anywhere else. Hence, more than a decade before the Zamfara Declaration, Muslims were already proposing solutions to religious violence. Isa Kaita, you may remember from above, had two priorities. The second one was that “no laymen should ever be permitted to preach in a religious gathering.” This was actually a compliment to the professionals. During the heat of the Kafanchan crisis of 1987, Abubakar III, the Sultan of Sokoto, “summoned 50 Islamic teachers and scholars to his palace and urged them to make peace. He also sent directives to the imams in the mosques to preach nothing but peace.” Given that Sokoto State had been spared the violence that had been wracking other states, Akpaka concluded that this approach of the Sultan was an effective way to curb religious violence.<sup>205</sup>

Ambassador Kazaure proposed the following:

*Since religious leaders hold the key to religious tolerance and since the prejudice, mistrust and hostility between both sides are so intense, it would be necessary, as a first step, to convince the leaders that tolerance between the leaders of the two religious communities is imperative and urgent and that the alternative is continued religious tension, disunity and, possibly, war. The FG should select eminent Nigerian patriots from each of the two religious communities, who should not include any of the religious leaders, but who should be sufficiently versed in religion to be able to impress on the leaders the need for purposeful inter-religious dialogue.<sup>206</sup>*

<sup>204</sup>S. Olatunji, 13 Oct/2007. The interview is reproduced in Appendix 22, along with more Nigerian articles and links to international articles. See the following internet addresses: <allafrica.com/stories/200710151627.htm>, <allafrica.com/stories/200710150634.htm>, <everythinginliterature.blogspot.com/2008/02/comrade-shehu-sani-no-one-can-stop-me.html>, <talatu-carmen.blogspot.com/2008/02/interview-with-controversial-playwright.html>, <bouncingbubbles.wordpress.com/category/shehu-sani/>, <islam-watch.org/Others/Sharia-and-Human-Rights-in-Nigeria.htm>. See also J. Boer, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 104-104 for other radical action by Sani. See ch.8, p.xxxx, for my recommendations about Sani’s approach.

<sup>205</sup>A. Akpaka, 6 Apr/87, pp. 22-23.

<sup>206</sup>Z. Karaure, 1987, pp. 17-18. The rest of his discussion on dialogue is recorded in the section on Dialogue, p... xxxx

At the dawn of the new sharia era, Justice Massoud Oredola of the Ilorin Sharia Court of Appeal expressed his views on the role of religious leaders:

*They have the sacred duty to teach their followers their avowed religions, especially those aspects that have to do with patience, peace, tolerance, co-operation and co-existence. They must avoid provoking ill-feeling or dissension in the minds of other religious groups. No religious leader or group will be allowed to wantonly threaten the other. Similarly, no religious leader or organisation will be allowed to confront government in its assigned area of responsibility. Any religionist who behaves as an extremist or fanatic should be handled and treated accordingly. The rights of all the religious groups should be respected and constitutionally guaranteed.*<sup>207</sup>

The NSCIA was also concerned with irresponsible behaviour on the part of religious leaders. “It cautioned religious leaders about the habit of making inciting and misleading statements capable of inflaming passions to desist from doing so.”<sup>208</sup>

All the previous volumes of this series have demonstrated the sorry plight of politics in the country. If you are not familiar with the situation, read those volumes. But in the context of Christian-Muslim struggles, a Muslim participant at the First International Conference in 1993, Yufusu Magaji, encouraged religious leaders of both faiths to get out there and clean up the corruption on the path to righteousness. He quoted at length from a booklet by Samuel D. Gani, the Deputy Governor of Taraba State, in which the latter used strong Christian arguments for Christians to put on their gloves. Then he held up two Christian clergymen who have become state governors, Jolly T. Nyame of Taraba and Moses Adasu of Benue, as models of courage, and called on both Muslims and Christians to follow their lead. Magaji even quoted positively from the New Testament, a fine touch of dialogue!<sup>209</sup>

One-time Military Head of State and two-time civilian presidential candidate, Muhammad Buhari has a checkered history when it comes to his actions and pronouncements in the world of religion. Sometimes his actions and words were strongly pro-Muslim. At other times he could be

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<sup>207</sup>M. Oredola, 25 Dec/99, p. 20.

<sup>208</sup>T. Adejo, 27 Feb/2000.

<sup>209</sup>Y. Magaji, *First International Conference*, 1993, pp. 86-87. For more information about these governors, see vol. 5, pp. 78, 93. At the time of writing, Nyame was still/again governor. Adasu has long ago left it in disappointment. I wonder why Magaji referred only to clergymen in politics. Was he not aware of other Christians among governors—or Muslims for that matter? As to Nyame, at the time of this writing, he is in custody awaiting trial for alleged corruption. See *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Corruption/Govs and States/2007-03-27 Governor Nyame> and <...2007-07-20 Dariye and Nyame>.

more irenic and ecumenical. During his 2003 presidential campaign, after depicting the multi-religious attitude of the Prophet, who discussed theology with Christians in his mosque, Buhari proclaimed that Islam teaches “brotherhood and tolerance” and demands from its followers that they practice them. And then the challenge: “If nowadays this type of interaction [with Christians] does not exist, Muslims must search their souls and ask themselves if they indeed copy the example of the Holy Prophet in their dealing with the People of the Book.” Then turning to Christians, “In the same vein, our priests must be able to know that Islam is very different from what missionary education teaches, and to distinguish between the agenda of Western imperialism. *The Qur’an teaches Muslims that among those closest to them are the Christians.*” And then a comment that reminds us of his alleged dictatorial undemocratic tendency:

*Perhaps, it can with justice be said that the problem of leadership is most acute in the domain of religion; because, more than in other areas, leadership in the religious sphere tends to lead from behind. Leaders seem to wait to determine what the mob wishes to hear, and they tell exactly that. But the mob is frequently a blood-thirsty creature that has no place in the scheme of any of our civilized monotheistic faiths.*

*Whoever, therefore, in the name of either religion preaches intolerance is clearly an adherent of neither. And our society must evolve a way of unmasking the hidden agenda at work. We must understand provocation, while it is being planned and stop it before it happens.<sup>210</sup>*

Writing during the aftermath of the Miss World riots of 2002 in Kaduna, Ibrahim Dan Halilu suggested an “interfaith dialogue” programme that would introduce the “concept of inter-religious support” and include cooperation in a work project:

*We must encourage joint fund-raising and cleaning of worship places between Christians and Muslims as a way of nipping in the bud old hatreds and animosities. Our religious leaders, whose knowledge and understanding of interfaith relationship is still at the infant stage, need to be educated about the current happenings the world over. They must realize that Nigeria has reached a stage where evoking religious sentiments will only lead to anarchy, as Nigerians have bonds of unity beyond their religious circles.*

The subject was close to Dan Halilu’s heart. In an earlier article he wrote:

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<sup>210</sup>*Vanguard*, “Buhari on Democracy...,” 2 May/2003.

*The docility of the Nigerian middle class, the polarization of the media and the conspiratorial collaboration of our ulama and priest have combined to create a new construct of Nigerian unity and all other values we hold dear to our heart. Even the concept of God has been bastardised to the extent that one may begin to ask which God the clergy are worshipping. Unless these agents of social change return to the path of honour, we will not have the courage to ask relevant questions and put an end to our collective exploitation by the ruling class.<sup>211</sup>*

The above perspective drove Dan Halilu directly to various educational subjects some of which you will find under the previous heading “Education.”

Aliyu Tilde challenged religious leaders with the following expectations:

*Therefore, what we expect from our religious leaders is the role that their predecessors played, people like Avicena (Ibn Sina), Averoes (Ibn Rushd), Thomas Aquinas, and many others. These were men of religion who played the roles of scientists, philosophers and clerics, at the same time. They did not separate between the divine and the profane and had a heart that embraced the whole humanity.<sup>212</sup>*

*In addition, religious leaders must live as leaders, setting the pace of piety for us, their followers. This will give them the moral locus, without fear of losing the lucrative opportunity of material acquisition, to correct the society right from Aso Rock down to the remotest village.*

*However, they will not succeed in their job without a firm commitment to this world as they have for the Hereafter. This will lead them to acquire and respect knowledge, labor, justice and humanity, ideals that will place them at a great distance from their present state of contempt for the fundamentals upon which any just and progressive society is built. God has decreed that his Earth be a commonwealth of different people from different backgrounds in ethnicity and belief. And so it must remain. Once the clerics fail to dedicate themselves to this world, it will be ruled by the lowly, people before whom nothing has value except the desires of their hearts.<sup>213</sup>*

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<sup>211</sup>I. Dan Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003; 8 Mar/2003.

<sup>212</sup>Actually, though I have high respect for Thomas Aquinas, he is the person who laid the philosophical groundwork for the dualistic worldview that I am battling in this series. He is the father of Scholasticism, the philosophical tradition that bequeathed Nigerian Christians with their handicap.

<sup>213</sup>A Tilde, n.d., Gamji. Appendix 8.

### Similarities with the Bible    xxxx

There is a strong sense among Muslim writers that there are important similarities between sharia and the Bible, especially the Mosaic laws. They are often puzzled why Christians object so strongly to sharia, when much of it is found in the Bible. They are also puzzled why Christians seem not to take these laws seriously. Tahir T. Umar, National President of the MSS, advised Christians to “appreciate what the law has in common with the Biblical provisions on punishment for sins, as contained in Leviticus 20:1-21.”<sup>214</sup> Mu’az Dadi, a Nigerian studying sharia in Syria, advised the leaders of his state, Bauchi, to “invite the Christian leaders and make them clear and aware that all the Muslim community knows the equivalent laws in the Bible. He then produced several pages of Biblical laws, mostly from the Old Testament, that show remarkable parallels to sharia provisions about adultery, marriage, theft, alcohol, interest, weights and measures, justice, dress code for women, apostasy and more. He suggested that Christians “go back to restudy their Bible, for they do not even understand it.” And at the end? Well, Christians and Muslims happily submit together to sharia. “I call on Muslims and Christians to come back to their senses and be awake by accepting Islamic sharia. It is the only future path for Nigeria. It provides solutions for all Nigeria’s problems. “Let us accept this call of sharia and be free from these problems.”<sup>215</sup> A perfect world!

Since sharia and Biblical law were seen as so similar, Aminu Binji advised Christians that, if they “are worried about sharia, let them introduce Biblical laws in their stronghold states. No Muslim will raise eyebrows.”<sup>216</sup> On another occasion, A. A. Shuaibu of Malali, Kaduna State, advised the then National CAN President, Sunday Mbang, to read his Bible. Mbang had allegedly vilified and insulted Governor Sani so grossly in the media that Shuaibu was highly offended and advised Mbang “to go back and digest the following message in the Bible in unbiased manner”—and then follows a list of texts.<sup>217</sup> The Council of Ulama of Nigeria published a press statement shortly after the Zamfara Declaration in which it angrily chided Christians.

*If CAN believes that the Constitution as well as other segments of laws tagged common law, have no relevance with the Canon laws, the Council challenges CAN to advance Mosaic laws for the Constitution. Muslims will give them support. But if, on the contrary,*

<sup>214</sup>A. Alhassan, 28 Dec/99.

<sup>215</sup>M. Dadi, 15 Mar/2000. Appendix 17, vol. 6.

<sup>216</sup>A. Binji, *NN*, 31 Oct/99, p. 5. Appendix 1, vol. 7.

<sup>217</sup>A. Shuaibu, 26 Nov/99.

*the Common Law and the Canon Law are one and the same, it is better CAN behave responsibly towards their Muslim brethren in the spirit of mutual understanding and reciprocity of tolerance.*<sup>218</sup>

In his speech at the Zamfara sharia launching, Abdul Alao similarly described common law as “90% Christian law.” He also encouraged—“challenged” may be the better word here—Christians to come up with a Christian law to be based on the Decalogue. “We shall support them. We shall never oppose them.”<sup>219</sup>

Continuing with the canon law theme for a moment, Adegbite urged, “Since freedom of worship is allowed in this country, both the Christians and Muslim must be allowed to freely practise their religions, sharia included.” When asked “whether it would be proper if Christian-dominated states decide to introduce canon laws, Adegbite said, ‘Let them do it, it would be better.’ He added, ‘I am surprise that the Christians have abandoned canon law, even though I know why.’” The reason? “Christians have to abandon that canon law, because the church wanted to dominate the state, while the state wanted to dominate the church.” Then he hastened to add, “But that is not the case with sharia.” But if Christians want canon law, Muslims won’t hinder them.<sup>220</sup>

Ado-Kurawa approvingly reported that the Iranian Professor Ali Ferroz “noted that there was no difference between Islamic and Christian teachings as far as the prohibitions of the sharia are concerned. Some Christians are against the sharia, because they want to promote libertarianism such as ordination of gays as bishops, which is against the teachings of the Bible.”<sup>221</sup>

In a more irenic spirit, Leme of Jalingo, Taraba State, issued an invitation: “It is believed that if there is any other Christian-oriented law that will bring about peace, harmony and development apart from the present one we are using, it is welcome.”<sup>222</sup> Malam Sidi advised similarly that “if people are afraid of the sharia, they should fall back on the Bible—the Old Testament, where they would find clearly that anybody who commits adultery would face capital punishment.” That same Bible also stipulates similar punishment for alcohol consumption, according to the

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<sup>218</sup>Council of Ulama, 7 Nov/99.

<sup>219</sup>A. Alao, 5 Nov/99.

<sup>220</sup>C.Gyamfi, 11 May/99.

<sup>221</sup>I. Ado-Kurawa, July/2003. Appendix 9.

<sup>222</sup>B. Leme, 31 Dec/99.

Malam. He supported his affirmation with a story about how the Prophet handled a case involving sharia and the Old Testament.<sup>223</sup>

So, the Bible and sharia share significant features. But the same is argued for Christianity and Common Law.<sup>224</sup> Muslims use this claim to oppose Christian insistence on the neutrality and non-religious nature of Common Law. They draw the conclusion that, since the Christian Common Law has ruled them for so long, they have the right to demand sharia law, even if it is religious. The one is no less religious than the other and no more neutral. Two commonalities—sharia and Bible, Christian and Common Law-- , but they are never brought together. The contradiction this creates is discussed in Appendix 22 xxxx

### **Comments about and Advice to Christians xxxx**

In this section I gather various words of advice and, sometimes, warnings that Muslims direct to Christians. Way back in 1974, when Christians in Kano were complaining of discrimination against them in access to the airwaves, Military Governor Audu Bako told them to investigate the Southern Christian states to see whether they gave Muslims access. Then let them report to him and he would reciprocate. When in 1987 a journalist from *ThisWeek* discussed the same point with the Kano State Information Commissioner, Ujudud Sheriff, the latter repeated Bako's assignment and promise.<sup>225</sup>

Shortly after Zamfara Declaration, the strong initial negative reaction to sharia by Christians offended Sani Mustapha. After asserting that the Prophet never forced sharia on Christians, he challenged them "to counteract my claim by proving from any book of detailed exposition of authority where Prophet Muhammad (SAW) or his rightly guided Khalifas ever passed judgement to unbelievers." He appealed to Christians

*to tell the truth if and when they know it. If they do not know it, they should believe in it whenever historical evidence is produced before their intellect. They should seek the co-operation and support of those who know what Islam and the sharia are telling us about the betterment of society, peace and progress. Christians must co-operate in seeing that the sharia is established and should be its principal advocates, while keeping to their faith, because they should benefit from it more than the Muslim community.*<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup>U. Salifu, 6 Nov/99.

<sup>224</sup> M. Sambo, 3 Nov/99. J. Boer, 2005, vol. 4, Appendix 8, pp. 223-224.

<sup>225</sup>A. Akpaka, 6 Apr/87, p. 17.

<sup>226</sup>S. Mustapha, 4 Nov/99.

Yusuf Hadejia wondered why secularists and Christians do not attempt to embody their laws in their communities and thus “give peace a chance.” He lauded the attempts by Muslims to free themselves from “the dictates, the myopic assumptions and understanding of secularism.” He advised adherents of the latter, in whom he included Christians, that “they should acquaint themselves with the teaching of the religion and the sharia, which they go about criticising, and find out if at all there is unequal treatment both within Muslims and the non-Muslims. It is beyond reasonable doubt that this sharia has respect for all aspects of humanity.” Hadejia then turned to Al-Maududi, whom he described as a “renowned scholar” and said, “Most if not all such people who indulge in this prattle have no clear idea of Islamic way of life.” He charged that such people “have never made a systematic study of the Islamic political order or of the place and nature of democracy, social justice and equality in it.” Then he quoted an unnamed bishop of Zamfara who agreed that Christianity rejects the same social sins as do Muslims. The problem is that Christians have “not provided a clear-cut solution to such misconduct.” “What then,” asked Hadejia, “is the issue at stake for choosing sharia to provide the solutions?” He warned that Muslims will leave no stone unturned to get sharia in place at any price. “The religion of Allah shall surely prevail in spite of stoppage or threats. The Zamfara move is a journey of a thousand miles started with just a single step.”<sup>227</sup>

Lateef Adegbite called on Christians “to exercise restraint in expressing their fears.” He wanted disputes “resolved through constitutional machinery.” In his NIREC lecture, he expressed his hope that “Christians would articulate their fears” and that “a formula would be found that would preserve sharia without rancour, while at the same time incorporating safeguards that adequately address non-Muslim fears and apprehensions.”<sup>228</sup> As Secretary General of NSCIA, he advised “those opposed to the enhanced application of sharia,” among whom Christians are the majority, to “adopt constitutional means to ventilate their grievances through such for as the State House of Assembly and the courts of law,” rather than take to violence.<sup>229</sup> He also suggested a role for the Government here, but please check out the appropriate section for that. He chided Christians and other critics of sharia for not addressing “the mischiefs that sharia seeks to redress.” These are the familiar social vices written about *an*

<sup>227</sup>Y. Hadejia, 8 Dec/99.

<sup>228</sup>L. Adegbite, NIREC, 2000, p. 1.

<sup>229</sup>I confess to amazement that NSCIA pretends not to understand the dynamics of Kaduna State, when they have been so thoroughly analysed in response to the various riots over the decades. An example of “dialogue of the deaf?”

*nauseam* by both Christians and Muslims. In his CCC paper, he lectured about misconceptions that sharia is foisted on non-Muslims. The promise that it will not happen “has fallen on deaf ears”!<sup>230</sup>

Yusufu Sambo Rigachukun, a Muslim scholar from Kaduna, advised Christian leaders “to be moderate when criticising sharia to avoid misunderstanding among followers.” This was in response to Archbishop Benjamin Achigili’s demand that the state committee on sharia should be disbanded. The bishop was all wrong, according to Rigachukun. Christians should give Muslims a chance to operate sharia and see what will come of it. Had not Muslims always shown tolerance? Did not a Muslim President bring the Pope to Nigeria? Christian leaders should “desist from cheap publicity through the media.” He was wondering whether Christians were preparing for a “revolt against sharia.”<sup>231</sup>

Ibrahim Dan Halilu wanted CAN to engage in introspection after the Miss World riots of 2002:

*CAN should ask itself why it is always against Muslims and their interest. Is it really true that Islam and Christianity are sworn enemies and incompatible? Let us go down memory land and study how the late Sardauna lived with Christians in post-independent Nigeria and draw a lesson from such. Why don't we build on this achievement instead of destroying it?*

*If there is basically no big difference between Islam and Christianity, why is CAN always against anything championed by Muslims in Nigeria? CAN should reflect on these and many other issues and come up with satisfactory explanations. This may be the path to peaceful co-existence between the two world religions.*<sup>232</sup>

The situation in Plateau was, of course, the opposite from that of Kano. Here the Muslims were on the defensive and looked upon as dispensable. The 2004 turmoil involved several murky issues that Muslims found difficult to understand. There was that of the settler-indigene controversy of which the various parties had very opposite views. There was the Christian leaders’ call for the return of Governor Dariye, internationally known for his corruption. In this context of baffling ambiguities, Sani Garba called upon Plateau “Christians like Yakubu Pam and others of his ilk (like Lar) who are the only Christians enjoying and supporting Dariye in all the atrocities he committed, to re-read Christianity again and re-

<sup>230</sup> NN, 22 nov/99, p. 2. L. Adegbite, “Sharia in the Context...,” 2000, p. 76.

<sup>231</sup> M. Musa, 30 Dec/99.

<sup>232</sup> I. Dan Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003.

strategise their plan or else they are heading to nowhere." Also, "The issue of indigenes/settler must be discarded,"—but that is discussed elsewhere.<sup>233</sup>

Talk of sharia tends to generate fear in Christians that needs to be addressed. There are the fears of second-class citizenship, of apostasy, disinheritance and a whole lot more. Mamuda Aliyi, Deputy Governor of Zamfara State, appealed in Jos to Christians to "continue to be calm and not to be afraid of the implementation of sharia in the state." At the same time, he urged Muslims to "continue to strive and agitate for the implementation of full sharia."<sup>234</sup> I am not sure whether his message to Muslims may not have undermined the one to Christians.

Shuaibu Gimi called upon sharia "detractors" to "consider the enormous force behind the crusade and simply leave us alone. The resurrection of the sharia system is both natural and irresistible," While it will "protect its architects, facilitators and supporters, including non-Muslims, it will destroy its saboteurs, including Muslims."<sup>235</sup>

In his "Letter to Zamfara Governor," Baban Takko expressed himself with amazement concerning the Christian reaction to sharia. He doubted that Christian opponents are sincere Christians or knowledgeable. The insincere oppose sharia only because its champions are Muslims. What really amazed him was hearing Christians affirm the "supremacy of the Constitution instead of the Bible." They should examine themselves, he advised them. Furthermore, he proposed that it was "high time the Christians start to think about the best way to apply Christian laws in their states of control." That would be better than for them to deny Muslims "the right to practise their religion as guaranteed by the much talked-about man-made Constitution."<sup>236</sup>

We have read in the previous chapter how Ali Ahmad approved of Danny McCain's gentle warning to Christians about their reaction to sharia. He had his own warning as well and criticized Christians for their wrong response to sharia. "Christians should have empathised with their Muslim fellows that Islam mandates the sharia." Having done that, they should have gone on "to protect Christian interests...." Muslims, he predicted, would have magnanimously "reciprocated the gesture in some way and Nigeria would have been able to teach the rest of the world and present a contemporary model of ... religion in the public sphere."<sup>237</sup> In other words,

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<sup>233</sup>S. Garba, Dec/2004. See above at pp. 22-25 ?xxxx and J. Boer, vol. 7, 2007, ch. 7.

<sup>234</sup>NN, "Christians Told...", 22 Nov/99.

<sup>235</sup>S. Gimi, 1 Dec/99.

<sup>236</sup>D. Takko, 10 Dec/99.

Christians missed a great opportunity—shades of Philip Ostien’s thesis of such a missed opportunity at CA 1978.<sup>238</sup>

Okpanachi said he had no problems with sharia, as long as the Governor did not apply it to Christians. He then advised the critics, the press, Christians and all, to “leave sharia in Zamfara to undergo a natural process of development, because that way there will be a lot of fine tuning with time and it will blend with society without losing its meaning.”<sup>239</sup>

### **Media    xxxx**

The media have received their share of attention in the previous volumes of this series. They will receive less in this one, since there really is not much new to be said. The late Isa Kaita, in life a popular Muslim politician and Chairman of the Code of Conduct Bureau, prioritized two things to be done, one of them being preventing the media from reporting anything “without verifying the facts.” Similarly, Bilkisu Yusuf, at the time editor of the Kano-based *Sunday Triumph*, advised journalists “to shed any prejudices and look at the situation just as it is.” As a professional herself, she ought to know. Abubakar Adam Othman of the University of Maiduguri felt that “the press should stop treating volatile issues with prejudice and sensationalism.”<sup>240</sup>

Dan Halilu proposed an educational function for the press, specifically for the *Daily Trust* in which his article appeared. He advised them to “introduce a column for civic education so that the majority of the Nigerian electorate will appreciate the essence of good governance” and realize that it “is not a function of religious or ethnic background. Both Muslims and Christians can acquire the skill through scholarship.” Among the recommended type of materials would be the “rich and informative literature produced by such great men as Usman Dan Fodio,” the great Fulani revivalist of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, some other classic Muslim authors and even Mao Tse Tung and Plato. In this way the press can contribute “to the eradication of poverty of the mind,” for “an ignorant person cannot be a good leader however hard he tries and no matter the level of his commitment. This is the root of our problem.” The media as a whole must “sanitize itself

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<sup>237</sup>A. Ahmad, 2005, pp. 368-371. The details of the imposition, distortions and pseudo-equality are all fully discussed throughout previous volumes.

<sup>238</sup>P. Ostien, “An Opportunity Missed....,” p. 18.

<sup>239</sup>A. Okpanachi, 8 Dec/99.

<sup>240</sup>A. Akpaka, 6 Apr/87, pp. 17, 22-23.

and redefine its focus. Instead of promoting ethnic and religious politics, let it shift its focus to serious issues” that will build the nation and bring us together.<sup>241</sup>

### **Government, Politics and Economics and Justice xxxx**

In this section we begin with governmental issues and politics and then slide kind of surreptitiously into economics and from there briefly hit justice. In wholistic Islam that’s an easy, natural journey. The one almost automatically merges into the other.

In Nigeria, because of their omni-presence, governments pop up in almost every discussion. Throughout most of this series they are often seen as part of the problem. In this section we will see how they might become part of the solution. They are advised on many different topics. Again, many of the concepts in this section have been aired in scattered fashion throughout these volumes; here they are brought together. The BZ section of this is found in Appendix 23.

Demands from and advice to governments were aplenty after the Zamfara Declaration. After discussing opponents to sharia, both Christian and Muslim, BabanTakko advised Governor Sani, “Don’t bother about them, but always ask them to go back to the Constitution they were talking about and see the provisions made for the propagation and practice of religion.” And then, in a brotherly voice and posture, he wrote, “Brother Sani, I am sure by now you must have started to grow big and strong, because of the various tensions, emotions and tribulations you are going through. Such experiences are necessary in order to prepare you for the daunting task. Don’t falter. Don’t lose heart. Be a brave mujahid. Consider all the agonies, trials and tribulations as the price you have to pay for championing the cause of Allah.”<sup>242</sup>

Suleiman Kumo was quick with advice for the FG within two weeks of the Zamfara announcement. First of all, it “should refuse to be intimidated by the wrong-headed, ill-motivated attempt to whip up and organise an anti-sharia mass hysteria to frighten and mystify some Nigerians.” Secondly, the FG “should give leadership in the matter by providing some forum for a proper, frank and sensible discussion of the issues involved with a view to resolving them permanently and to the satisfaction of the people. It would not be proper for the FG to wish the issue away.”<sup>243</sup> NREC was the Government’s eventual answer to these proposals for a discussion forum from both NCSCP and Kumo.

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<sup>241</sup>I. Dan Halilu, 8 Mar/2003.

<sup>242</sup>D. Takko, 10 Dec/99.

<sup>243</sup>I. Umar, 9 Nov/99.

Sidi Ali Sokoto, a Muslim activist, was asked for advice by the Zamfara Government. He offered various worthwhile pieces. His first point was to remind them of the classic Muslim perspective that they are shepherds who will have to give account of their stewardship. The second point was patience on the part of the Governor. Even if he ruled righteously, he would have to go through a period of false accusations, criticism, insults and assaults before the truth is recognized. Anyone who is familiar with the climate, will immediately recognize the situation as described. Malam Sidi advised him to be patient, steadfast and firm while fearing Allah. “If you maintain your cool and not give in, you don’t look back in regret, surely you will reach success. You may be passing and people shouting at you. Tomorrow you pass and they rain abuse on you. The next time you come, there would be a warm reception for you. But if initially you react, the whole thing would go wrong.” Another aspect of patience is that the Governor should not expect to complete the sharia mission during his tenure. He should “take it step by step.” If he cannot complete a project, his successor can finish it. Sharia cannot come at once. Those who complain, will complain under whatever circumstances. “If out of ten, five have been achieved, he has tried. A country that is said to be a secular state and someone blazed the trail and came up with sharia, he has tried”—a Nigerianism meaning he has done well. The third point was unusually frank and honest. “The Governor must also watch out for the Hausa race. We are not good fellows. Because we are used to hypocrisy, falsehood, cheating, hold on to your cabinet and know how to carry them along.” Fourthly, the Governor was warned not to jump to hasty conclusions when someone is accused of wrong doing. “Don’t rush into ruling. Investigate and get to the root of the matter. Rushing to pass judgement always leads one into disaster.” Finally, the Governor should show mercy. The Malam recounted a story of the Prophet showing mercy to a group of non-Muslim prisoners, many of whom then converted to Islam. “We hope the Governor would follow the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad.”

The interviewer, Umoru Salifu, also asked Mallam Sidi for advice for some state governments that were hesitant to take the sharia route because of the controversies it had raised. Sidi responded that they “should not develop any cold feet. They should just go on, because the devil is all over the place among people. If you want to embark on a good job, the devil is working hard to stop such effort.” We pray that sharia would be embraced by all. They should not be deterred. If there were no sharia, the society would decay. As to any individual Muslim

who is not concerned about sharia, his “faith has waned seriously. He has to come back and proclaim again the article of faith, because sharia is the Qur’an; it is the article of faith.”<sup>244</sup>

A specific demand for political action was made from both the National Assembly and all state houses of assembly. Please recall the 2007 Kano State local cartoon incident reported in Chapter 2. In response to that, Kano’s youth, through its KMYCF, called on these bodies “to enact laws against blasphemy on any religion in the country as a panacea to incessant religious crises.” Chairman Aminu Yakub said that “absence of any laws that will punish blasphemy has been responsible for religious intolerance in the country.” He continued his arguments as follows:

*It is necessary that laws on blasphemy on any religion be promulgated so that religions and prophets will be protected as well as reduce the recurring strife over such attempts. He said the law should provide stringent punishments for anyone who attempts to ridicule any religion in the country, to reduce escalation of crisis as most people resort to taking laws into their hands because of the impression that nothing will be done to persons who commit blasphemy. ‘The National Assembly and all the 36 other state houses of assembly will do the nation good if they enact such a law, for it will surely prevent unnecessary attacks on religions and their prophets.’*

*Malam Yakub advocated capital punishment as contained in the holy books, adding that it is better for anyone who blasphemes to die than for his action to cause the death of so many people. While citing the Ijeoma Daniels, Gideon Akaluka, and the recent Denmark crisis as examples, the forum’s chairman said if a stringent measure is not taken to stem the increasing cases of blasphemy, then the nation will not only continue to witness loss of lives unnecessarily, but will also incur the wrath of God who will certainly take action against a people who dwell on attacking His prophets.*<sup>245</sup>

Balogun represented Muslim secularists well with his three recommendations that are scattered under the appropriate headings in this chapter. The role of Government with respect to religion

*should be that of a watch-dog to check the excesses and abuses of the various religions. While religious tenets and doctrines may guide and shape the life of the individual in the business of daily living, it is not desirable that a particular religion should be the focus*

<sup>244</sup>U. Salifu, 6 Nov/99. Appendix 24.

<sup>245</sup>H. Karofi, 21 Oct/2007. For information about the three incidents see respectively J. Boer, 2004, vol. 3, pp. 296-299 along with *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Miss World>; 2003, vol. 1, pp. 46-47; 2008, vol. 7, pp. xxxx and *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Muhammad/Cartoons>.

*of the state. Government should be interested in “religion” general, because of the role it can play in moulding character and bringing about peaceful co-existence, and not just in any particular religion.*

This emphasis on the neutrality of government towards religion is a deviation from majority mainstream Nigerian Islam, but in his ideas about the moral function of government Balogun followed the more traditional path, but for that you need to turn to the BZ discussion in Appendix 23.

However, even some mainstream people advocated government religious neutrality, some very prominent ones even. For example, Lateef Adegbite, deeply immersed in national Muslim leadership and usually moderate, advised the FG to be neutral and fair to all, while simultaneously refusing to “succumb to pressure from any quarter that would pitch it against the majority of the people in the exercise of its constitutional powers.”<sup>246</sup>

Sometimes I get the impression that, with all due respect for him, Adegbite does not always have all the pieces of the Muslim-Christian “puzzle” in place and can thus seemingly contradict himself. He insisted elsewhere that “religion is the responsibility of the state.” “Sharia is a religious law and the state must enforce it.” “If the Christians no longer recognize the fusion of religion and state, the Muslims can never endorse this [Christian] approach.” Here, it would seem, we have reached the limits of Adegbite’s tolerance and the beginning of an antithetical situation.

Adegbite spoke on many related issues in various situations. He proposed “to eliminate or reduce to the barest minimum the perennial controversy” about sharia by various constitutional provisions.<sup>247</sup> Please note his terminology: “reduce to the barest minimum.” Adegbite was honest and realistic. He knew that there will no end to the controversies any time soon: Nigeria must learn to manage them with mutual tolerance and without rancour and violence.

Adegbite realized Christians have some legitimate fears that the Government must help them overcome. There are ways of getting around at least some of these fears. He was of the opinion that apostasy laws could never be an issue under the current Constitution. Of course, you may remember the response of Governor Sani, who calmly stated that individuals or families would take care of this privately. This fear for “over-zealous enforcement of sharia through self-help, according to Adegbite, must be “forestalled by strict prohibition of private meddling in law

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<sup>246</sup>NN, 22 Nov/99, p. 2.

<sup>247</sup>L. Adegbite, NIREC, 2000, p. 17.

enforcement.” Persons involved in it “should be severely dealt with by the authorities.” As far as disinheritance is concerned, “the owner can upturn the effect of the sharia rule by making a will.”<sup>248</sup>

Writers and organizations continued churning out proposals about various ways in which governments could help restore peace. In a communique, the NCSCP offered a number of suggestions to governments. It called on the FG “to make sharia accessible to all Muslims, because it is their fundamental right.” It recommended “that a body should be established to coordinate the initiatives of various organs working for the full implementation of sharia.” In addition, “all efforts should be made to remove whatever legislative and constitutional obstacles were encountered.”<sup>249</sup> Ibrahim Dan Halilu of Kaduna, writing about the Kaduna Miss World riot of 2002,<sup>250</sup> demanded that the Government—presumably the Kaduna State Government—and religious leaders must sit together and fashion out a plan of inter-religious harmony in Kaduna and other religiously volatile states in the country. The present religious enclaves created out of fear in Kaduna, must be demolished, using instruments of the law and through consultation and deliberate planning to re-integrate the various ethnic-religious entities inhabiting the state. An edict must be enacted by the State House of Assembly, disallowing the establishment of religious enclaves. This should be followed up with the establishment of government high-density housing schemes in all parts of Kaduna metropolis to neutralize the dangerous trend of religious exclusivities.<sup>251</sup>

Salisu Bala of Arewa House, Kaduna, in an extensive paper on sharia and conflict in Kaduna, offered a paragraph full of governmental programmes “to seriously address the socio-economic and political problems. Otherwise peaceful co-existence and harmony among the different ethno-religious groups will be a difficult task to achieve, especially among the so-called marginalized.” Government must immediately check “poverty, hunger, unemployment, mass corruption as well as the importation of deadly weapons. And lastly, there must be equality in the distribution of resources among the citizens of this great country. Government

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<sup>248</sup>L. Adegbite, CCC, 2000, p. 69.

<sup>249</sup>I. Adamu, 22 Nov/99.

<sup>250</sup>For details of this riot see “Miss World” Index entry in vols. 2, 3, 5, 6 and *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Miss World>.

<sup>251</sup>I. Dan Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003.

should as a matter of urgency provide free and qualitative education at all levels and free medical care to all its citizens without discrimination.”<sup>252</sup>

At the 2001 International Conference on Restoration of Sharia in Nigeria, where Roy Nweke interviewed Governor Sani, Professor Ali Nazrui of the Binghamton State University of New York delivered a lecture in which he advised sharia governments to take the following actions:

- Ensure the efficiency and credibility of the judicial system.
- Reform the laws governing the administration of the sharia in the non-criminal area.
- Improve the quality of Islamic legal education in order to produce efficient and well-educated manpower for implementation of sharia.
- Take advantage of available expertise when enacting and implementing sharia.
- Enlarge the focus from purely legal issues by initiating policies in areas like the economy, public morality and accountability, as well as social relations that the sharia as a comprehensive system embraces.<sup>253</sup>

Anyone who has read Volumes 6 and 7 will recognize all of these as felt dire needs for sharia to succeed in the long run and for peace to become viable.

Hussaini Abdu asked, “To what extent can we use Islam to promote democracy and good governance?” While rejecting the secular idea of democracy with its companion concept of human autonomy, Abdu insisted that a chastened form is compatible with Islam. “Rejecting democracy because man is sovereign is a big mistake,” he asserted. We need to limit man’s sovereignty. “Democracy with its principles of limited government, public accountability, checks and balances, separation of power and transparency does succeed in limiting man’s sovereignty.” The traditional Muslim concept of shura [consultation] can be interpreted as a democratic principle, since it demands open debate among both the ulama and the community.”

The democratic potential in any nation depends on the local situation, Abdu argued. In Nigeria it “hinges on the ability of the state to cope with the diverse oppositional and constitutional demands of religious groups” as well as on “our conception of democracy.” He advised, “Rather than dismiss some of these religious issues as reactionary, primordial and incompatible with our national aspirations, we should constructively engage these religious

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<sup>252</sup>S. Bala, 2000.

<sup>253</sup>R. Nweke, May/2001, p. 12. Mazrui is no Nigerian, but his incorporation in this report constitutes Nigerian appropriation of his contribution.

issues.” While he recognized that they were often tools of manipulation in the hands of leaders, “it is important to note that some of these demands could represent the genuine mode of participation for many groups and may carry important mental and aesthetic loads that give dignity to people and community.”<sup>254</sup> It is unfortunate that Abdu failed in his paper to deal more explicitly with solutions to the Muslim-Christian rift. How can his concept of Muslim democracy be made to dovetail with that/those of Christians? Who has to make what compromises? But I do thank him for publicly exploring issues of democracy, jihad and others elsewhere in this chapter. His paper is one of hope and openness.

So it is clear that democracy is not necessarily considered un-Islamic as some Nigerian Muslims do. Abdul-Razaq Fagge’s wholesale condemnation of democracy does not seem to be in line with most of the Muslim world. He considers it an inseparable twin of secularism with the two always appearing together. He then condemns democratic secularism as a tool of “Western liberalist civilization” to “impose alien Western and anti-Islamic values on Nigerians, with no regard to our beliefs and religious differences.” He complains that Nigerian Christians and even Muslims are buying into it and supporting moves to introduce anti-Islamic laws for the equalization of inheritance for males and females and preventing marriage of their daughters under the age of 18. All this flies straight in the face of the Qur’an. He further objects—and here I agree with him—that for these “liberalists” “there is nothing eternal and anything can be changed” according to the popular demands of the day. They can even “decide to legalize any divine prohibition in so far as it conflicts with their worldly interest.”<sup>255</sup> He then traces the origin of this western mentality to its dualism: “The West took their religion to cover spiritualism alone, with very weak and limited influence over their physical lives.” He sees a strong antithesis between the two. “The movement along the process of democratization through secularization and then to liberation is a journey of billions of miles away from the Islamic faith.”<sup>256</sup>

Fagge represents a rigidity often found in Nigeria’s advocates of Zamfara-style sharia. It is a stark either/or with no way out. And if the Pew Foundation is right, Fagge’s position is spreading. In the course of their research, Pew concluded that in Nigeria “most of those who

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<sup>254</sup>H. Abdu, 7 Mar/2003.

<sup>255</sup>Fagge here comes close to describing the basic perspective of the Liberal Party of Canada as I see it, where nothing is sacred and the most basic and historical social structure, the family, is up for grabs without a serious second thought.

<sup>256</sup>A. Fagge, 15 Sep/2005.

perceive a struggle between modernizers and fundamentalists put themselves in the latter camp.”<sup>257</sup> This finding is in keeping with the view of the late Ambassador Tanko Yusuf that even moderate Muslim leaders have pushed Islam as hard as they could.” They “have maneuvered jurisdiction” over many major cultural sectors. Neither have moderates condemned fundamentalists, at least, not publicly.<sup>258</sup>

Fagge is contradicted by many Nigerian Muslims. Lawan Danbazau advocated the establishment of a committee to which every Nigerian, regardless of religion, can present his view on the Constitution. Such practices, he lectured, are not new to Islam. He presented some early examples to illustrate his point.<sup>259</sup> Fagge is also flatly contradicted by Ibrahim Shekarau, his own Kano State Governor, who stated that the ideals of democracy such as “the rule of law, mutual consultation and the safeguarding of human rights are not far from the teachings of the sharia. In fact, they are at the core of its philosophy.”<sup>260</sup> It appears that the larger Muslim ummah sees things in a broader light. Yes, democracy, but within the parameters of sharia and without secularism. Apparently, the majority of Muslims refuse to accept the narrow parameters of Fagge’s either/or and envision another direction.

Many assignments were also dished out to various state governments. Much of this material is found in Volume 6, Chapters 4-7, of this series; some of it in the BZ part of this section. These chapters not only contain much criticism by Muslims, but also recipes for a better future, for what to do, both implicitly and explicitly. One Al-Bishak’s recipe was passed on to us by Ado-Kurawa. He advised Governor Sani against emphasizing the hudud punishments that have given sharia such a bad name. Instead, he should “emphasize the non-penal sides of sharia” such as “banning street begging, discouraging forced marriage, checking the maltreatment of women, securing justice for non-Muslims..., increasing salaries of workers...,” and more, most of them issues of justice and development. The Governor, according to Al-Bishak, “has done positive things on sharia but handled his publicity very poorly. He should emphasise the non-

<sup>257</sup>A. Wolfe, 2008, p. 60.

<sup>258</sup>L. Grissen, 1995, pp. 75, 107.

<sup>259</sup>*NW*, “Danbazau Cautions...,” 18 Nov/99. L. Danbazau, 28 Nov/99. For more on Danbazau see J. Boer, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 109-114; 2005, vol. 4, p. 143; 2007, vol. 6, pp. 73-74, 79. His suggestion sounds generous enough, but only one finely-tuned to Islam would recognize that it also illustrates the tension such generosity creates in the Muslim heart. No Christian would feel the need to insert the phrase “regardless of religion.” Of course regardless of religion. Why even bring that up? But to the Nigerian Muslim such generosity does not come naturally; he has to stretch himself, not to say convince himself. The instinctive attitude is to assume only Islam, even though they can find these kinds of illustrations in their early traditions.

<sup>260</sup>I. Shekarau, 25 June/2005. Appendix 25.

penal aspects of sharia and shy away from...unnecessary controversy. That way, he will help Islam. Once that is done, I believe that non-Muslims will be better informed about sharia, and many of them with enough goodwill will emulate it and implement it. Sharia is positive, and does not deserve all the negative publicity it has received so far through faulty implementation.<sup>261</sup>

Apart from Governor Sani of Zamfara, some other incumbent governors were very active in sharia affairs, some in a creative way. The previous volumes in this series deal extensively with the Muslim-Christian struggle in Kaduna State. The state has had to endure much violence. Christians object to the colonial imposition of alien [that is, not belonging to their own tribe] Muslim rulers and to the domination of Muslims over the entire state, while a large section of the state is Christian. Governor Makarfi, during whose tenure at least two major riots occurred in Kaduna city as well as serious skirmishes in some LGAs, including his own home town, Makarfi, wanted to take the bull by the horns in the state's political structures. Though sometimes berated by fellow Muslims and even accused of secularism, the Governor doggedly proceeded along his chosen way. His basic principle was to recognize the legitimacy of the long-standing complaints of his Southern constituents and that peace demanded their complaints be acted upon. For one thing, according to Abdul-Azeez Suleiman, Makarfi appointed more Southerners to political office than ever before, including some very pretigious. He upgraded some chiefs and chiefdoms, a problem that had long grated Christian souls. They hailed this step as "an emancipation and fulfillment of years of yearning for self-determination from the 'feudal clutches' of the Zazzau Emirate."<sup>262</sup>

Already in 2000, the Governor announced a sharia arrangement that would be fair to both faiths. He agreed to its application only in Muslim-majority LGAs, a step that earned him outrage from sharia advocates, but that Abdul-Azeez Suleiman expected to result in his re-election in 2003—which did indeed materialize.<sup>263</sup> Sharia Courts would be introduced in the Muslim areas and Customary Courts in the non-Muslim.

It appears that the plan was delayed. During the 2003 campaign it was again announced that Makarfi "resolved the question of sharia in the state through the setting up of both sharia and customary courts of equal jurisdiction to tend to adherents of different religions." Leon Usigbe

<sup>261</sup>*NN*, 10 Aug/2000, p. 5. Quoted by I. Ado-Kurawa, 2003, p. 409.

<sup>262</sup>For full explanation of thewse irritants see Y. Turaki, 1993. Also C. Avre, 17 Nov/95. S. Bakut, 2 July/92. J. Boer, vol. 3, 2004, pp. 175-213.

<sup>263</sup>A. Suleiman, 12 Apr/2003.

commented that as a result, “many citizens would feel disappointed and insecure if he is not returned to power. He has been able to douse the tension in the state and residents now appear to have a sense of belonging and a measure of trust among themselves.”<sup>264</sup> Well, he was.

But there was more. During his 2003 campaign, Makarfi announced the creation of 19 new LGAs, with the provision that the State House of Assembly would have to approve. He explained that one of the reasons for this move was to achieve “total reconciliation” between the peoples of his state. Thirdly, he “formally launched the campaign for the creation of a new state from the present Kaduna State.” Christians from Southern Kaduna State had long called for such a division. The rationale for this move was said to be, among other things, “the need to assuage feelings of alienation by sections of the state.”<sup>265</sup> That need surely existed and the desire for such division was great among Christians. Though Makarfi’s support for this move probably gained him some Christian votes, in 2007 Kaduna State had not yet been divided. Makarfi moved on the Senate. Whether or not the new LGAs have been established, I do not know. But at least, here was one politician who was addressing some of the basic politico-structural causes for the religious tension in his state and in the process reduced tension—and got re-elected in 2003.

Reactions were mostly positive. The BBC quoted a prominent Muslim sharia proponent, Hadi Auwal, and the leader of the state branch of CAN, Archbishop Benajmin Achigili, as both being satisfied with the arrangement, though a “formal response” was yet to be issued.<sup>266</sup> Similarly, Anglican Archbishop of Kaduna, Idowu-Fearon gave the Governor high cudos. But Richard Akinola of the Centre for Free Speech was not so sure. “The government is trying to satisfy both sides,” he said, “but given the known antics of some Muslim fundamentalists, a lot has to be done to ensure that the proposed law is complied with.”<sup>267</sup> What, pray tell, is wrong with a compromise that is acceptable to both sides? Is that not at the heart of good politics in a pluralistic society? As to assurance, well, Christians do have enough experience with such promises not to accept too quickly.

Political maneuvering? Almost certainly, but probably not exclusively. He may have recognized the genuine legitimacy of the complaints and wanted to solve the problem once and for all. The outcome of the 2003 elections in Kaduna State gave a strong indication that, giving

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<sup>264</sup>L. Usigbe, 7 Apr/2003.

<sup>265</sup>A. Ali and A. Madugba, 7 May/2003.

<sup>266</sup>BBC, “Sharia Compromise...,” 12 Oct/2000.

<sup>267</sup>CC, “Nigerian State...,” 13 Nov/2000.

Christians a sympathetic hearing and solving their problems yields goodwill, co-operation and unity.

And then there was Shekarau of Kano. Five years into the AZ era, this Governor made some assertions about the role of government and morality. At a London conference he explained that Nigeria had been experimenting with “Euro-American inspired concepts, ideas and institutions in the running of its affairs of the nation,”—but “without much success.” He quoted Mahmud Tukur, who stressed the need to solve these problems “in a manner harmonious with the worldview, way of life and temperament of the population.” The West has not helped the process with its campaign to “spread democracy.” Though Shekarau could accept “the universal application of its fundamentals,” he insisted that “any attempt to impose the Euro-American world always sees third world countries dying in the throes of attempts to give birth to an alien species.” “There are far deeper structural problems in the implementation of democratic models than we, and the West in particular, would like to accept.” “It will involve the West swallowing its pride and accepting the fact that democracy cannot be supplanted outside the West without framing it within the history and cultural experiences of the people.” And then came the surprise: “The developing countries must be willing to sit with political experts from Western capitals, in the like manner they normally do with economic experts and fashion out home-grown political models that will suit their social, cultural and historical antecedents.” Unlike many sharia advocates, the Governor appeared more open to Western secular theories, even if he rejected their imposition.

So what did Shekarau propose for his state in this sharia era? You can read about his projects by searching the Index of Volume 6. The ideals of democracy such as “the rule of law, mutual consultation and the safeguarding of human rights are not far from the teachings of the sharia. In fact, they are at the core of its philosophy.” He explained that the obstacles to democratic developments include the related triad of greed, corruption and lack of sacrifice. His government had begun waging “a war of societal re-orientation falling back on the moral teachings of our two sacred religions, Christianity and Islam. In Kano State we have established a directorate and saddled it with the responsibility of re-orienting our society towards its pure and cherished values. Our platform is the religion the majority of the people believe in—Islam.” This was his flagship campaign called in Hausa *A Daidaita Sahu*.<sup>268</sup> “Our task is to lead the people and prevail

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<sup>268</sup>J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 155, 163.

over them to re-embrace the Islamic-Christian values of discipline, hard work, tolerance, co-operation, accommodation, decency, cleanliness, moral uprightness, respect for law and order, respect for elders, proper upbringing of children, respect for the rights of women and, above all, the fear of God.”<sup>269</sup> Boer comment: An interesting ambiguity. You embrace *both* religions where they are seen as similar, but at the end of the day, you build on the platform of *one*. That is to say, you embrace the other in terms of your own. That’s not quite multi-religion.

Not everyone approved of this omni-responsibility of government for all of life. We have already taken note of Nasir El-Rufai’s attitude towards funding for education. His remarks had obvious implications for more restricted or limited government and lead him to hold quite a different view of the role of government in general. His view was likely influenced by his fiscal responsibilities that could not meet the expectation of most Muslims. And with the close integration of education, religion and morals advocated by most, I wonder whether El-Rufai would favour a more limited government in religion as well. Unfortunately, he left the matter for our imagination.<sup>270</sup>

Another voice of caution was that of Ali Ahmad in his response to the Sudanese An-Na’im’s lecture. The latter did not favour deep governmental involvement in sharia affairs. Though Ahmad, as we have already seen, rejected the notion of governmental neutrality in matters of religion, he cautiously followed An-Na’im in disapproving of government involvement in sharia. “The “current widespread arrangement in Nigeria...where the executive arm of government, rather than the people or, at minimum, the learned jurists, determine what emerges as sharia criminal law,” he suggested, is not the best. He agreed that “the current practice of what emerges or could emerge as the official sharia confirms An-Na’im’s fear about fusion of religion and state and the tendency for repression of minority views. Government may facilitate but should have no hand in what emerges as an enacted sharia.” He closed his presentation with the statement, “The ultimate objective of any modern state, including Muslim-majority states, is to devise means to ensure non-discrimination against minorities or dissenters and to guarantee protection of their rights by limiting the powers of the state in relevant areas.” There is “the need to guarantee protection of human rights of all citizens, as well as to ensure

<sup>269</sup>I. Shekarau, 25 June/2005. Appendix 25.

<sup>270</sup>We are likely to hear a lot more advocacy for limited government as the new fledgling Initiative for Public Policy Analysis takes root and its Director, Thompson Ayodale, publishes more papers. Address: P. O. Box 6434, Shomolu, Lagos. Digital addresses: <[www.ippanigeria.org](http://www.ippanigeria.org)> and <[thompson@ippanigeria.org](mailto:thompson@ippanigeria.org)> and <[thompsondele@onebox.com](mailto:thompsondele@onebox.com)>.

religious neutrality of the ever-intrusive nation state.”<sup>271</sup> But remember Ahmad’s thesis about affirmative sharia action? Though in principle he preferred a neutral government, the historical situation required temporary affirmative sharia action on the part of government.

Ibrahim El-Zakzaky had very different ideas. “Replacing common law with sharia involves a total overhaul of society and its structures.” Corruption must be overcome before sharia can be applied. Only *after* all that hard work has been done, is it possible to “establish the just and egalitarian society that Islam envisages.” A “conducive atmosphere” must be created—and that includes replacing the present system of government with the Islamic system.”<sup>272</sup> So, a complete societal overhaul before a sharia overhaul. Sharia must come at the *end* of the “sharianisation” process, not at the *beginning*. Several expressions help explain the problem. The Zamfara government put “the cart before the horse,” for “sharia has a lot of stages before the final one which was implemented.” The Governor “jumped the gun.” Or the Hausa “*Ya wuce gona da iri*.” In terms of economics and justice, he insisted that for sharia to succeed, it is not first of all a matter of sharia courts, but “the society must first get rid of poverty, illiteracy and other societal vices.” The Government must first “help educate our people, wipe out poverty and then establish the just and egalitarian society which Islam envisages, before thinking of sharia application.” It is unjust to amputate the hand of a thief desperate for food. The prevailing poverty that drives people to steal is created by the government itself. A conducive atmosphere must be created, for “haphazard introduction of sharia may lead to early collapse.” If sharia court comes before social reconstruction, it will end up as an oppressive institution. Besides, sharia cannot work when it is subject to a non-Muslim constitution in a secular context. Everything, literally everything needs to be overhauled—and *then* sharia.<sup>273</sup>

Supporting El-Zakzaky, Saleh Maina announced that “the government should work to improve the material conditions of the people as a prerequisite for commitment and dedication to the objectives of the sharia.”<sup>274</sup> Adebite did not stress this issue, but he did encourage the government--not sure which government—to embark on development and educational projects.<sup>275</sup> Abubakar S. Mohammed and his co-authors published a series of articles, “The

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<sup>271</sup>A. Ahmad, 2005, pp. 371-372

<sup>272</sup>B. Abdullahi, 2 Nov/99.

<sup>273</sup>A. Madugba, 14 Oct/99. A. Doki, 8 Oct/99. S. Obassa, 26 Feb/2000.

<sup>274</sup>S. Maina, 4 Nov/99.

<sup>275</sup>NN, “Christians Told...,” 22 Nov/99, p. 2.

Talakawa<sup>276</sup> and Sharia,” in which they similarly insisted that “anyone genuinely interested in the promotion of sharia in Nigeria must first of all be concerned with the actual living conditions of Muslims.” There are “some of the most fundamental conditions which must be satisfied, before real social justice as envisaged by the sharia can be achieved”—and they must be fulfilled prior to implementing sharia. “These existential conditions are of prime importance, because they can determine whether or not a human being can practice his or her faith in any meaningful way. In the case of many Muslims in Nigeria, the existential conditions are such that they make it difficult for them to practice their religion.”<sup>277</sup>

### ***Economic and Banking Issues*   xxxx**

I have already made the predicted move from sharia religion cum government into economic issues. To many, sharia governors do not simply follow wrong strategies, but they are dead wrong in their basic idea of sharia-based economics. Muslim critics cover the whole range from moderates through more fundamentalistic types to those berated by the latter as secular Muslims.

Some, like Lateef Adegbite, can hardly be classified as critics. He is more of a senior and sympathetic adviser. As such, he urged the Zamfara Government to be “alive to its enormous responsibilities by striving to make the state a haven for excellence.” To accomplish this, it should ‘create an environment for stronger spiritual and economic life for the people.’ The Government should take advantage of the new unity among the people by “mobilising them to be more productive, honest and upright.” It should “provide welfare programmes such as interest-free banking.” He also emphasized that Christians should be allowed to fully participate and profit from these developments. They “must share fully in the abundance and the new era in focus as well as the serenity that is bound to remain in a true Islamic society.”<sup>278</sup> Sanusi wanted President Obasanjo and all other elected officials down to LG level to be challenged about improving the lot of the poor, the uneducated, those recruited for demonstrations, violence and riots. “Our *jihad* should be about changing these pathetic circumstances.”<sup>279</sup>

Abdulkareem Albashir advised sharia governments to “execute sound and effective Islamic economic policies, which only well learned scholars in Islamic economics can design.”

<sup>276</sup>Hausa for “the ordinary people.”

<sup>277</sup>A S. Mohammed and others, 4 Dec/99; 18 Dec/99.

<sup>278</sup>NN, 22 Nov/99, p. 2.

<sup>279</sup>S. Sanusi, 8 Sep/2005.

For him, this was to be part of a general approach to Islam to enhance its image. These governments must “present, propagate and display all the attractive and inviting aspects of Islam which have been misschievously suppressed by its enemies in orde to prtray it in negative colours. Critics often make a lot of noise over certain penalties provided for in Islamic law and say nothing about Islam’s effective legal system, economic and social system.” These states should bring these scholars together to devise an Islamic economic plan. Among other things, they must “resist the urge to obtain loans from the IMF, World Bank, Paris Club, etc. These loans are instruments to make such states subservient under the weight of huge debts to these bodies, who will spare no efforts to plot against Islam.” Albashir adduced a Jewish law “to drive this point home:” “At the end of every seven years, you must cancel the debt which your fellow Israelites owe you, but as for foreigners owing you, apply pressure to them.” The pressure might include “devaluing their local currency, gaining control of parastatals, buying huge shares in industries, etc. All of which spells doom to the victim state.”<sup>280</sup>

However, some major economic players, including Muslims, considered sharia an obstacle to healthy economic development. In 2003, the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) organized an interesting and important workshop on sharia and the modern world capital market, a potential source of development funds that most sharia states were avoiding. The NSE identified sharia as an obstacle to the sharia governments’ access to these funds. If it were not for sharia, the spokesman said, they would have used them for their projects. Sharia “has been a major excuse for running away from bond issues” that have helped Southern states. He called on authorities “to find a way of educating and convincing” sharia governments of the need to use these financial sources. The underlying issue was: with or against sharia? Suleyman Ndanusa, Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission, explained that Islamic capital market and Islamic banking were “gaining wide acceptance” in the financial world. International bodies “indicated interest in developing these concepts to enable all interested stakeholders tap the benefits.”<sup>281</sup> On the “against” side, Binos Yaroo, representing Yobe State, informed the participants that his government had raised large funds from the capital market, ignoring sharia. He called on other sharia states “to emulate Yobe, which also embraces Islamic doctrine, but

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<sup>280</sup> A. Albashir, 8 Nov/99.

<sup>281</sup> For details about the spread of Muslim banking, see the articles in *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Business/Banking>, especially File <2007-12-14 Muslim Banking Taking Over>.

came to the market to access funds.” He stated that sharia governments accessed money markets that also charge interest. It makes no sense, he argued, to access some and not others.<sup>282</sup>

In keeping with that spirit, there are several banks in the country under Muslim control that charge interest. No doubt, Sulaiman would argue that the interest factor only goes to prove the deep inroads of secularism, but that may be difficult to maintain in view of the high prestige of this initiating agency. I would rather view this new move as a natural result of the more traditional-“liberal” school of interpretation.

The introduction of Islamic banking into Nigeria is a recent phenomenon. When Governor Abdullahi of Nasarawa State addressed his fellow Northern governors, he lamented that “The north is not even a medium player in the banking industry either. The support of the banking industry is critical to economic, social and industrial development. How can our business men and women and our industrialists compete with their southern counterparts in the absence of the support of the banking system?”<sup>283</sup> *But not a sound about Islamic banking.* In the same year, Tariq Hameed, Executive Chairman of the London-based Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance, called for the adoption of the Islamic financial system around the world, including Nigeria. He said that the development of the Islamic financial industry mirrored the virtues of Islam. He stressed the need to recognise the specific attributes of the religion in the development of the Islamic financial system. Now that’s a sound not often heard in the “neutral” banking establishment of the secular West or of religious Nigeria. His speech, of course, included some technical and professional banking details that are beyond me, but they included phrases and terms with a positive sound, such as “primacy of participatory equity financing, and the non-payment of interests,” “effective regulatory system to ensure the effectiveness of the Islamic banking system.”<sup>284</sup>

On May 18, 2005, the Central Bank of Nigeria approved the first Islamic Bank in Nigeria under the name JAIZ Bank International. The bank was well connected to Nigeria’s banking sector, with its Board of Directors headed by Alhaji Umaru Abdulmutallab, former Chairman of United Bank for Africa and current Chairman of First Bank of Nigeria. It was not going to be some small pious marginal religious bank, the type you find in the US. Mustapha Bintube, the CEO, explained,

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<sup>282</sup>P. Egwuatu, 10 June/2003.

<sup>283</sup>A. Adamu, 2004. Appendix 13.

<sup>284</sup>*The Guardian*, 28 Apr/2004.

*We plan to position the bank as a national bank and we welcome, therefore, all genuine customers and investors irrespective of race or religion. The bank, which proposes to site its head office in Abuja, will set up branches in key commercial centres of the country.... The bank is not for adherents of the Islamic faith only, said: "In terms of customers, we won't discriminate. In terms of branches, as long as they meet standards, we will go there. We are going to compete with the conventional banks."*

*He continued: "We also want to be among the top 10 banks in Nigeria by the year 2010. Though this is tough, it is achievable. We will also provide social and economic empowerment to the people."*

As to services and products, Bintube announced,

*The Federal Government and the CBN have been concerned about high interest rates. We don't charge at all. In Islamic banking, it is zero interest. Besides, most of our products will be ethical products as we will be socially responsible. For instance, we will thus have nothing to do with vices such as gambling and promoting pornography. Islamic banking gives people choices, especially for people who do not want interest on their investments because of their beliefs.<sup>285</sup>*

In Islam, matters of government, politics and economics must all work together to create a just society. Nigerian Christians have not always noticed or experienced this, but Muslims proudly and emotionally boast frequently of the justice inherent in Islam. In fact, justice comes close to a definition of Islam. Hence, an anonymous *Radiance* author insisted on the need for the “entrenchment of justice in the fabric of society, for there is nothing more dangerous to the existence of Muslim society as injustice. According to Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, a state can endure even on non-Islamic values, but no state can endure on injustice.”<sup>286</sup> That, of course, is what the *people* were expecting from sharia. That’s what it was all about as far as they were concerned.

Human rights also entered the picture. We have seen especially in Volume 6 the close relationship of sharia to human rights issues. We saw that these rights as defined by international conventions tend to be regarded by Nigerian Muslims as products of the dominant worldview of the West and as lacking in global validity. International efforts at eliminating capital punishment in Nigeria were interpreted as a “coverup to fight the sharia and to change the

<sup>285</sup>M. Oloja, 30 May/2005. Appendix 26.

<sup>286</sup>*Radiance*, no. 4/83, p. 40.

system in Nigeria through the back door.” Nigerians were challenged to resist such efforts strenuously, for it would amount to apostasy.<sup>287</sup>

Muhammad Hassan Tom was ready to dump all this as Western baggage. “There is no reason why humanity should have hope in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. After all, the same UN is the parent of the International Monetary Fund and its three deadly ‘Ds’: debts, devaluation and deregulation,” all terms related to the dire straights of the Nigerian economy.<sup>288</sup> This does not mean Tom was not interested in human rights, but they can only be made effective “by mass mobilisation” leading to the people themselves owning up to them. “All classes, creeds and nationalities among us must be made to realise the absolute need for human rights for all,” including their correlative responsibilities.

Tom went still one further radical step: “*We must call on our government, as a matter of urgent priority, to set up a socio-political and economic agenda detached from the apron strings of the West and its agencies.*” After all, the new Asian “tigers pulled themselves up by looking inward first.” Nigeria’s leaders “do not need to make Europe and America their second office in order to bring peace and prosperity to the nation. Let us all stay back and salvage it together.”<sup>289</sup>

Babandi Gume published a Gamji article questioning Nigeria’s dependence on the West. With visible disgust, he wrote about a recent G-8 Summit at which “African countries unfortunately [were] invited for photo opportunities. They were there only to plead with the rich nations to look leniently at their unfortunate plight.” He depicted Africans as “falling on our knees, pleading and begging on behalf of the Dark Continent, as if we don’t have anything. An unfortunate situation.” “The Prophet tried to discourage his followers from begging, as we can see from experience that a beggar always remains a beggar as there is no improvement in his condition. Why can’t we help ourselves? Why do we have to depend on others to help tackle our problems? Although every day we hear the problem is being tackled, yet it is on the

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<sup>287</sup>J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, chapter 7 as a whole, but especially pp. 310-322. For similar OIC sentiments see Appendix xxxx (OIC)

<sup>288</sup>Tom conveniently forgot the dominant “C” in the equation: corruption, the factor that is widely recognized by Nigerians, including past and present Presidents, as having led to the big “D’s.”

<sup>289</sup>M. Tom, 3 Janu/2000. In the course of my research projects on colonialism and various neo-colonialist situations (J. Boer, 1979, 1984, and 2 in 1992), I would make similar suggestions to my Nigerian friends and colleagues, but they always responded with ruckus laughter. Such a suggestion coming from a Western missionary could not be taken seriously! But there was also an element of despair in the laughter. It was realized that the elite profit too much from the Western connection to sacrifice it for the nation’s long-term good. But, really, it should be asked seriously: What has the West profited Nigeria? Could Nigeria not do better in South-South alliances?

increase.”<sup>290</sup> Gumel did not refer to sharia, but if you were to push him on the subject, he would surely agree with previous authors in this section that it is precisely this foreign dependence that makes it difficult for Nigerian Muslims to have their way with sharia.

Though these writers were annoyed by Western contempt at the Muslim practice of human rights, that does not mean they have a restricted view of human rights. An exceedingly macho view of women can stand side by side with broad human rights perspectives. The very same Orire who regards women as the playground of men,<sup>291</sup> presented a very broad overview of human and other rights at the 2000 NIREC conference. He discussed “the rights of Allah, the rights of self, the rights of other human beings and the rights of other creatures.” “Sharia makes it a duty of every person that he should respect the rights of other persons....” Christians “of course have right upon every Muslim to be fairly and equitably treated and not to have his religions or religious leaders slighted or insulted.” Even non-human creatures such as animals, plants and inanimate objects have their rights. “Even these animals, creatures and things that have been harnessed for man to serve his need, possess rights upon him that he should not recklessly or wantonly harm or destroy them or make them object for his sport.” The point of these rights is “to make people live in peace and harmony and to save the society from conflicts and tension.” “The ultimate objective of Islamic law is the universal common good of all created beings....”<sup>292</sup> It is unfortunate that Nigerian Christians do not experience this face of Islam. If Muslims in general were to put these principles into practice, we would see great improvements in relationships. I believe that is what Orire had in mind. That was the purpose of the very conference at which he delivered this lecture. Of course, it would have to fully include women as well and elevate them from the status of toys.

An appropriate closure to this section but almost antithetical to its spirit is the advice of the venerable *Aare Musulumi*, Abdul Aloa, at, of all occasions, the Zamfara sharia launching. Earlier on this chapter we listened to his warning Governor Sani to be careful and not be pushed into a corner. Contrary to all the radical demands overheard in this section, he counseled the Governor and the Ulama to accept the status quo:

*give 100% support to the Obansanjo administration. This administration is God-sent and we must support it. 99% loyatly is not enough. It must be 100%. We shall remember*

<sup>290</sup>B. Gumel, June/2007. The Biblical book *Proverbs* 22:7 says, “The borrower is servant to the lender.”

<sup>291</sup>J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, pp. 277-278.

<sup>292</sup>A. Orire, 2000, pp. 8-10. Appendix 27.

*that there had been governments before this government. Let us shame our critics. It is on record that it was the Muslim leaders who gave Obasanjo 100% support. Many Christian leaders opposed him. Even some Christian prophets said God told them he would not be alive by the day he would be sworn in. We should remember nobody can ever become President except by Allah's will.*<sup>293</sup>

This was an amazing statement in the heat of sharia fever. Few people would be able to get away with it. What was the dynamic? Practical politics, not to say pragmatic? Yoruba ethnocentrism? Was it an expression of the famous Yoruba propensity for compromise? Or perhaps an expression of true wisdom expected from an *Aare Musulumi*? I exit with these questions--and with the reminder that Obasanjo has since been succeeded by allegedly his own hand-picked Northern Muslim..

One thing that continues to surprise me is that quite a number of people deny that a Governor has the right or to revive sharia or is the proper person to do so. I understand that in Islam there are no privileged positions, no hierarchy, no class that poses as religion's "owner" as we have in some Christian denominations. El-Zakzaky is probably the most famous and vocal objector to Governor Sani's attempting this revival. He pointed out that "It is not anybody who can implement sharia." Governor Sani may not measure up to the kind of person who is qualified to usher in something as weighty as an extended sharia. Such a person must "be the representative of Almighty Allah and must, therefore, be a rarified soul. He must be knowledgeable and pious. Certainly, it is not a job for every Tanko and Bala," his Nigerian version for "every Tom, Dick and Harry."<sup>294</sup> True, he committed himself to adhere to the Nigerian constitution, but this is true for all citizens. What happened to the high position of the shepherd-ruler chosen by his people? Where does *khalifa* fit in? I hope we do not have a case of class interest disguised in a cleric as, according to my opinion, we have in Christianity. Islam boasts it is free from such artificial "spiritual" hierarchies. So, then, what have we here? Is this a judgement of Sani's spirituality? If so, on what basis? Mallam Zakzaky, can you help me out?

**Security    xxxx**

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<sup>293</sup>A. Alao, 5 Nov/99.

<sup>294</sup>A. Madugba, 14 Oct/99. A. Doki, 8 Oct/99.

Security is one of a government's prime responsibilities. As in others, this section emphasizes proposals for solutions.<sup>295</sup> If you have read all the volumes, you will know how big an issue security is for both religions, with both complaining regularly that either there is no security at all or it is applied only in favour of the "other side." Sometimes security forces are caught aiding and abetting the forces of insecurity against the people. At other times they are just plain useless by showing up after the event for being fearful, under-equipped or under-trained. And then, of course, there is the problem of big-time corruption. This has created a national sense of insecurity and betrayal. I have experienced it many times personally. Under such conditions peace and stability are impossible.<sup>296</sup> As Ibrahim Bashir put it seven years into AZ, citizens "always sleep with their two eyes open, as a result of the fear of the unknown."<sup>297</sup>

In the context of the Maitatsine riots during the early 80s, an anonymous *Radiance* writer described the police force as "frightened sheep on the advance of a motley crew of kids armed with sticks and cutlasses." The FG "should realise that the stability of the nation depends on the extent of its ability to establish real, absolute justice."<sup>298</sup> In other words, "Government, wake up to your responsibilities." That was one of the solutions the people sought for in that day, a situation that by and large remains the same 25 years later with little improvement to show for.

Abdulrahman Ahmad pretty well summarised the general Muslim feeling about the NPF during the AZ period. He placed heavy emphasis on the law-and-order angle by demanding an upgrade of law enforcement agencies. They should be increased in number and strength, better funded and better motivated. "If our leaders are serious about stopping crises in the country, why can't they strengthen our law enforcement agencies? We have been grossly under-policed. The few we have are poorly trained, poorly attired and motivated. Increase their numbers, their pay, and pay them when due."<sup>299</sup>

Not only do the security forces often fail to provide the protection people expect from them, they not infrequently actively contribute to the chaos and insecurity. This was true for the NPF and the army, but also for the '*yan agaji* or the *hisba*, the youthful morality police

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<sup>295</sup>In order to understand the reasons for the concerns and proposals, go to Appendix 27 (J. Boer Muslim Security Concerns), where many of the same proposals appear but more in their context.

<sup>296</sup>For details see entries "Police," "Security" and *Hisbah/ 'yan agaji*" in the indices of other volumes, especially vols. 2, 4, 6. For your convenience I provide you here with the pagination for some examples and complaints, mostly on the part of Muslims. Vol. 1—pp. 80, 83, 136-138; Vol. 2—pp. 26-30, 52-53, 93-94, 100-108, 148-149; vol. 4—pp. 44-46, 97, 120-122, 189-190; vol. 6—pp. 151-152.

<sup>297</sup>I. Bashir, May/2007.

<sup>298</sup>*Radiance*, no. 4/83, p. 40.

<sup>299</sup>Y. Akinsuyi, 17 Oct/2004.

appointed by sharia governments, the very ones promising to turn the ship around! Therefore Salisu wrote, “We are appealing to the Governor, whose idea of *Hisbah* in the state was to screen out the true members who know what sharia means, to rescue innocent people from being intimidated.”<sup>300</sup>

Ibrahim Bashir explained that NPF members cannot live without engaging themselves in corruption. Hethen demanded, “Unless we address our priorities and consider the welfare of our fellow countrymen, especially those who stake their lives to protect you and me, as equally important as ours, we will continue to grapple with insecurity in our fatherland, as the society continues to produce bad eggs even among the security operatives whose welfare packages cannot meet their needs. A word is enough for the wise.”<sup>301</sup>

Dan Halilu’s first target was the establishment of a “state and local security force.” He disapproved of the current arrangement under which “the security of our lives and property is in the hands of people who do not give a hoot if the entire state is wiped out. There is no justification for putting the security of states in hands hundreds of miles away, who cannot easily assess the level of our insecurity.”<sup>302</sup>

The issue of insecurity was wider and deeper than security forces. As if he foresaw the rise in general violence among Muslims, in his Zamfara launching speech, Abdul Alao warned Governor Sani, the Ulama and Muslims in general, “We must be very careful in our pursuit of this noble goal. This is important so that our enemies may not put us in a tight corner. We should not allow a few fanatics to derail our goal by taking the law into their hands. For some people to start burning beer parlours and hotels is not good for our cause.”<sup>303</sup> If you have read Volumes 6 and 7 you will understand that this much-needed warning demanded more forceful control than some sharia regimes were either willing or able to assert.

As already told in Volume 2, Sheikh Yakubu Hassan, Chairman of the Katsina State branch of the *Izala*, blamed religious violence on the failure of governments to punish the culprits. Unless the government flushed out and punished the culprits of the latest violence in Kaduna, there will be no end to religious crises, as the arsonists will continue to be encouraged by government’s inaction.”<sup>304</sup> This complaint has been aired repeatedly by high and low over the years. In

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<sup>300</sup>I. Salisu, 16 Nov/2004.

<sup>301</sup>I. Bashir, May/2007. See also *TELL*, 6 June/2005, for a more extensive litany.

<sup>302</sup>I. Dan Halilu, “The Rantings...,” Apr/2003.

<sup>303</sup>A. Alao, 5 Nov/99.

<sup>304</sup>*NN*, 2 Mar/2000. J. Boer, vol. 2, 2004, pp. 88 , 103.

connection with the Plateau tragedy of 2004, even former President Ibrahim Babangida warned, “The earlier these faceless persons who perpetrated these crimes are identified and brought to book, the better it would be for the peaceful co-existence of the multi-cultural people of Plateau.” In fact, he encouraged the Plateau Government to “leave no stone unturned in apprehending the perpetrators of this crime which, unless checked now, such dastardly acts of wanton destruction of lives and properties of innocent people by a select group...”—the sentence is left unfinished.<sup>305</sup> This is an amazing complaint, coming from a former ruler against whom the same complaint was aired *frequently*.

Abubakar Umar, former military governor of Kaduna, commented on “the current religious crisis rocking Kano” during the 2007 elections. He insisted that “those found culpable in the religious crisis should pay the supreme price.” “Government must declare that religious aggression, especially aggression which leads to death, carries mandatory capital punishment. The situation requires that all religious attacks on others be thoroughly investigated and the offenders promptly prosecuted.” Umar

*advised the government that “the law forbidding the preaching and dissemination of hate messages must be enforced strictly” and that “there is need for state governments in the North to establish religious peace enforcement agencies with equal powers of investigation, arrest and prosecution of persons hiding behind religions to foment trouble. If government considered it necessary to establish para-military agencies to check trafficking in drugs or corruption in financial and economic matters, crimes that, in comparison with religious misuse, are less incendiary, there is no justification for not setting up religious police. It is an enforcement agency long overdue.”*<sup>306</sup>

That, of course, was the reason for the *hizbah*.

Directly related to government failure to apprehend the culprits is their failure to publish the reports that various commissions, at both state and FG levels, had been assigned to write on various riots. Every riot results in one or more commissions assigned to find out the “immediate and remote causes,” but their reports, often referred to as “white papers,” are seldom published. The EDP workshop held in Kano addressed the issue. The participants would “do everything

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<sup>305</sup>DT, 8 May/2004.

<sup>306</sup>S. Akhaine, 20 Apr/2007. For further details about these Kano riots, see M. Kwaru and H. Karofi, 20 Apr/2007; VS, “Nigerian Islamic Group...,” 18 Apr/2007.

possible to make government release the white papers on the various crises in the state and that the culprits should be punished to serve as a deterrent.”<sup>307</sup> As Ibrahim El-Zakzaki put it,

*Government should be held responsible for the [sharia] tragedy in Kaduna, as people who instigated similar incidents in the past were never punished. In Kafanchan in 1987, a lot of people were killed. A commission of enquiry was instituted, but nothing else was done. There were two other cases in Zangon Kataf in 1992, and another commission was instituted. It apportioned blame to those who were responsible, but they were rewarded chieftaincy titles. Other commissions did good jobs and submitted their reports, but government failed to act.*<sup>308</sup>

It could almost be predicted that someone would write in similar vein during or after the Jos riots of December, 2008. Kabiru Tsakuwa and Muhammad Ishaq did not disappoint us with their Gamji articles.<sup>309</sup>

After the 2007 elections, the issue of security continued to be uppermost in the minds of governors and emirs even. A rather amazing meeting took place in Kano between the State Command of the NPF and the Kano Stakeholders Forum. Here Governor Shekarau and other members of the Kano powerbrokers seemed helpless in the face of insecurity.<sup>310</sup> Both Governor and Emir are pleading for help from the police, from the President and from the people themselves. They are appealing for prayer. It was even “reported that the police in the state invited a private hunter from Bauchi, Alhaji Ali Kwara, when they realized the situation was worsening on daily basis. But police swiftly disputed the report, saying they have never invited any private detective to assist them.” Nevertheless, there he was, operating in the state. Kwara himself reported that he was indeed involved.<sup>311</sup> For a more complete Kano security picture read also Appendix 19. What happened, I am forced to ask, to the promised “*Pax Sharia?*”

Sokoto continues to be wracked by intra-Muslim violence and a consequent sense of insecurity. It almost seems that if Northern Muslims cannot find Christians to molest, they turn on each other. Governor Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko “warned perpetrators of religious crises

<sup>307</sup>S. Obassa, 28 June/2001.

<sup>308</sup>*NN*, 2 Mar/2000, p. 15. K. Kolade, 4 Mar/2000. J. Boer, vol. 2, 2004, p. 103; vol. 3, vol. 3, 2004, pp. 154-157; vol. 7, 2007, pp. 237-238 (?x xxx ch. 8)

<sup>309</sup>K. Tsakuwa, Dec/2008. M. Ishaq, Dec/2008.

<sup>310</sup>D. Mgboh, 4 Aug/2007.

<sup>311</sup>Y. Ibrahim, 3 Nov/2007. Appendix 28.

to pack their bags and leave the state, because ‘freedom has limits, and if they think they can forment trouble, we are prepared to deal with them squarely.’<sup>312</sup>

In reaction to all the Sokoto violence, the Joint Council of Ulamas spoke up. I reproduce part of Hamza Idris’ report on their protest:

*The killing of Islamic clerics is undermining the peace and security of society, the Joint Council of Ulamas in Yobe State said yesterday. The spokesperson of the group, Sheikh Abubakar Diyar said security operatives in the country must face the challenge and uncover the assailants. “The rate at which Islamic scholars are being killed is not only frightening but is a serious threat to scholarship and preaching”, the Sheikh said. “Islamic scholars in Nigeria require protection under the law to save them from planned, unscheduled and unexpected attacks from unknown killers”, Sheikh Diyar advised. He called on the government to check the threat so that peace would continue to prevail. “Islamic clerics are worried because nobody around could tell who are those behind the killing of the innocent preachers and no group or organization came out to claim responsibly.”<sup>313</sup>*

Government must of necessity bring all those found culpable in the perpetrations of the most heinous crimes against humanity in recent past to justice. There should be no sacred cows. And Justice must be done in order to serve as deterrence to other criminally minded politicians who are lucking in every corner for opportunities such as this,

The desparate call for increased security is loud and clear. The impatience with the inability of the authorities to nip the violence in the bud and to apprehend the culprits is unmistakable. It is the cry of the land.

The new Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister, Aliyu Umar, promised that in his jurisdiction “the protection of lives and property of Abuja residents would be given priority.” In fact, he further promised, “by next week we will be able to come out with concrete measures to ensure safety for FCT residents.”<sup>314</sup> *Malam Umar, we sincerely wish you great success as the pace setter.*

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<sup>312</sup>A. Mohammed and A.Abdulfatai, 23 July/2007. It is not clear to me whether the two Sokoto reports talk of one or two incident.

<sup>313</sup>H. Idris, 23 July/2007.

<sup>314</sup>*D/Triumph*, 31 July/2007.

Moving from state affairs through those of the Capital Territory, we end up at the Presidency, including the new President Yar'Adua himself. That all this energy and writing about security was not a mere blowing in the wind was clear from his inaugural address in May, 2007.

Although his main reference was to Delta oil issues rather than religion or sharia, he stated, "We will move quickly to ensure the security of lives and property and investment. In the meantime, I appeal to all aggrieved communities to suspend all forms of violence. Let us allow the intending dialogue to take place and continue to act from there. We are all in this together and we will find a way to achieve peace and justice." After outlining the main components of his programme, he promised,

*"These plans will mean little if we do not respect the rule of law. Our Government is determined to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies, especially the police. The state must fulfill its constitutional responsibility of protecting life and property."<sup>315</sup> Three months later, the President assured the international community of a firm tackling of security in the country.<sup>316</sup> It is significant that this Muslim President, enough of a supporter of sharia and Islamization during his tenure as Governor to worry Christians, mentioned neither religion in general nor sharia in the context of his security assurances, nor even in his entire inaugural. Is his predecessor's prophecy coming true or is he continuing the game of smart silence?*

## **Legal and Constitutional Concerns   xxxx**

The legal and constitutional challenges to sharia have been debated at length in both Volumes 6 and 7. Auwalu Yadudu of Bayero University, delivered a lecture at the National Seminar on the Political Future of Nigeria, organised by the Muslim Forum of ABU in August, 1986, under the self-explanatory title, "We Need a New Legal System." He was very dissatisfied with the direction and contents of the debates about Nigeria's political future, considering them irrelevant and bizarre. He ended his contribution with the following three suggestions that went to the root of the problem as Yadudu saw them. Muslims should:

1. *Question the legitimacy of and justification for the continued supremacy of an alien and demonstrably unsuitable and unjust legal system, i.e., the English common law.*

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<sup>315</sup>J. Lohor and others, 30 May/2007.

<sup>316</sup>Y. Adebawale, 25 May/2007.

2. *Demand and work towards the removal of all restrictions on the application of Islamic law.*
3. *Demand for and concerted work towards the unhindered and unqualified application of the sharia to the Muslims in its entirety.*<sup>317</sup>

Though in some way welcoming sharia in Zamfara, El-Zakzaky basically rejected Governor Sani's approach long before. He insisted, "The struggle must be from without the system. If you do it from within, you have to play the rules of the game, and very soon you become part of the game." It is a waste of time to try to Islamise parts of the existing system as some are attempting. Muslims should not make piecemeal demands; they should ask for the whole. "Once this country is Islamic, there is no question what legal system the country will operate. It has to be Islamic."<sup>318</sup>

Zakzaky's wife, Zeenat, summarized her husband's aims and those of his Islamic Movement very succinctly. He aimed "to ensure that Muslims are given an opportunity to live according to Islamic injunctions." This used to be the case under the pre-colonial Sokoto Caliphate but was undermined by Europeans.

*They imposed Western ideas and way of life and our society began a system of decline. Now the Europeans have left, but their system of disbelief has prevailed. Islam is being sabotaged by the imposition of this Western system of life. That was why Malam [her husband] called us to join this Islamic Movement: to find our roots, restore our Islamic culture and shun the disbelief of the system imposed on us. We are committed to ensure that Allah's religion triumphs over heathen practices and disbelief.*<sup>319</sup>

Just a couple of weeks prior to the Zamfara Declaration, Zakzaky declared that sharia "is not meant to be practised under an un-Islamic system. No court should be above sharia and sharia is not [designed to be] limited to courts." To be effective and legitimate, sharia cannot exist under a secular system. It must be part of a fully Islamic system, not just legal.

*It is a sort of subsystem within a parent system. The parent system is Islam, which encompasses all aspects of life. But a country which does not practice the Islamic system [in its entirety] cannot apply sharia as a legal system, because sharia envisages that the leader of the society is someone whom allegiance is paid to and is seen to be a sort of*

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<sup>317</sup>S. Bala, 2000, p. 7. [A. Yadudu, 1988, p. 7—Bala's own endnote.]

<sup>318</sup>J. Fearon, 1992, p. 8. Culled from *Citizen*, 29 July/91.

<sup>319</sup>Quoted in J. Fearon, 1992, p. 13.

*representative of Allah on earth and he is the custodian of not only the sharia but the Qur'an as well.*

*It is not possible for a state within the country to have a complete system running it contrary to the system running the whole country. To me, it is just the beginning and not the end of the struggle.*

*It is hardly possible for a state within the country to be fully Islamic, because the whole country maintains a single constitution. The states are not independent. They are part of the whole and the federal laws surpass those of the states. So, in case of a contradiction, the federal laws will be sovereign.*

*The Constitution is supreme. In order to operate sharia effectively, it has to be superior or placed above the Constitution and any other law. If you have a law superior to the sharia, then the sharia cannot work. Application of the sharia envisages a society that has already accepted the supremacy of Allah.*

El-Zakzaki could only accept the Zamfara step as “part of the process of bringing about awareness among the Muslim people as to what should be their future. It could encourage other states to move in the same direction until, by democratic processes, the entire country were to follow or, at least, “end up having some concession at the federal level.” And now it comes to the radical part of his perspective: “To establish an Islamic system, one has to do away with the present system. The present governors of the system were elected to run the system. They cannot come naturally and run a system contrary to the system they were elected to run.” Governor Sani was trying to short-circuit the process of Islamization. It is a “natural process” that “you don’t accelerate by force. You allow things to take their natural course.”<sup>320</sup> Of course, we have heard similar demands earlier in the chapter.

Then there were calls for amending the Constitution to make room for the “full application” of sharia. Suleiman Kumo was somewhat impatient with those who declared the new sharia unconstitutional. He advocated “a little tidying up” of existing legal provisions. “And if in the process constitutional amendments are required, then, so be it. Let the Constitution be amended to accommodate the wishes of the Muslims of Nigeria.” It should be remembered that the current 1999 Constitution, having been framed under the military, “cannot claim any sacrosanctity.”<sup>321</sup> In line with this, a few years later, the Fifth Annual Forum for [Sharia]

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<sup>320</sup>A. Doki, 8-14 Oct/99. A. Madugba, 19 Oct/99.

<sup>321</sup>I. Umar, 9 Nov/99.

Judges, organized by the Centre for Islamic Studies of ABU, in a debate about capital punishment, “urged the National Assembly to amend the 1999 Constitution to allow for full implementation of sharia.”<sup>322</sup>

If you have read Volumes 6 and 7 and Appendix 6 of this one, you will remember the hot debates by both Christians and Muslims about constitutional and other legal issues. Many Christians want to hang the entire issue on whether or not the Zamfara sharia is constitutional. It could be argued that the issue is used as an excuse rather than a driving reason, since under normal circumstances Nigerians tend to have a rather nonchallant attitude towards the Nigerian legal system. “Liberated,” as one pundit put it.

According to Suleiman Kumo, the issue should not be decided on constitutional grounds. After Muslims have had their rights trampled upon for so long, “all fair-minded Nigerians should support the Zamfara experiment and insist on their rights even if this would necessitate amendments to the current constitution.” And since the Constitution is presently under review, “Muslims must now speak with one loud, clear, orderly and non-ambivalent voice, demanding and insisting on their right to have the sharia implemented.”<sup>323</sup>

Lateef Adegbite strongly rejected this undue dependence on these legal questions. Instead, “an enduring solution to the controversy must be sought beyond the law. He received support from a namesake, Lateef Owoyemi, who likewise insisted that this was not an issue to be decided on the Constitution alone. “Even if the courts were to declare sharia, for the time being, unconstitutional, through dialogue and constitutional amendments, ways will still have to be found to address” Christian fears and Muslim insistence. Dialogue would be the key method.

If you have read Volumes 6 and 7, you will know that legal pluralism was a major consideration in the sharia saga, with most Muslims favouring it. Can a nation have more than one legal systems? The answer of sharia opponents, especially Christians, is generally negative. Subsequent to the Zamfara declaration, it quickly became a major point of discussion, but was already an issue throughout the CA decades. Back in 1988, the editor of *The Pen* demanded a pluralistic legal approach. In the wake of the second post-colonial CA he wrote, “Since this country has been under a Christian legal system, there will now be no more justification for denying sharia a significant place in the constitution of our land. The choice is now between giving sharia equal status with the Christian common law or doing away with both. Anything

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<sup>322</sup>E. Mamah, 23 Dec/2003.

<sup>323</sup>I. Umar, 9 Nov/99.

less will amount to a profound mockery of our secular creed.”<sup>324</sup> Imams and Muslim scholars from Nigeria’s Eastern states echoed the same sentiment: “If the sharia is to be abolished, then the existing common law must also be excluded, because it is completely Christian in origin, content and application.”<sup>325</sup> In other words, both are needed--a plea for pluralism.

Auwalu Yadudu denied that the current Nigerian legal system is pluralistic. True, Muslim and customary law exist side by side with Common Law. However, the first two are not “independent and autonomous partners of Common Law.” At best they “are simply and politely tolerated in the hope that they would gradually die out or be submerged by the Common Law.”<sup>326</sup> That relationship is no mere accident. It was designed that way from the beginning.

In Appendix 6, we will read Yadudu’s discussion about the three phases of sharia. The upshot of the long-range development was that sharia by conscious colonial design became a limited handmaiden to Common Law. Yes, three systems co-exist, but with the sharia and customary law existing “at the mercy and under the shadow” of Common Law, as appendages of the latter. Sharia “does not exist as an autonomous and self-regulating system. It is defined in terms of Common Law. It is subject to the standards of common law. Its courts are established and its personnel trained and appointed in the same way and using virtually the same criteria as those of Common Law courts and justice.” Today—1986—“we see how the English legal ideas affect the thinking process of policy makers, judicial officers and the legal profession as a whole.”<sup>327</sup> That, in Yadudu’s opinion, is not pluralism, for pluralism implies equality.

You may remember from Monograph 5 that Muslims cogently argue that secularism is a coercive mono-cultural system that will brook no rival, while Islam is pictured as a tolerant and open system that leaves room for other systems to flourish alongside it. Sharia, being the embodiment of Islam, is tolerant and pluralistic. Ibrahim Sulaiman asserted that “through all the ages, sharia has been the only system that, rather than impose itself on others, respects pluralism.” One of the most quoted statements in the Qur’an is that there can be no compulsion in religion. When Jews came to Muhammad to judge in disputes, he would ask them to judge on basis of the Torah. The Qur’an does not teach that all people should live under one set of laws or be forced to accept other cultures. Where sharia is in force, non-Muslims are to be allowed to

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<sup>324</sup>*The Pen*, Editorial, 16 Dec/88.

<sup>325</sup>*The Pen*, “Chief Imams...,” 18 Nov/88.

<sup>326</sup>A. Yadudu, 16 Dec/88. That, of course, is the classic dream of secularism and the classic hope or even plan of colonialism.

<sup>327</sup>A. Yadudu, 1986, pp. 4-6.

practise their own system. They can drink alcohol in their own part of town. Europeans have wiped out tolerance and pluralism in Nigeria as you may have overheard Sulaiman argue in Monograph 4.

Nigeria's Constitution has assigned to state governments the responsibility to pass laws suitable to their people, based on their customs and culture, which, in the case of the core north, is Muslim. "The responsibility of the Federal Government is not to impose unitary laws on states, but to find ways of managing the different yearnings and aspirations of the different units of the federation."<sup>328</sup>

At an international sharia conference in the UK, Ali Mazrui asked "whether a federal system is able to support cultural self-determination of its constituent parts and still retain cohesion as a federation." He referred to the Swiss model "where cultural autonomy has been conceded to its constituent cantons."<sup>329</sup> Can a secular legal system co-exist with a religious sharia? Generally Christians answer this question negatively.

Muslims usually counter this with an affirmative. Salisu Bala felt it quite "possible to adopt a plural legal system in the country." "The problem is whether the two systems can co-exist peacefully or not." He approvingly gave the floor to Awwalu Yadudu, who declared, "There is absolutely nothing objectionable or problematic in having a plural legal system, which is a necessary consequence of the historical experience of the diverse people of Nigeria." "It shall co-exist with others as an autonomous and self-regulating system and not as an appendage of the English common law."<sup>330</sup> JNI held a national seminar on sharia in Kaduna and published a communique in which it denied that sharia threatens the unity or further development of Nigeria. Haliru Yahaya, speaking for the conference, stated that Nigeria's legal pluralism "should not be seen as an impediment to the development of the country." After all, Nigeria has long had a pluralistic legal system consisting of three strands, sharia, common and traditional. It has learned to live with it. Secondly, such pluralism is not peculiar to Nigeria. While that is true, it is unfortunate that the report or, perhaps, the communique itself, does not expand on where else such pluralism exists or how it works. The final word was that any future constitution must "fully and unambiguously reflect the country's religious and legal plurality."<sup>331</sup>

<sup>328</sup>I. Umar, 2 Nov/99. Appendix 56, vol. 6.

<sup>329</sup>R. Nweke, May/2001, p. 12.

<sup>330</sup>S. Bala, 2000. The Ostien materials taken from his "A Study of the Court Systems of Northern Nigeria with a proposal for the creation of Lower Sharia Courts in some Northern States," 1999.

<sup>331</sup>*NV*, 14 Feb/2000. Appendix 32, vol. 6. K. Kolade, 19 Feb/2000.

A sharia conference held in Kwara State made the same recommendation. Nigeria's pluralistic legal system is a "healthy practice which should be encouraged in Nigeria just as it obtains in Canada, India, UK and Switzerland."<sup>332</sup> Mu'az Dadi reminds his readers that in the United States, states have their own laws that may even contradict those of other states. They "are applied strictly without regard to the other states."<sup>333</sup> Auwulu Yadudu, in a lecture on capital punishment, said that the FG "should allow each state to determine if capital punishment should be retained." That amounts to advocating a pluralistic legal system.<sup>334</sup>

Ibrahim Sulaiman stated that God "has prescribed that laws must never be imposed on any religious community against their will, and that the system of law of each human organisation should be duly recognised and protected. This is the only way to ensure harmony in society, and forestall friction and conflicts which may ultimately lead to the disintegration of society." He goes back to the time of the Prophet when a covenant was created between Muslims and Jews and a *Pax Islamica* established. One of the guiding principles of this covenant is

*that Muslims should co-exist with other communities within one nation only under a firm, secure and written agreement in which the terms of the co-existence are clearly set out. The rights and obligations of Muslims must be spelt out precisely and unequivocally. Likewise the rights and obligations of non-Muslims. Another principle is that such a constitutional agreement must contain terms which are fair to the Muslims as well as to non-Muslims in addition to an irrevocable acknowledgement that the law of God shall remain supreme and the free expression of Islam shall in no way be hindered.*

The above situation hardly obtains in Nigeria, Sulaiman observed. Instead, Muslims and Christians live together under conditions that are not negotiated but imposed. The Nigerian state is designed to dissolve Muslim institutions. The most sensible solution is to work out a fresh agreement between Muslims and Christians "based on equity and fairness" that includes "mutual respect and reciprocal obligation" and will produce "sustainable and peaceful co-existence."

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<sup>332</sup>M. Lamidi, 22 Feb/2000, p. 2. Canada has 10 provinces and three huge territories, each with their own laws. Though these are mostly based on the British system, Quebec's is based on their French heritage as well as on their different history. In addition, Canada has laws that apply only to the Aboriginal peoples in the country-- very much of a pluralistic legal system that has so far enabled the country to manage its diversity of peoples, geography, history and cultures. A unitary legal system would unleash the existing tensions and probably render them unmanageable.

<sup>333</sup>M. Dadi, 15 Mar/2000. Appendix 17, vol. 6.

<sup>334</sup>J. Orintunsin, 12 Jan/2004. TD, 13 Jan/2004.

Islam, Sulaiman promises, “offers justice to all.” Sharia “grants automatic legitimacy to Christian laws and enjoins the Islamic government to facilitate their application. It grants others a high degree of social and juridical autonomy.”

Yes, legal pluralism is the word from Sulaiman, but a few pages earlier we have seen that he often contradicts it. There is more. For example: “The state must give full recognition to the Islamic value system. All things Islam declares morally good must be regarded as such by the state. All things Islam declares reprehensible, like alcoholism and human exploitation, the state shall not protect them, let alone attempt to make profit through them.” “Prominence should be given to the enforcement of the sharia provisions relating to the maintenance of social justice in society.” He then lists a number of concerns and issues with which Christians would also be concerned, such as human welfare, land policy, dignity of labour and more.<sup>335</sup> Sulaiman continued:

*This, then, is the Islamic recipe for human society, as far as the legal system is concerned. Social tensions and upheavals come only when the Islamic injunctions, recognising the rights of religious communities to maintain their laws, and enjoining upon the state to ensure that those rights are strictly observed, are ignored. In the context of Nigeria, these injunctions imply, (i) that the sharia shall enjoy full application in all areas where Muslims predominate, and that it takes precedence over all other legal systems in Nigeria, as the law that governs the majority of her people; (ii) that such other legal systems are accorded recognition in accordance with the extent of the following they command. Equally significant, there must be a definite commitment by Nigeria to abolish all aspects of imposed laws that are inconsistent with our fundamental values, norms and the demands of our faith. In fact, the entire colonial legal enterprise must be abolished and be replaced with our authentic and legitimate laws. This indeed is the irreducible minimum in our quest for genuine self-determination and sovereignty.<sup>336</sup>*

Lateef Adegbite has also insisted on legal pluralism. The federalism enshrined in the Constitution is not just an empty word. It means that “Nigerian laws, institutions and people must respect the cultural diversities intrinsic in the nation. These diversities are not just regional, ethnic or tribal; they also extend to religious beliefs and practices.” It is as “proper to extend recognition and protection to Islamic law” as it is to common and customary law.

<sup>335</sup>I. Sulaiman, 1986, pp. 8-9, 14-16.

<sup>336</sup>I. Sulaiman, May/86.

*Indeed, Nigeria being a pluralistic society, has opted for a multiple legal system, a kind of tripod. The three must co-exist and receive fair treatment from the authorities. Each state is competent to embrace any of these laws to a degree consonant with its social and cultural structure, in the legitimate exercise of its autonomy. To hold otherwise is to undermine the federal status of Nigeria and to negate the autonomy of the states.*

“In a multi-religious and federal country,” asserted Adegbite, “legal pluralism is a *desideratum*.” Muslims will never abandon sharia. To force them to do so “would be a denial of their freedom of religion, an abomination which the Muslims can never contemplate.” Therefore, the three law systems “have come to stay in Nigeria and should be allowed a healthy cohabitation.” Oh, yes, under legal pluralism one can expect conflicts between the systems. Religious pluralism produces strains. However, there “are well-developed rules and procedures for resolving such conflicts as may arise from time to time.”<sup>337</sup>

This entire section amounts to a strong demand for legal pluralism in which there will be equal space for all three Nigerian systems. The question is whether the demand for a pluralism of equality is to be taken seriously.

There are some good reasons to question the seriousness of the Muslim emphasis on pluralism. In Volume 7 we will hear the Christian complaint that they have not noticed much of Muslim pluralism. During the “innocent” pre-Zamfara days, when people were not as much on their guard, the Kano branch of the Council of Ulama of Nigeria condemned Kano’s Ministry of Education for agreeing to a change of name of the Ahmadiyyah Secondary School to that of “Ahmadiyyah Muslim Secondary School.” Muslims the world over, it must be understood, have rejected the Ahmadiyyah movement as heretical and thus not Muslim. This was a kind of excommunication. The addition of the term “Muslim” to the name was, according to Ibrahim Umar Kabo, spokesman for the Ulama, “particularly annoying as it was sanctioned by a Ministry that ‘was run by Muslims and supposedly to advance and protect the interest of the Muslim community in Kano State.’” The Council reminded the Ministry of the “heretical colonial” nature of Ahmadiyyah that deprives them of the right to the name “Muslim.” The Ministry should gather the courage to withdraw the name change.<sup>338</sup> So, when pluralism is not a public issue, it seems to be flouted very easily and replaced by intolerance. The latter instinct seems to

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<sup>337</sup>L. Adegbite, “The Constitutional and Legal...,” 2000, pp. 4, 13-14; “Sharia in the Context...,” 2000, pp. 70, 76.

<sup>338</sup>S. Durbunde, 7 Apr/89.

surface naturally in unguarded moments. Pluralism does not seem as instinctive as some of these writers try to picture it.

But the issue was not one of two systems, but three. Some Muslims favoured an expansion of the three-legged court system already in existence in some states, namely the common, traditional and sharia court systems. Yoonus Abdullahi wrote that it would be “in the fairest interest of Nigerian justice, equity and conscience” to implement all three components “throughout the federation.”<sup>339</sup> Quoting Crown Prince Abdullah, Abdullahi warned that Muslims will never be able to convince the world that sharia guarantees human rights, “unless the advocates of man-made laws see with their own eyes, how these Islamic laws are successfully put into practice in daily life.”<sup>340</sup> To him that would mean the tripod court system.

Adebite favoured a federal system that would allow the diversity of the tri-court system. The federal status of Nigeria must be taken seriously and make room for diversity within the greater unity. We must make up our minds if we truly want Nigeria to be a federation, if we want it to be a democracy. Federalism presupposes that all cultural diversities should be recognized.”<sup>341</sup> He advocated the recognition of all three systems. “Each state is competent to embrace any of these systems to a degree consonant” with its type of culture.<sup>342</sup> “In a multi-religious and federal country, legal pluralism is a *desideratum* [something desirable], especially where Islam is the religion operative in the country.” Thus, those three systems “have come to stay in Nigeria and should be allowed a healthy cohabitation.” Of course, in a situation of legal pluralism, occasional conflicts between the three are bound to arise, but Nigeria already has “well-developed rules and procedures for resolving such conflicts.” He then called on the authorities who must operate the judicial system to “assure non-Muslims of fairness and protection: and be seen to be doing that.” They must allow the general court to operate so that citizens who are not Muslims will have access to those courts. They should fund those courts well. They should not fund only sharia courts to the detriment of the other courts.”

Adebite offered some additional suggestions for the way ahead. First of all, he wanted the civil sharia applied throughout the country. Southern Muslims are as entitled to it as are Northerners. Secondly, “many Nigerians would be willing to live with sharia criminal jurisdiction if confined to the crimes recognised by the Northern Penal Code.” Some practices,

<sup>339</sup>Y. Abdullahi, 31 Dec/99.

<sup>340</sup>Y. Abdullahi, 31 Dec/99.

<sup>341</sup>M. Mumuni, 15 Nov/99, p. 17.

<sup>342</sup>For further discussion on legal pluralism, see vol. 6, p. 90 and vol. 7, ch. 3.

such as drinking alcohol and prostitution, are allowed by the Constitution but they are hurtful to society. Should a state not have the power to “prohibit activities injurious to the health of its citizens?” “It would be correct to place a ban on goods and activities likely to impair health or well-being of the society,” as is already done with drugs.<sup>343</sup>

Sidi Sokoto, asked about Governor Umaru Yar’adua of Katsina State [now President Yar’adua], who wanted to delay sharia until the Constitution was amended, denied the need for such an amendment. The Constitution grants the right to sharia. He then raised an interesting historical point: Did Governor Sani “just entrench sharia out of the blue? Didn’t he seek for permission from those above him? He sought approval.” He was not driven by “madness or illiteracy.” “He made other consultations before deciding on sharia.”<sup>344</sup> Whether Sidi was merely surmising or whether he was privy to inside information never made public, only insiders will know. I have seen no reports about the Governor consulting President Obasanjo and the Governor himself denied such contact.<sup>345</sup>

An anonymous *NN* writer had an interesting suggestion with which I close this section. *If, as all are agreed, the sharia is in the Constitution, then why make it an issue of legislation, which has the tendency of elevating it to the point of such monumental disagreements? Why not simply constitute the sharia courts, instead of making specific laws of “adoption” of sharia? Between the need for Muslims to be fulfilled in their religion and for the fears of Christians in such a dispensation to be addressed, there ought to be a middle ground. That middle ground is not necessarily making laws for sharia adoption. We should take that middle ground. It exists.*<sup>346</sup>

## **Judicial Culture and Protocol      xxxx**

A major problem in the old sharia justice system was the low level of the judges. Muslims have long recognized and struggled with this problem. Justice Abdulmalik Bappa Mahmoud wrote a three-part BZ series on defects in the sharia system and how to overcome them. The defects were already found during the emerging years of Islam. He presented us with a very interesting historical account of how all this developed over the centuries, going back to the

<sup>343</sup>L. Adegbite, CCC, 2000, pp. 76-79; NIREC, 2000, p. 10. M. Mumuni, 15 Nov/99, p. 17.

<sup>344</sup>U. Salifu, 6 Nov/99. Appendix 24. Handpicked by President Obasanjo, Governor Yar’adua became President during the 2007 elections.

<sup>345</sup>See vol. 6, p. 193.

<sup>346</sup>*NN*, 27 Feb/2000, p. 5.

seventh century AD or 140 AH. I have summarized this history in Appendix 20 and strongly urge you to read it.

At the end of his historical account, Mahmoud provided a list of judicial etiquette or protocol for judges to follow to avoid the trap of corruption and to encourage just and righteous sentences. Since the first installment of his series is missing, I cannot vouch for whether he culled this collection of etiquette from established tradition or whether this list is the mature expression of an experienced judge. At any rate, he offered 35 rules as corrective and rejuvenation of a severely wounded system that Muslims in both the BZ and AZ eras recognize as very corrupt. I merely summarize his points here, while the full text is found in Appendix 20. The emphasis was on simplicity of life style and dress, restraint in all his public behaviour, dignity, transparency, cleanliness and restricted social life This should lead to avoidance of boastfulness, pomposity, and extravagance, behaviour that characterized the elite. Others were no display of exuberance and enthusiasm; fluency of speech, but no prattling or garrulity; avoidance of parties and other social gatherings apart from weddings and funerals; rejection of gifts, except from close family members, to avoid bribery; no taking advantage of a privileged position. And then there were a number of professional protocol rules as to court location and scheduling issues.<sup>347</sup>

True, many judges were hardly qualified with the result of very skewed judgements and sentences. For this reason some sharia states screened them, dismissed those that were disqualified or organized training opportunities.<sup>348</sup> Ibrahim El-Zakzaky was second to none in his contempt for sharia judges and their lack of readiness to handle the new sharia situation. “The majority are graduated high court messengers,” according to him. There was a need “to upgrade the courts to fare like modern magistrates and those to run them should also be manned with full knowledge of the sharia.”<sup>349</sup> In view of his general attitude towards Nigeria’s legal inheritance from the West, I find it interesting that he upheld modern magistrates as models. Only a week later, Suleiman Kumo went public with his demand that the right caliber judges must be trained. “There is no need to establish any new courts. The existing ones can do the job adequately. The

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<sup>347</sup>A. Mahmoud, 13 Jan/89, pp. 5, 15. Appendix 29. Unfortunately, the first rule is in installment 1, which I have not been able to locate. So the appendix begins with point 2.

<sup>348</sup>J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, see entry “judges” in Index.

<sup>349</sup>B. Abdullahi, 2 Nov/99. For background information on El-Zakzaki and the Islamic Movement, check their entries in the indices of vols. 2 and 4 as well as the website <[www.islamicmovement.org](http://www.islamicmovement.org)> Also M. H. Sulaiman, 11 May/92.

only thing is to get the right *alkalis*. The necessary retraining must be done right here in Nigeria; no need to send anyone abroad.<sup>350</sup> Mu'az Dadi proposed a “re-orientation of the present [set of] judges and magistrates by means of classroom lectures so that they will cope and catch up with the system in a short time.”<sup>351</sup>

It is important to remember that Muslims themselves are painfully aware of the shortcomings of sharia judges. These are considered *serious* shortcomings and called for *serious* reactions on the part of Muslim authorities themselves: outright dismissal, upgrading and delay by governors in carrying out of judgments. Christians and Muslims look at this negative situation very differently. Muslims insist that the problems arise from ignorance, incompetence and corruption of an impeccable system, while Christians charge that these problems arise from the nature of sharia itself. The sharia Christians complain about, according to some Muslims, is not the true sharia; it is the deformed sharia of colonial vintage, made even worse by corruption and incompetence. It is good to remember this issue when we read about Christian complaints over sharia courts. They don't do themselves a favour by ignoring this important point, but neither have Muslims done much so far to prove their point.

Given the above situation, it is no wonder that in Bauchi State, for example, the Sharia Commission was “inundated with complaints of mass withdrawal of civil litigations from the various Sharia Courts, due to allegations of corrupt practices by some sharia judges.” They were all being investigated, with one already suspended. The government would keep up the process till all the bad ones had been weeded out.<sup>352</sup> From Volume 6 we know that other states also started this cleansing process, without which sharia could never achieve acceptance.

But Sidi Sokoto denied there was a problem of inadequate judges. “There is no problem in that direction. We have woken up from the slumber. From 15 years back, the North has rediscovered itself. The scholars are there. At least, we have 200 of such scholars in Zamfara State who studied in universities in Cairo, Medina, Libya, Kuwait and Sudan. We have them. We have learned scholars.”<sup>353</sup> Not everyone agreed with him.

### **The Struggle about Interpretation xxxx**

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<sup>350</sup>I. Umar, 9 Nov/99.

<sup>351</sup>M. Dadi, 15 Mar/2000.

<sup>352</sup>*Daily Triumph*, 2 May/2005; 13 May/2005.

<sup>353</sup>U. Salifu, 6 Nov/99.

Differences about the correct interpretation of authoritative ancient Muslim sources have a profound impact on the way sharia is thought about and implemented, as you may remember from Volume 6.<sup>354</sup> A literal, static interpretation usually seems to lead to a legalistic and harsh sharia regime. An interpretation that takes into consideration the historical context of a text, the human role in its development and then moves on to its contemporary dynamic equivalent, often results in a more humane and meaningful application. Proponents of the latter tend to be horrified at the static approach and accuse its advocates of giving Islam a bad name, because it ends up in oppressing the more vulnerable, especially the poor and women.

Muhammad Asad has been introduced to us in Volume 6.<sup>355</sup> He was a strong advocate for a dynamic approach to the Qur'an and to other classical Islamic documents. A dynamic approach is absolutely necessary, for the "sterile, formalistic" approach "makes it impossible for many educated Muslims to accept the sharia as a practical proposition for the our time." It ends up prescribing patterns and traditions that evolved in the Muslim community but "for which there is not the slightest warrant in Qur'an or *Sunnah*." In addition, these static interpreters—"self-appointed guardians of Muhammad's Message" he called them—insisted without warrant on discrimination and separation of Muslims from others as supposedly demanded by sharia. They were thus "making it impossible for minorities to bear with equanimity the thought that the country in which they live might become an Islamic state." Thus, "in order to overcome the apprehensions of our non-Muslim citizens, we must be able to show that Islam aims at justice for Muslim and non-Muslim alike, and that in our endeavour to set up a truly Islamic state, we Muslims are moved by moral considerations alone." Hence, "particular care must be taken to differentiate between ordinances intended by the Prophet to be valid for all times and circumstances, and ordinances which were obviously meant to meet the needs of a particular occasion or time."

Asad outlined the criteria for recognizing these differences and suggested a method for codification of sharia that would meet both Muslim and modern standards. The dynamic approach of Asad supposedly makes room for creative interplay with the contemporary situation and avoids the rigid traditionalism advocated by so many sharia proponents. So, an Islamic approach—yes; sharia—yes; but on basis of the recognition of the historical human contributions to sharia and their contextual meaning. Attributing the source of ancient Muslim documents

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<sup>354</sup>J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 255-260.

<sup>355</sup>See entries under his name in Index of vol. 6.

solely to Allah and ignore or even deny the human historical role in their development is to misread them and results in misusing them.<sup>356</sup>

Ayesha Imam, a prominent Muslim female rights activist, delivered an acceptance speech in 2002 in Montreal, Canada, for an award given her for work on behalf of Muslim women.<sup>357</sup> In my estimation, it was a remarkable speech that shed a lot of surprising light on the development of sharia and Muslim law in general. It is a classic example of the work of BAOBAB,<sup>358</sup> which “involves de-mystifying religious laws by documenting how historical, political, economic, socio-cultural, and gender specificities mark the construction of all laws (customary, secular or religious), and the empirical diversity of Muslim laws historically and contemporarily both within Nigeria, and in the Muslim world more generally.” That is exactly what Imam does in this lecture. I can only pass on a few of her insights by means of a few numbered summary statements. You can access the entire lecture by turning to Volume 6, Appendix 39.

1. She was engaged in *“defending women’s rights in Muslim laws and practices,”* because *“it was clear that many women cannot access their rights in Muslims law, because they do not know them. Consequently, in 1996BAOBAB...began making that knowledge available...through legal literacy leaflets and activies, training workshops, paralegal support and so on.”*
2. *Those politics have...produced claims that the new sharia... of 1999-2002 incorporate perfectly a universal God-given code, and that to raise any issues of possible defencts...is unIslamic, anti-sharia and tantamount to apostasy—in short, a politics of intimidation and threat. However, the falsityu of allegations like these are clear, when examining the nature of Muslim laws.*
3. *There are several schools of Muslim legal thought. Each school has variations according to the cultural, political and socio-economic contgexts in which they were developed and the philsofhy of reasoning that was accepted.*

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<sup>356</sup>M. Asad, 15 Jul/88, pp. 5, 12, 15. See also J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 255-260. In vol. 6 there are many denials by Muslims that via the Zamfara style sharia, they intend to set up a Muslim state. In this Asad article, written a decade before AZ, that was not yet an issue. Hence the positive references to an Islamic state were left unedited. But it is telling us something about Muslim dreams and casts some doubt on their denials.

<sup>357</sup>A. Imam, 2002. The award was the John Humphrey Freedom Award. John Peters Humphrey was a Canadian law professor and human rights activist. In 1946, he was appointed as the first Director of the [Human Rights Division](#) in the [United Nations Secretariat](#), where he was a principal drafter of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (Wikipedia).

<sup>358</sup>A baobab itself is “a broad-trunked...tropical tree,” according to the *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*,” Tenth edition, 2002.

4. *Even the oldest schools...did not exist until many decades after the revelation of the Qur'an and the Prophet's death (peace be unto him). Hence the laws they outline (commonly collectively referred to as sharia...) are clearly not direct divine revelations from Allah, but mediated through human judicial reasons [called ijihad]. It was recognised in that "golden period of Ihsam" that there were legitimate variations in Muslim laws...and therefore that sharia must be subject to progressive development and therefore to change.*

Imam then proceeds to illustration these variations by referring to differences, contradictions even, among Muslims about various issues like polygyny. Then there are differences that illustrate the progressive nature of understanding sharia by reference to slavery. It is allowed in the Qur'an but not acceptable to Muslims today. They have move on beyond the Qur'an.<sup>359</sup> I continue with more statements.

5. *Muslim laws are therefore not unchangeable laws, to be accepted unquestioningly by all Muslims. In fact, the scholars after whom the four currently accepted schools of Sunni sharia were named, had no intention of making their view final and binding on all Muslims. Imam Hanbal urged, "Do not imitate me [and others]...and derive directly from where they themselves derived." Imam Malik, the founder of the school...accepted in Nigeria, cautioned that "I am but a human being. I may be wrong and I may be right. So, first examine what I say. If it complies with the Book and the Sunnah, then you may accept it. But if it does not comply with them, then you should reject it." **Good Muslims were precisely those who questioned and examined and trusted their own reasoning and beliefs.** Furthermore, the founders also found it acceptable that the reasoning of one legal tradition might be considered correct on one issue, but that of another more correct on a different issue.*
6. *The unthinking acceptance which dominates most Muslim societies derives from the myth of the closing of the doors of ijihad, whereby for the last thousand years and more, legal jurisprudence has ceased to develop in favour of following establish models.*

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<sup>359</sup>In Christian terminology, this is known as "progressive revelation," revelation that goes beyond the letter of the Book on basis the larger framework that carries the entire Book. Along the way, specifics are dropped in response to insights that do more justice to the Spirit of God as understood in the new circumstances. New developments in the "Book of Nature" sometimes give legitimate cause to reinterpret previous understanding of the text.

This book is not meant to serve as a source of history. However, in view of the extremely static conception of sharia that has the Northern Muslims in its grip, knowing this history should help release them from this bondage and free them up for more liberal interpretations. It could help set the stage for more dynamic democratic developments within the strictures of orthodox faith.

Oppression, common as it may be in Muslim communities, is usually “the product of custom and has no relation to the law,” insisted Sanusi L. Sanusi. It represents a fundamentalistic rejection of the traditional Muslim interpretative tool of “*ijtihad*,” and seeks to freeze current social classes and traditions, even when they go against the grain of the justice that is said to lie at the heart of Islam. The resulting laws end up violating the spirit of genuine Islam and have made Islam repugnant to many ever since the beginning of colonialism. Much of the Northern Nigerian sharia regime is based on that static approach and is shaped by a “lack of dynamism that is a reflection of a general state of intellectual stupor and the dominance of a quasi-feudal, patriarchal discourse.” Even “among the scholars there is complete ignorance of the possibilities which exist and the actual changes taking place in other Muslim lands.” The ignorance is widespread, not only among the masses but even the *qadis* or judges are ignorant of the very traditional laws they are supposed to interpret and implement. They override the spirit of the law because of the forces of feudalism and patriarchy that dominate the society. The liberating pressures of sharia are simply overruled by oppressive non-Muslim traditions.<sup>360</sup>

In view of this, what is “the way forward?” Sanusi proposed that Muslims be educated about the law and be given “political support and empowerment to seek enforcement of their rights.” In addition to education and empowerment, there is a great need for sharia governments to pass practical legislation in various cultural sectors to protect weak individuals and structures, especially marriage. “These,” Sanusi concluded, “are the areas that governments interested in the restoration of sharia need to look at in the interest of Islamic justice and equity.”<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>360</sup>The problem seems to be common among Muslims, even in a country like the UK. In his report on a British conference, Ado-Kurawa wrote that most British Muslims “give preference to the customs of their native land, which they sometimes elevate to the status of Islamic precepts (I. Ado-Kurawa, July/2003).

<sup>361</sup>S. Sanusi, 11-14 Mar/2002, pp. 5-14. For information about Sanusi himself, see Index entry “Sanusi” in J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007. Though I have great respect for Sanusi as a creative thinker, it is good to keep in mind that he has a reputation for arrogance and even heresy and does not hesitate to berate his opponents as ignorant and worse.... However, the discussion in vol. 6 indicates that his position is shared widely by more liberal minded Muslims. If his is heretical, then Nigerian Islam embraces many heretics.

Ali Ahmad of Bayero University wrote, “If Nigerian Muslims are all incapable of making *ijtihad* or scholarly exertion, then we have no business running a sharia show. Something is wrong with a system that is adept in convicting cow thieves but unable to hook in two years one public office holder in a sea full of those who betray public trust.”<sup>362</sup> Abdulsalam Ajetunmobi picked this up and, on basis of a more dynamic interpretation of sharia, urged that “Muslims should intensify and multiply their efforts towards the safeguarding of human right.” And again, Muslims are not supposed to limit their discretion or fetter their judgement or bind themselves to unnecessary and irksome legislation.” He wanted “insightful Muslims to offer a better way of articulating the Qur’anic view intelligibly, intellectually and convincingly.”

*It is not only in the interest of our country’s unity, but the dignity of our religion that Nigerian religious leaders effect a positive change in their attitude towards critical thinking in religious matters and present Islam as a vibrant and progressive package for people to reckon with, rather than the current manner of representing Muslims as an emotionally insecure community that is no longer at ease with itself but, instead, eager to look for excuses to justify its own weaknesses.*

*The right to differ is one of the greatest of social virtues. It is a creative engagement in the gift of human difference. By respecting the free will of others to choose how they want to live their lives, we best protect our own.*

While some might expect that, given the above, Ajetunmobi would prefer secularism, since it allegedly allows for the greatest of freedom, he ended his article by pointing out that “secular systems are devised to bring about the public disappearance of other religions.” Its adherents “are keen to tell people of all faith what they should believe and how they could express it. Is secularism not worse than other religions?”<sup>363</sup>

But Ajetunmobi *did* want to create more space for an “interplay of alien philosophies and Islam.” Going “a bit further down memory lane,” he disclosed that

*Muslim scholars, sages and philosophers in the early period of Islam drew inferences from the Qur’an and the Sunnah and then combined these with Greek philosophy and sciences, as well as studied the classical philosophy of India, Persia and China to revolutionise the concept of knowledge by broadening the horizon of study and*

<sup>362</sup>A. Ahmad, 31 May/2006.

<sup>363</sup>A. Ajetunmobi, Jan/2004. For a fuller discussion of Muslim views on secularism, see vol. 5 of this series.

*investigation to an unsurpassed dimension. But one fact came out, i.e. that these scholars' association with secular branches of knowledge was seldom at the cost of their faith.*

It was that kind of openness that resulted in the Muslim culture of Andalusia, Spain, during the period of Muslim culture, surpassing “all other Muslim countries of the time in most fields of scientific research. Added to that, there was enjoyed a long and seldom broken period of relative peace.” Ajetunmobi’s point here was to demonstrate not only that such interplay with non-Muslim systems of thought was common practice in ancient times. He was also proposing that even today it “would probably help to further the course of Islam far better than the blind pursuit of juristic ideas of the ancient [Muslim] schools of thought.” Muslims should reject exclusive dependence on the traditional four schools of jurisprudence and be more open to “using *kafir* philosophies.”

Ajetunmobi wanted to pre-empt the frequent accusation that such “modernist” attitudes would lead to the enthronement of “reason over revelation.” There is, he argued, a “correlation between the revelation and observational truth in Islam,” as Professor Abdus Salam, a Nobel Laureate, “observed that the number of verses exhorting Muslims to make the best use of reason, rationality and scientific investigation adds up to 750 and that he could not find a single verse in the entire Qur’an that advocates irrational dogmatic invasion of the world of ideas that seem to be gaining ground in some quarters.” Therefore, concluded Ajetunmobi, “any suggestion that the revealed truth by itself is all-sufficient and as such it should be accepted without any rational investigation has no foundation.” “There is indeed an interrelationship between faith and reason.”

*Revelation and reason work both independently and jointly; they both aid one another. Revelation can help provide a better understanding of things which are observed through sensory organs by illuminating the human faculties to a much higher and more refined order of perception. The sensory organs in their turn also help the recipient of revealed truth to understand its message better.<sup>364</sup>*

As you process the above open approach, do not forget the heated opposition this dynamic approach has triggered as discussed in Volume 6. The approach is favoured mostly by members

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<sup>364</sup>A. Ajetunmobi, Apr/2003.

of the intelligentsia. It has released bitter venom among the more traditional thinkers, directed especially against Sanusi.<sup>365</sup>

It is difficult to know how Justice Sabo Suleiman Darazo, Chief Judge of Bauchi State, would classify himself as a Muslim. In view of his various appointments, I would consider him a capable man of honour. When asked how he felt about the death sentence for offences like adultery under the sharia regime, he answered as follows:

*The problem is that I know well as a Muslim that this is a purely religious affair. In Bauchi State, there has not been anytime when such sentences like amputation or death penalty were dished out to convicts [for] offences like adultery. But definitely, I believe that it is either due to not applying the law properly, because Islamic laws also have procedures which are very strict and it is very difficult to prove most of these offences. Let me also say that naturally, as a lawyer and as a Muslim, one would feel that we have passed the time that death sentences should be given for such offences.*<sup>366</sup>

The answer seems to indicate that Darazo did not espouse a literalistic interpretation of sharia. He would prefer its implementation applied in the spirit of the times, no doubt taking into consideration both the past and current *Sitz im Lebens*, the differences between the time of the sharia's original codification and today.

### **Sharia, Islam and Hausa Culture xxxx**

The relation of Hausa culture and customs to Islam is another a major issue, especially for the average Hausa Muslim. Custom and religion are so intertwined that many customs are popularly regarded as having religious sanction. An attack on a particular custom or set of customs is then regarded as an attack on Islam. Though he was not discussing sharia *per se*, Abdullahi Birniwa once wrote, “*Da wuya ke ce wannan al’ada ce, wancan kuwa abin da ya shafi addinin ne. Sai dai kuma abin takaice har gobe akwai wadansu abubuwa da ake yi wadanda ba su dace da addini ba ko kadan.*”<sup>367</sup> It is a problem of all religions. I can point to similar situations among Christians in the Dutch village of my childhood, in the Canadian communities of my teens and retirement years, in the American city of my college years and in the Nigerian Christian community of my missionary years. You may have read a discussion on the subject in my

<sup>365</sup>See “Sanusi” entry in Index of Vol. 6.

<sup>366</sup>*Vanguard*, “Law and Human Rights...,” 14 Feb/2003.

<sup>367</sup>A. Birniwa, 9-23 Dec/88, p. 3. English translation: “It is difficult to determine which is custom and which religion. However, in short, people engage in activities that do not jibe with Islam.”

Volume 6.<sup>368</sup> It means identification of sharia with various Hausa customs, so that when someone critiques a custom, he is regarded as attacking Islam and its sharia. This tendency exists everywhere and is due basically, I believe, to the fact that most individuals and communities adhering to a religion are by nature too conservative to understand the liberating elements of their religion and too fearful to embrace the openness it offers. In addition, there is the power of vested interests in the status quo, perhaps held unconsciously. This holds for Christians and Muslims alike. More about this in the next chapter.

The issue comes up repeatedly when Christians demand greater freedom for women in Nigeria. The conservative literal interpreter of Fulani-Hausa tradition will immediately get on his hind legs and scream in holy horror, “*Arne!*” “*Kaffiri!*”<sup>369</sup> Muhammad Asad, whose article appeared in *The Pen* during the same year as Birniwa’s, wrote that the problem with conservative Muslims is that they “inist on the maintenance of all traditional forms” that are based “not so much on the real values of Islam as on the social conventions evolved in the centuries of our decadence.” They hold the “assumptions that Islam and the conventions of Muslim society are one and the same thing.” And again, we end up with a call by many Muslims for an end to all vestiges of secular colonialism and replacing them with customs and culture that are found in sharia. The controversial question among Muslims is, once again, what is the real sharia.<sup>370</sup> Though there may be a serious problem of over-integration of custom and religion, there is general agreement that the legal system of a people must conform to their culture. If laws and judgement are out of sync with local sensitivities, a problem we seem to be having in my Canadian province of British Columbia, then tensions arise and dissatisfaction becomes rife. Back in 1988, highly esteemed Justice Abdulkadir Orire, in this series especially of NIREC fame but at the time a member of CA and Grand Khadi of Kwara State, stated, “The Constitution must take into consideration the peculiarities of the people.” In the UK, for example, the English and the Scots have different laws. In the US, different states have different laws, sometimes even contradictory. The state-by-state decision to go sharia is in line with that kind of pluralism. In the same article, Justice Muhammed Bashir Sambo, at the time Grand Khadi of Abuja, said “The English common law is Christian law. He asked Christians who called for the expunging of sharia from the Nigerian Constitution to ‘show cause why they do not call for the expunging of

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<sup>368</sup>J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 226-227.

<sup>369</sup>Both mean “Pagan!” and are terms of utter contempt.

<sup>370</sup>M. Asad, 15 July/88. p. 5.

the High Courts, which apply Christian-inspired English common law, which, by implication, is a religious law.”<sup>371</sup>

More recently, Abdulkareem Albashir quoted Lord Denning, a British legal luminary popular among Nigerian Muslim writers, who said that “the people must have a law which they understand and which they will respect.” Albashir added, “Every legal duty is founded on a moral obligation. Therefore, law needs, in order to enjoy its full authority, to be buttressed by the moral convictions of the community.” For mainstream Nigerian Muslims, that means sharia.<sup>372</sup> In a letter to the editor, Abubakar Garba of Gombe, adduced the words of Nigeria’s First Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who is to have said, “The best rule for any country, state or society, is to rule in the way the people will enjoy: the rule which will make them live in peace and happiness.” And that is what Garba wished for the people of Zamfara.<sup>373</sup>

## *Jihad* xxx

### *1. BZ Era*

*Jihad* is often advocated as a solution to the sharia issue. But that needs further explanation, since there are various definitions of the term, some even contradictory. Usman Abbas wrote that etymologically speaking, the term means “effort, fight, battle and struggle for any purpose. Islamically, it means a religious action embarked towards uplifting and raising the word of Allah and suppressing the acts of corruption.”<sup>374</sup> It is also used to denote any type of genuine social development. Nurudeen Lemu wrote that in Arabic the term means “to struggle, to exert effort or to strive.” In Islam, it refers “to the unceasing effort an individual makes towards self-improvement and self-purification. It also refers to the duty of Muslims, both at individual and collective level, to struggle against all forms of evil, corruption, injustice, tyranny and oppression, whether this injustice is committed against Muslims or non-Muslims.” Lemu then warned that “Muslims are not to commit aggression or to initiate violence. ‘For God does not love the aggressors’ [Qur’an 2:190]. If, however, they are attacked, they have the right to

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<sup>371</sup>A. Mamman, 24 Oct/88, p. 20.

<sup>372</sup>A. Albashir, 8 Nov/99. J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, p. 75.

<sup>373</sup>A. M. Garba, 13 Dec/99.

<sup>374</sup>U. Abbas, 7 Apr/89, p. 12.

resist and, if necessary, to fight to overthrow tyranny and oppression, so that people can live in freedom and with their basic human rights.”<sup>375</sup>

Muhib Opeloye was concerned to show “that the Qur’anic teachings on inter-religious relations create a conducive atmosphere for peaceful co-existence.” He took note of the three options commonly said to be open to non-Muslims living under Muslim control: convert, agree to *dhimmi* status or die. The most rigid view of *jihad* he described as “a permanent obligation upon the believers to be carried out by a continuous process of warfare,” until the House of War (*dar al-harb*) becomes the House of Peace (*dar al-Islam*). In this view, Muslims are expected “to slay all the polytheists wherever they may be found until they believe.” The Shi’ites allegedly adhere to this view. However, their insistence on such *jihad* is circumscribed by some serious restrictions that prevent the killing of non-combatants. Opeloye then listed a number of Qur’anic verses that seem to support this rigid view, but explained that “it is not difficult to deduce from the Qur’an quotations that fighting the idolaters is not an obligation unless the initiative comes from them.” The obligation arises “only on condition that their intent is to ward off their aggression and hostility.” That was the case with the early Muslim community. In all these Qur’anic verses either Muslims were in danger of being attacked or non-Muslims violated treaties. Opeloye then proceeded to describe some early agreements made with Christians and Jews that, though turning them into secondary citizens, were tolerable and humane. “The unfortunate conclusion of this history is that, “despite the efforts of Muhammad to promote co-operation and harmony” between Muslims and others, the attitude of the latter was marked by “aggression, treachery, break of trust and violation of treaties, culminating in perpetual warfare.”<sup>376</sup> We really have a case of dynamic versus static interpretation discussed earlier in this chapter. The solution to the religious problem must be found in the dynamic interpretation of the Qur’an. These introductory paragraphs express the main ideas associated with *jihad* throughout both periods.

Adamu Adamu, in a litany of praise for the Iranian Revolution, described its achievements in medicine, education, agriculture, and others. He referred to the entire programme as a “*jihad*.” There was the “*Jihad* for Reconstruction” after the Iran-Iraqi war; the agricultural *jihad*; the “education *jihad*.”<sup>377</sup> An anonymous author described *jihad* as an action

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<sup>375</sup>N. Lemu, 2 Nov/95, p. 32.

<sup>376</sup>M. Opeloye, 1992, pp. 82-89.

<sup>377</sup>A. Adamu, 1983, pp. 28-30.

“unertaken by upright, honest and totally selfless leaders to re-establish the Islamic tenets and traditions in their pure forms, restore Muslim honour and integrity, pull down the edifice of unbelief and eliminate the corruption, injustice and other abominable practices associated with it.”<sup>378</sup>

The editor of *Alkalami* called for such a *jihad* in the face of the oppression Muslims suffered at the hands of the West and their Nigerian Christian lackeys. He urged, “*A Musulunci tuni jihadi ya wajaba a kanmu. Domin kullum sai cin mutunci da karfa-karfa da keta haddi, da barna da wulakanci muke ta gani. Gashi kuwa Allah ya ce a Qur’ani, ‘Kuma ku yi yaki (don Allah) wadannan da suka yake ku.’*”<sup>379</sup> The editor went on to explain, “*Babu cin mutuncin da keta haddin da ya wuce gusar da shariar Allah. Yin haka shi ne tsantsar zalunci. Wajibi ne Musulmi ko’ina suke su tashi su kwaci kansu.*”<sup>380</sup> This is the raw militant kind of *jihad* popularly associated with Islamism, fundamentalism and terrorism.

Bashir Othman Tofa, Chairman of the Bureau for Islamic Propagation that published both *The Pen* and *Alkalami*, called upon Muslims to start the *jihad* in 1991. “Let us found our own Islamic *Jihad* of Nigeria to counteract the evil machinations of CAN. Let us act right now!” There were two reasons for this urgent call. One was the upcoming 1993 election campaign in which Tofa would run for President. In Nigeria, it is an established custom to make religious appeals in that context. The *stated* reason was the need to support the Islamic revival in the face of an aggressive Western Christo-secularism. Using his *The Pen* as his soapbox, he wrote:

*Christianity is an idle culture, which leaves its so-called managers with ample idle time, since most of believers are usually busy collecting from Ceasar what is due to them. Second, since it is a culture very much synonymous with Western civilization, the Islamic revival and its very swift spread into the heart of Christendom, makes most imperative for the West to rise in support of their dying cultural influence. So, they employ the likes*

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<sup>378</sup> *Radiance*, no. 4, 1983, p. 36.

<sup>379</sup> Translation of Hausa: “Muslims should have started a *jihad* long ago. They [Westeners] are forever showing disdain for us, bringing false charges against us and offending our ways, [not to speak of] the damage we see them inflict on us and the contempt [with which they treat us]. Take note of what Allah says in the Qur’an, ‘Make war on those who war against you.’”

<sup>380</sup> *Alkalami*, 1 Dec/88, p. 1. Translation of Hausa: “The worst kind of all contempt and misrepresentation is that which touches on the sharia. That is the worst and most serious form of oppression of all. Wherever Muslims find themselves, it is their duty to effectively defend themselves. No matter how much opposition they face, they must overcome.”

*of Mr. Okogie and Jolly<sup>381</sup>--clearly frustrated fanatics—to do the job of disturbing Muslim peace with reckless regard even for the tranquility in their own country.*

*It is time to begin the offensive. It is time to claim our unnegotiable rights and freedoms.*

Those “rights and freedoms” in the minds of many Muslims already at the time included a fuller sharia. However, Tofa did not dare go that far. After all, he would also need some of the Christian vote. The time was not yet. It had to wait for the end of the decade. In the meantime, “Let us begin by proclaiming Friday as our sabbath. Let us invent our Crescent Society as a medical and humanitarian symbol and do away with the Christian Red Cross symbol. Let us establish more Islamic newspapers, magazines and broadcasting channels. Let us build more mosques and schools.” But above all, counteract CAN and begin “right now!!!!”<sup>382</sup>

Yusufu Mohammed Magaji, a high civil servant in Taraba State, without defining *jihad*, identified it with militancy and war; he wanted to discard it.

*The times are gone for the historic acts of militancy and gallantry during the Christian Crusade and Islamic jihad. We now live in the period of enlightenment and technology. To resort to the use of force, especially modern weaponry under the guise of religion, will only lead to the annihilation of the human race. It is, therefore, far more in tune with our moral doctrines to spread the Word of God in peace and to encourage the use of science and modern technology for the benefit of all.*<sup>383</sup>

“The time is gone”—a sentiment similar to what Hussaini Audu applied to the sharia *hudud* punishments. The time is gone. We live in a world in which we relate differently to each other. Well, were it only so!

Talking about Hussaini Abdu, he also favoured us with an explanation of *jihad*. Islam, he asserted, is not a pacifist religion—as if the world did not know that! It

*does permit the use of force. But the theory of jihad, which means “struggle in the path of God,” forbids violence except:*

1. *when Muslims are not allowed to practice their faith or when freedom of religion is threatened;*
2. *when people are oppressed and subjugated;*

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<sup>381</sup>Okogie was Catholic bishop of Lagos at the time and National President of CAN. “Jolly” refers to Tanko Yusuf, long-time Christian politician. Check the indices of previous volumes for details about these gentlemen. For “Jolly,” see especially vol. 3, pp. 14-15.

<sup>382</sup>R. Adejumo and S. Onitiri, 11 June/93. Quoted from B. Tofa, *The Pen*, 20 Aug/91, pp. 2-3.

<sup>383</sup>Y. Magaji, 2 Nov/93, p. 85.

3. *when people's land is forcibly taken from them.*

*In these situations, Islam allows a range of responses. One can forgive the oppressor or one can respond with force. There are Qur'anic sources encouraging both positions. The Qur'an states, "And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them out of the place from where they drove you out, for persecution is worse than killing" (Qur'an 2:191). But the Qur'an also states, "Tell those who disbelieve that if they cease persecution of believers, that which is past will be forgiven them" (Qur'an 8:38). There is no hierarchy of verses in the Qur'an.*

*Those who privilege the first verse over the second will wage war to fight injustice. And most militant Muslims invoke this verse in defense of their actions. But then there are Muslims who privilege the second verse and seek a diplomatic end to persecution and urge forgiveness. These two verses are exemplary of the tension between realism and idealism in Islam.*

And then Abdu comes with a surprising, if not astounding, remark: "In the final analysis, Islam is what Muslims make of it."<sup>384</sup>

Dauda S. Dauda explained, "The concept of *jihad* is very broad":

*It encompasses all things in the struggle to obey God's commandments. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), upon returning from a battle, was reported to have made the remark to his companions that they were returning from the "lesser jihad" of fighting to the "greater jihad"—that of struggling against the evil temptations of the soul. In another tradition, he was reported to have said that "the best of jihad is a perfect Hajj" (pilgrimage to Makkah). Jihad is therefore striving in the way of Allah by pen, tongue, hand, media and, if inevitable, with arms. It does not include striving for individual or national power, dominance, glory, wealth, prestige or pride. It is wrong to instigate or start war; some wars, however, are inevitable and justifiable.*

From where the popular military meaning? According to Dauda, "This brutally false distortion of the true, broader meaning of *jihad* is orchestrated by a minority of extremists—Muslims who, as a result of being misguided or mostly in serving some selfish or political interests or claim to be '*mujahideen*' (people involved in *jihad*)."<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>384</sup>H. Abdu, 7 Mar/2003.

<sup>385</sup>D. Dauda, Apr/2003, pp. 1-3.

Muhammad Asad warned, “By representing the idea of *jihad*, in clear contradiction to all Qur’anic injunctions, as an instrument of aggressive expansion of Muslim rule over non-Muslim territories, they sow fear in the hearts of non-Muslims and fill many righteous Muslims with disgust at the thought of the injustice which such a tendency so obviously implies.”<sup>386</sup>

Some refuse to choose between these definitions and incorporate them all into one. During the BZ era, Aminuddeen Abubakar published a lengthy discussion on the subject that I attach as Appendix 30. He began with the Prophet himself, whom he described as waging a total *jihad*: “*Ya yi jihadi domin daukaka kalmar Allah. Ya yi jihadi da zuciyarsa, ya yi da bakinsa, ya yi kuma ta hanyar kira da bayani. Sannan ya yi jihadi da takobi. Saboda haka, rayuwarsa dukkaninta jihadi ne.*”<sup>387</sup>

He then proceeded to outline the conditions under which a *jihad* is called for, all of them being caused by “*kafirai*.” Strictly speaking, “*kafirai*” refers to all people except Muslims and the “people of the book,” namely Christians and Jews. However, in the Nigerian context of Muslim anger at Christians and Jews, the term often covers them as well. It is, moreover, a term dripping with contempt that greatly annoys Nigerian Christians-- which is often the intended effect. The conditions include persecution of Muslims, humiliating Muslims, offending the pride of Muslims, showing hostility to Muslims, making wily plans of evil against Muslims. Examples of these conditions are the dynamics between Jews and Palestinians and between the Communists and Afghanistan—the year of publication, understand well, is 1988—as well as those created by Christian missionaries in many countries. Nigeria, of course, is one of these missionary targets. When *kafirai* engage in just one of these activities, it becomes incumbent on every Muslim to wage *jihad*. At that time, Muslims must be ready to totally give of themselves, their wealth, their everything. In fact, Muslims should anticipate such conditions to arise and be ready for the *jihad*. Preparation should include military weapons of every kind, including any new weapons that are invented. “*Ko da nan gaba kuma za a kirkiro sababbin makaman, to,*

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<sup>386</sup>M. Asad, 15 July/88, p. 5.

<sup>387</sup>English translation: “He waged *jihad* to glorify the Word of God, which is the true and real *jihad*. He conducted it with his heart, his mouth and even by way of evangelizing. In addition, he waged it with the sword. In short, his entire life was in the *jihad* mode.”

*wajibi ne, Musulmi su mallaki irinsu domin su yi maganin farmakin da Arna za su yi musu.*"<sup>388</sup>

389.

Ibrahim Abdullahi of Unguwar Kanawa, Kaduna, did not use the term “*jihad*” in his 1989 letter to the editor, but he did want all Muslims to become “*Mujaheed*.” He was very annoyed upon hearing a youthful Muslim preach in a mosque that Muslims should not join the army or police. His were days of much turmoil between the two religions. If Muslims follow the advice of this young preacher, Abdullahi argued, Christians will get the best of us. How, he asked, will Muslims gain the victory, if they do not join the army and learn how to handle modern weaponry, even those evil ones? The traditional tools like knives and swords do not suffice anymore. That is the direction Muslims must take if they want to end the oppression they are suffering.<sup>390</sup>

Jihad can also be called against Nigerian governments. In his letter to the editor, Jibrin Muhammad Doguwa threatened that the FG knows very well that Muslims will not accept contempt and oppression [*wulakanci*]: “*A shirye muke da mu yaki duk wanda yake kokarin cin mutuncin Musulunci ko da za a kashe mu. Domin Manzo (SAW) ya ce duk wanda aka kashe wajen daukaka kalmar Allah, to, Allah ya yiwa wannan mutum alkawarin Aljanna.*”<sup>391</sup> Doguwa then called upon the Sultan of Sokoto, the leader of all Nigerian Muslims, to achieve freedom for Muslims by way of establishing sharia. “*Domin mu Musulmi mun lashi takobin la’antar duk*

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<sup>388</sup>A. Abubakar, 9-23 Dec/88, p. 10. Appendix 30. English translation: “If in the future new weapons are developed, it is incumbent on Muslims to have them as well in order to end the evil that Pagans are planning for them.” The literal meaning of “*Arna*” is “Pagan,” an even more contemptuous term, but that should not include the “People of the Book.” In the Nigerian climate of anger, militant Muslims, of which our writer surely is one, fuse the meanings of “*kafirai*” and “*arna*” to allow them to refer to Christians and Jews with the most contemptible terms available. It is a common feature in the pages of both *Alkalami* and its twin, *The Pen*.

<sup>389</sup>Here we have an early Nigerian Muslim rationale for the current struggle over the nuclear weaponry of Iran. And it is not unique among Nigerians. An Iranian clergyman, Mohsen Moradi, a few years ago stated that “Iran must continue its nuclear activities. We have nuclear weapons already, but don’t want to start a war.” “There are commands in the Holy Qur’an that we must keep up to date with technology and weaponry” (BBC, “In Pictures: Iranian Views on Tehran’s Nuclear Plans, Oct/2004). The point here is not whether Iran actually has nuclear weapons so much as the defence of it on basis of the Qur’an. To the contrary, President Ahmadinejad of Iran, on September 26, 2007, during a meeting in New York with North American religious leaders, is reported by Bruce Clemenger, President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, to have said that “Nuclear weapons...are incompatible with Islam.”! (B. Clemenger, Nov-Dec/2007.)

<sup>390</sup>I. Abdullahi, 17 Feb/89, p. 3.

<sup>391</sup>English translation: “We are prepared to make war against everyone who tries to oppress Muslims, even if we die in the process. The Prophet has said that whoever dies because he holds high the word of Allah, Allah has promised him Paradise.”

*wata sharia in ba ta Allah. Yahudanci da Nasaranci mun la'ance su. Saboda haka ba za mu yarda da shariarsu ba.*"<sup>392</sup>

*Jihad* is not always against Christians; it can also be called against Muslims. One Abdullahi Umar from Aikawa Quarters in Kano, called for *jihad* against corrupt Imams who were preoccupied with gathering wealth and power, who always preached against common vices, but would never critique anyone in power. Against such, Umar called on the youth: "*Matasa Musulmi A Fito Jihadi!*"<sup>393</sup> Two friends, Dan Uwanku and Nuraddeen B Adams of Kumbotse, Kano, were unhappy with Umar's proposal. They asked whether he was not belittling the evil nature of all these common sins. Furthermore, did he expect the leaders to quit preaching and just have all Muslims start a *jihad* without knowing its nature? Instead, Muslims should clean their hearts and learn what Islam teaches about *jihad*. Only then should they proceed. For good measure, they advised Umar to know what he is doing before writing a public letter.<sup>394</sup>

Around the same time, Abubakar Tureta, a popular preacher based in Kaduna, advised Muslims "to convert their mosques into courts, should they be denied the chance to full sharia."<sup>395</sup> In education, Abdullahi Abdulmajeed of Kano called on Muslim students "to dishonour and absolutely reject" the newly-developed moral philosophy curriculum for its "un-Islamic" nature. He also urged the Council of Ulama to demand that the FG "withdraw the course immediately in order to avert any unpleasant consequences."<sup>396</sup> The threat was hardly subtle.

Mallam Yakubu Yahaya, a self-declared disciple of El-Zakzaky and one of the leaders of the Islamic Movement, is (in)famous for his radical attitudes, rejections and solutions to the Nigerian situation.<sup>397</sup> They landed him in prison twice for four-year terms. Insisting on the total Islamization of Nigeria almost a decade before the Zamfara Declaration, he did not recognize any current governmental authority in the Nigeria of his BZ days. "The solution is to flush out this corrupt system and establish an Islamic state. There is no compromise. The solution is not in talking on the table [Boer: read "dialogue.]" but to flush out the system. Prophet Muhammad

<sup>392</sup>J. Doguwa, 14 Apr/89, p. 3. English translation: "We have shown that we will curse any law which is not Allah's. Whether it be Jewish or English, we curse it, for we will not accept their law."

<sup>393</sup>A. Umar, 3 Mar/89, p. 3. English translation: "Muslim young people, come out and join the *jihad*."

<sup>394</sup>D. Uwanka and N. Adams, 14 Apr/89, p. 3.

<sup>395</sup>I. I. Bello, 16-30 Dec/89, p. 16.

<sup>396</sup>A. Abdulmajeed, 21 Apr/89, p. 3.

<sup>397</sup>For an introduction to Yahaya see that entry in the indices of vols. 2 and 4. Also M. D. Sulaiman, 11 May/92. For introduction to his Islamic Movement, see vol. 2, pp. 143-153.

flushed out all idol worshippers and their leaders and all their evils. So our aim and target is to do so here, *insha Allah*.”<sup>398</sup>

8 years later, Yahaya’s master, El-Zakzaky, not to be outdone by his underling, after listing all the social developmental prerequisites for sharia described in other sections of this chapter, declared that the last step was to “remove the present system of government, which is unIslamic, and replace it with [the] Islamic system and then you can apply sharia law.”<sup>399</sup>

Mohammed Dahiru Sulaiman summarized the Islamic Movement’s stance thus:

*Although there is no detailed articulation of the type of society that the Movement wants to establish in Nigeria, it is very clear that, as far as they are concerned, the secular character of the Nigerian State makes it lose its political legitimacy and the right to control the lives of Muslims. According to Malam Yahya [an alternative spelling], “We do not recognise the laws of this country, because they do not conform with the laws of Allah as stated in the Holy Qur’an. This is why we want to operate outside it. We want to follow the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and our Prophet in toto.”*

*The implication is that while the long-time objective of the Islamic Movement is to bring about an Islamic revolution in Nigeria, in the meantime they will continue to deny its laws. That is why, e.g., they are not prepared to seek permission to assemble, conduct preachings or public processions, etc.*<sup>400</sup>

The man charged with heavy sharia responsibility in Zamfara State, the AG Ahmed Mahmud, offered a similar radical proposal. He declared that “the only alternative is for all competing parties to agree to discard the alien Common Law and replace it with sharia for Muslims, Canon Law for Christians and Customary Law to Traditionalists.” He assured his audience that the proposals and actions already taken in Zamfara State had been “appreciated by an International Seminar on sharia in Nigeria, organised by the Voice of America in Washington in May, 2000.”<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>398</sup>B. Ojudu, 22 Apr/91, p. 37. Translation of Arabic/Hausa: “God willing.” J. Boer, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 146-153; 2005, vol. 4, pp. 45-46.

<sup>399</sup>B. Abdullahi, 2 Nov/99. J. Boer, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 143-146; 2005, vol. 4, pp. 40-45; 2007, vol. 6, pp. 26, 161, 185, 223, 238, 260.

<sup>400</sup>M. D. Sulaiman, 11 May/92, p. 13. J. Boer, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 143-145; 2005, vol. 4, pp. 40, 44-46, 58.

<sup>401</sup>A. Mahmud, 6 July, 2000, p. 10.

Actually, the last few writers represented a level where *jihad* and *da'wah* fused. They also represented a kind of radicalism that looked at the root of things as well as an advanced degree of extremism. But the envelope of extremism can always be pushed a little further. The Kafanchan riots of 1987 triggered a number of documents that, I suspected some years ago, were fake, but now regard as quite possibly genuine outbursts of extreme anger and hate on the part of militant semi-educated Islamists. There were a number of extremist organizations stalking the country that were out for serious blood-letting *jihad* against anyone not following their way, including famous Muslim leaders. They produced some documents that expressed *daw'ah* concerns but also gave extreme expression to aggressive *jihad*.

An example is the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>402</sup> Back in 1987, shortly after the Kafanchan riots, the Brotherhood declared that it is incumbent on Muslims to establish the sharia and to destroy the “*kufir* from the face of the earth.” The *kufir* system” is established by the secular colonialists and has imposed the way of Christians and Jews on Muslims. “It is this system which is our target of destruction until the law of Allah is established.”

*Oh, Dear Muslims, it is compulsory that we rise and see to the establishment of the religion of Allah. It is also necessary that we rise and destroy oppressors and the Kufir system. It's a must that we see our way of life is based on the religion of Allah in this country and that this is our only salvation in this world and hereafter.*

*For this, Ulama should raise up and take the lead for the annihilation of Kufir and the subsequent establishment of the religion of Allah. We are calling on Muslim workers to boycott working until further developments. Muslims should make the Friday of 13th Rajab, 1407 A. H., to be a day for sadness and mourning, for what happened to our brothers at Kafanchan. Oh, we are tired of this Kufir system of government, of Jewish laws and decrees, and the acts of worship of Christianity [imposed] on us. For this!*

The Brotherhood then gave a short list of things to do, some of them specifically geared to that time but amenable to adjustment to the contemporary scene.

1. *All the Christians that murdered the Muslims must be brought out to public and be shot.*
2. *From now on Thursdays and Fridays must be made work-free days.*
3. *All laws and decrees that are oppressive to the Muslims must be eradicated.*

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<sup>402</sup>For earlier introduction, see J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, Appendix 31; vol. 7, 2008, pp. 350-352.

4. *There will be no limit on the number of pilgrims.*
5. *All Muslims should raise up and give their lives so that the Government of Allah be established and reigns supreme on the face of the earth.*

The document ended with the call, “Fight them until there remains no tumult on the face of the earth and religion (way of life) becomes for Allah alone” (Qur’an).<sup>403</sup>

A shadowy organization with the name “Islamic Liberation Movement” [ILM] boasted the slogan, “Aims: To die in the path of Allah, Our Target” and the motto “And fight them until persecution is no more. But if they desist, let there be no hostility, except against wrongdoers.” The organization wrote a threatening letter to then President Babangida, a fellow Muslim, for misinterpreting the riots to enable him to “drink the blood of the Muslims, because you are blood-thirsty, liar and trickish.” “You are hereby warned of the danger ahead if Muslims are jailed or killed. You will see with your own eyes that this nation will go in flames, which will unseat you from the leadership.” “We also heard in your speech that the government will compensate the Christians by rebuilding their burnt churches. You are hereby warned to desist from that, because the properties of Nigeria belong to the citizens comprising Muslims and non-believers. Muslim money should not be used for building houses or worshipping others beside Allah. Mr. IBB you are warned of the danger ahead if you dare kill any Muslim. We are looking forward for the reaction.”<sup>404</sup>

The same ILM wrote threats to various people, including Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, the founder of the Izala Action Group. Here is their undated and unsigned letter:

*Dear Sir,*

*Please find the enclosed copy of IBB’s letter and note that we are fully prepared to wage war against you if you dare sit and see Muslims being jailed or killed by the blood-thirsty man called IBB.*

*We are watching you closely and your life is in danger, unless you act accordingly and seriously to see that the arrested Muslims are released, because they are defending their religion.*

*We know many of you who worked seriously during the political days for his party and release of thugs. Now you must stand and release the arrested Muslims from this popular killer and deceiver.*

<sup>403</sup>J. La-Nibetle, 2000, pp 28-31.

<sup>404</sup>ILM, letter to President Babangida. See brief discussion in vol. 3, p. 52.

*We are looking forward towards your action.*<sup>405</sup>

A second letter to President Babangida was based on a meeting ILM held on December 14, 1989. The letter outlined plans for 1990-1992. With the help of others of high rank, Muslims should infiltrate the armed forces in order to Islamize the country. Also, with the help of Arabs and other Muslim countries, they were “to do away with the *kaferis* (Christians).” All the important government positions must be taken over by Muslims. Muslim men should marry Christian women and Islamize them. Scholarships for study abroad were to be awarded only to Muslims.<sup>406</sup>

These documents are unusual only in their super-extreme expressions. This is the absolutist world of black and white, of the reduction of difficult issues to their simplest and thus falsified forms. The solution to Nigeria’s religious problem is simply to do away with the enemy, who is defined as anyone with other ideas and loyalties, whether Christian or Muslim. In this atmosphere, threats and smell of blood are common. The enemies addressed by these ILM letters are Muslims, even dedicated Muslims who have served the Muslim cause in significant ways. The name of the game is subjugation only on their terms and in their way. Woe to anyone who stands in the way. Here there is no thought of compromise, dialogue or co-operation.

## 2. *AZ Era* xxxx

During the AZ era there was the same general agreement that *jihad* is encumbant on all Muslims, but also the same kinds of diagreements about the nature of it. Khadijat Teeta, in an aggressive rebuttal to Olisa Adigwe, who accused Islam of militancy towards other religions, explained that *jihad* is a “struggle to cleanse ourselves. To fight injustice and oppression.”<sup>407</sup> A common street definition of “*jihad*” is simply “holy war.” Dauda Sulaiman Dauda, a Nigerian living in Ternopol, Ukraine, found that the term acquired this street definiton by the transfer of the meaning of the Christian crusades against Jerusalem to “*jihad*.” This is what I call the “raw” meaning of the word.<sup>408</sup>

At a peace conference organized by Inter-Gender in Jos, Mohammed Sa’id rejected the notion of “holy war.” Islam, he claimed, has *jihad*, but “has nothing called ‘Holy War.’” The term basically means “to exert effort” or “to strive.” He recognized three categories or levels. The first is the “Greater *Jihad*”: “to make *jihad* with oneself. That is, to struggle against evil with

<sup>405</sup> ILM, letter to Gumi. See brief discussion in vol. 3, p. 52.

<sup>406</sup> ILM, second undated letter to President Babangida.

<sup>407</sup> K. Teeta, Jan/2004. O. Adigwe, Jan/2004.

<sup>408</sup> D. Dauda, Apr/2003, pp. 1-3.

oneself; to train the soul to piety, godliness and perseverance.” The second is “to ordain what is good and forbid what is evil. This form refers to anything that is good and brings benefit to others, such as preaching love, assistance in all forms, caring for others, as well as forbidding evil in all its ramifications.” That can include preventing others from doing evil and “removing harmful things on the pathway of people.” The third form of *jihad* is that “of the battlefield when the need arises.” There are only two causes that justify taking up arms: self-defense and the removal of tyranny and oppression. Even when there is a legitimate war, it is circumscribed by many precautions about whom you are not allowed to kill and what you are not to destroy. Such a war is legitimate only “when all avenues of peaceful resolutions are exhausted.”

However, war is not the ultimate guarantee of peace: It is justice. “Where there is no justice, you don’t find a meaningful, lasting peace, but a superficial peace which deceives.” Unfortunately, “conflict in human society is inevitable, but it can be managed and peace achieved if justice is upheld and seen to be done.”<sup>409</sup>

Two Muslim scholars tried to strip the term “*jihad*” of some false innuendos. Muslims have for years complained about marginalization in the sense that the FG and some governments of Muslim-minority states allegedly discriminate against Muslims: They are said to appoint more Christians than Muslims. Sanusi L. Sanusi was unhappy that some call the struggle to overcome this alleged marginalization “*jihad*.” He argued, “No Muslim has been stopped from practising the five pillars of Islam.” In fact, he dismissed the entire marginalization allegation as seriously flawed. To pretend that if we had more Muslims in government positions, the North would be better off “is to speak from an ethnically blind perspective.” The North’s political dominance before Obasanjo did not yield anything better for the people. This is all about the elite fighting about “their share of the national cake.” This interpretation of *jihad*, he argued, “is to make a complete mockery of the Muslim faith. It has nothing to do with religion” but everything with vested elite interest. Muslims have perfect freedom to practise their religion throughout the country. The *jihad* he wished to see is turning around the pathetic economy of the North so that the uneducated and unemployed are not so ready for recruitment into violent activities.<sup>410</sup>

Ado-Kurawa took on the long-standing but wrong Muslim tradition of strong condemnation of the Crusades, while they insist on the legitimacy of *jihad*. He recognized the inconsistency. He quoted an anonymous European Muslim

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<sup>409</sup>M. Sa’id, 2004, 54-56.

<sup>410</sup>S. Sanusi, Sep/2005.

*who counseled that if Muslims are against the use of “crusade,” they must also consider the use of the word “jihad,” since it raises similar sentiments in the West. Why can’t Muslim preachers emphasize the greater jihad, which is against the selfish desires of the individual? They keep on emphasizing the lesser jihad to attract attention. If Muslims are seeking justice for oppressed Muslims, they must cooperate with other allies who are also interested in justice for all oppressed people.<sup>411</sup>*

Though, if given a choice, I would know which *jihad* version to prefer, I am not in a position to judge which is correct according to the Qur’an, the “hard” or “soft” version. Muslim apologists in Nigeria need to do more than write or proclaim. Christians need to see clear evidence of the “soft,” “liberal” and “generous” version of *jihad*, since they have already seen the other in operation far too long.

### **Women** xxxx

The place and role of women is a frequent subject in all these discussions, with opinions ranging all the way from the traditional to the liberal. The traditional is represented by Sheikh Aminuddin Abubakar, who favoured the model of women that brings such negative reactions from the West. He wanted to restrict women to the “*ofishin gidan mijinta*”—the “office of her husband’s home.” Here we run into a static and cultural interpretation of the ancient Islamic sources that many Muslims are beginning to reject. They are sharply divided at this crucial front.<sup>412</sup> The sheikh clearly chose the static version. That, according to him, was the direction a worthwhile revival should take. I used the word “traditional” to describe Abubakar’s perspective. It may have been traditional from a Northern Nigerian cultural perspective, but whether it represents traditional Islam is another and hotly debated issue.

There are calls for Muslim women to free themselves from Western ideals and return to the ideal Muslim woman. It is the subject of a poem by Jawayriyya Badamasuyi of Bayero University, Kano, entitled “Awake, Muslim Women!”<sup>413</sup> The poem speaks for itself. It is a radical call to Muslim women to be themselves and not mere copycats of Western fashions and ideals. It begins with these words:

*Oh, you Muslim women!*

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<sup>411</sup>I. Ado-Kurawa, July/2003. For a general global discussion re “hard” or “soft” *jihad*, see *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Jihad-War/ ..>, especially File <Secular vs Traditional>.

<sup>412</sup>*Alkalami*, 1 Dec/88, p. 16. See J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 255-260.

<sup>413</sup>J. Badamasuyi, 15 Feb/91. Vol. 2, Appendix 3.

*Arise from your deep slumber,  
Islam has come to liberate you and has prescribed your mode of life.*

*It is out to enhance your dignity*

*It has given you your priority.*

*Why do you need to Europeanise yourselves?*

I encourage you strongly to go back to Volume 2, Appendix 3, where you can savour this radical poem, radical in the sense that it addresses root problems. And think. Especially women, *all* women.

A good two years later, an article in *NN* echoed similar sentiments. Isa Gwantu and Fatima Usara wrote:

*Unfortunately, the anti-human and anti-divine Western culture has dominated the thoughts of people, even in the societies where their inhabitants were at one time ardent followers of the Holy Christ or Muhammed (PBUH) in the Muslim world. They think that everything should be evaluated on the basis of Western values and that materialistic concerns are of primary importance.*

*Today, when we talk about woman, concepts become deviated to those incorrect standards of the culture of the world's arrogant powers. We should attempt to acquaint the world with the true value of woman.*

Then follows a discussion of the various true values and positive functions of woman as advocated by Islam. The article is accompanied by two pictures. One shows a woman at a manual but complicated weaving machine portraying the high value Islam places on the economically productive woman. The other is a woman dressed in *hijab* with only her face showing. Though to the Western mind and some Muslim women—secularised? modernised? liberated?—the *hijab* stands for subjugation, the authors of this article evidently saw no contradiction between an elevated, liberated view of woman and the *hijab*.<sup>414</sup>

An unnamed international body of Muslim women that includes Nigerian women, critiqued the Zamfara treatment of women as seriously inconveniencing them and taking them backward. Instead of reducing the freedom of movement for women, the group said in a communique that the solution lies in the FG's immediately protecting "the rights of women in Zamfara and in

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<sup>414</sup>O/ Gwanti and F. Usara, 9 May/93.

every other state as guaranteed under the Constitution without delay and ensure the well being , security and full rights of all its citizens.”<sup>415</sup>

Saudatu S. Mahdi is “a leading women’s rights activist in Nigeria” and General Secretary of the Women Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative. At the 2004 sharia conference held at UJ, she advocated “the codification of Islamic personal law in order to enhance the level of enjoyment of the rights of women, which are most vulnerable in the area of domestic relations.” Her reason for this point was that current treatment of women in Northern Nigeria “breach both the letter and the spirit of sharia.” Codification would result in four important improvements: (1) Provide greater understanding of rights and responsibilities regarding marriage; (2) “Ensure that women enjoy the rights granted to them by Allah within the framework of sharia;” (3) “Ensure that implementation of the law that is truly Islamic and not an arbitrary hybrid of principles derived from non-authoritative interpretations, traditions and customs, and the whims of individuals;” (4) “Provide standards, consistency and enhance the administration of justice.” “In short, it will provide the opportunity for development of sharia personal law in a manner consistent with the Qur’an and the *hadith*.” She ended her lecture by referring to the current global struggle for the preservation of Muslim identity. Nigerian Muslims “must not lose sight of the need to focus on the entrenchment of the fundamental Islamic values of human dignity and justice for all.”<sup>416</sup>

A Muslim women’s conference in January, 2005, in Abuja, 14 years later, could be said to constitute the answer to the challenge of Badamasuiy’s poem. Funded by the US, it was concerned with improving the political advocacy skills of Muslim women. The conference drew up certain benchmarks by which participants could measure their advocacy success. One such benchmark was the effectiveness of sharia governments in sponsoring “enlightenment programmes that highlight the Qur’anic provisions, sayings and practices of the Holy Prophet and the pious caliphs that underscore the human dignity and worth of women, as well as allow them to be actively engaged in the development of their communities, and not limited to their traditional roles as wives and mothers.”

Another benchmark was for the FG “to initiate legislation, aimed at fulfilling its obligations in international statutes, through the enactment of enabling laws that define or award proportional representation for women. This would provide a framework for female participation in politics,

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<sup>415</sup>R. Oshoku and A. Bally, 5 Dec/99.

<sup>416</sup>S. Mahdi, 2005, pp. 4-5.

which would in turn boost the number of Muslim women as elected representatives in their communities.”<sup>417</sup> It is safe to say that not all conservative sharia advocates had this in mind!

Nafsat Musa, Vice-President of the Federation of Muslim Women in Nigeria (FOMWAN) and Deputy Director, Legal Drafting Committee of Plateau State Government, said that Nigeria is in need of peace, and that, according to Islam, starts at home. “If there is peace in the home,” it is generally felt, “it will transcend to the community, town, region and the country.” It cannot be over emphasized that a woman’s role at home is important precisely for “her role in peace-building.” This function is to be the dominant role among the various modes of a woman’s life—as a wife, a mother, a partner. In relation to the public peace, women, “because of their creation as peace makers,” can influence men and youth to cease their violent behaviour. Elsewhere she said that “women are created ‘for love and peace’ and are therefore a source of tranquility, adding that Allah has endowed women with patience.” It has been argued that there is no peace in Nigeria precisely “because women were not carried along in the peace initiatives.” Having explained all that, Nafsat Musa called on her “sisters to start their homework by mending the broken relationships with our Christian community. They need to teach their children respect for other faiths and cultures. They have to plead with their husbands and sons to solve differences through dialogue, an avenue much easier and cheaper than conflict!”<sup>418</sup> The actors come in all shapes: this one in the shape of a highly placed public servant and leader of women pleading for a woman’s domestic role in nation building! Western traditional thought categories about Muslim women just don’t cut it among Muslims. Delightful, confusing or just plain contradictory? All of these adjectives are part of the mix.

Inter-Gender organized seminars and workshops for various social groupings—women, youths, stakeholders. At a multi-religious Inter-Gender women seminar in Kaduna, participants formed Peace Monitoring Committees for their various local areas. They all signed a communique “on the need for a sustainable peace process in Kaduna.”<sup>419</sup> This was a parallel action to that taken at a youth multi-religious seminar we will read about in the section on youth.

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<sup>417</sup>A. Haruna and A. Umar, 4 Feb/2005. In view of American funding of the conference, some will likely have considered this as American interference in their domestic affairs! In view of a similar reaction to the 2004 sharia conference at Unijos, they *should* have. That this did not become a big issue was probably due to the fact that participants were mostly non-academic women instead of aggressive academic men jealous for being excluded.

<sup>418</sup>N. L. Musa, pp. 35-38. *IGPB*, Nov/2004, pp. 1-2.

<sup>419</sup>M. Lawal, Nov/2004, p. 9.

Though women were said to occupy a strategic place in society, that place, it was commonly felt, was not acknowledged in the sharia judiciary. There had long been the need of “ensuring that women gain better access to justice under the sharia system.” A women’s conference decided that the issues “included the improvement of women education and enlightenment about their rights as enshrined in sharia.” Also needed were the “establishment of institutions that will enable women to have access to justice, such as legal aid services and access to counsel without distinction.” Thirdly, “effective mechanisms for communicating women’s interests and concerns” needed to be put in place. These issues needed work, since the “conference observed that the sharia [actually] recognises and safeguards women’s right and access to justice and has a very early history of women activism.”<sup>420</sup>

In 2007, Sultan Muhammadu Abubakar addressed Muslim leaders on women issues. I quote here the introductory paragraph of Sonnie Ekwowusi’s report:

*At the meeting of Northern Emirs, Imams, members of the JNI and prominent Northern Islamic scholars, Mohammadu Sa’ad Abubakar III, the Sultan of Sokoto, raised an alarm over certain International Conventions and foreign lifestyles, which if adopted in Nigeria, would destroy our cherished values and beliefs. **He urged the Northern lawmakers at the National Assembly not to accede to the domestication of any treaty or convention without first ascertaining their implication to the cherished values of the people.** Specifically the Sultan made reference to the on-going conspiracy to get the National Assembly to domesticate the controversial Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). His words: “In passing the bills and making laws, including the CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) currently before the National Assembly, the sensibility of our religion and culture must be respected at all times”*

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<sup>420</sup>G. Oji, 3 Mar/2003.

Now we could dismiss the above as the typical Muslim cry about anti-Muslim conspiracies and keeping women in their place. Please note the highlighted sentence in the above quote. Here is one place where Christians and even non-religionists concur with Muslims. And here is one time even Wole Soyinka, that thorn in the Nigerian Muslim flesh,<sup>421</sup> concurred with Muslim opinion in no uncertain way. It seems like a typical case of a common enemy uniting opponents.<sup>422</sup>

The Sultan delivered his speech in 2007, seven years after Zamfara's sharia declaration. The sharia hype was over; the word "sharia" was no longer on everyone's lips, but the issue was the same. In effect, the Sultan warned against repugnant Western values that would undermine the sharia and destroy the Muslim culture of Nigeria. Rejecting them was among the keys to Nigerian survival and even revival. Here we have a cultural front where all major communities in Nigeria could and, in fact, do meet, the instinctive tendency of enemies uniting against their common enemy.

As I stated earlier, this book is a sampler, not a complete well-rounded meal. The subject of women deserves a full chapter. They have, of course, been given extensive coverage in earlier volumes. Search for them with the help of the entry "Women" in their indices. Sorry, sisters, we need to move on.<sup>423</sup>

## **Youth   xxxx**

Youth is another category of people that deserves special attention. They are often the victims of manipulation by politicians and other leaders. They are accused of actually carrying out much of the violence, but under the control of their remote manipulators. Reports in previous volumes about riots invariably refer to the prominent roles played by youth. Back in June, 2001, Governor Makarfi of Kaduna instructed his Permanent Secretaries in charge of Religious Affairs in the state "to embark on sensitisation of youth on religious matters to curb religious violence." This was to help "ensure sustainable, peaceful and harmonious co-existence." This was to be accomplished by workshops and seminars. Another part of the programme was to "review the religious curricula in post-primary schools and set up religious clubs to promote harmony in all

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<sup>421</sup>J. Boer, vol. 4, 2005, p. 234; vol. 6, 2007, pp. 321-322.

<sup>422</sup>S. Ekwowusi, 17 July/2007. Appendix 15 xxxx. Ekwowusi's further comments fit more appropriately in ch. 4. See p. xxxx

<sup>423</sup>For your interest, I have attached an article by the Canadian Muslim activist Mohamed Elmasry that provides some historical insights and a more modern perspective on women. See *CCD* <Misc Arts/Women/2007-05-25...>.

secondary schools.” The programme was to cover both Islamic and Christian courses with the involvement of both JN1 and CAN. This approach was selected because religious crises are due to ignorance. So, education would be the natural medicine. It was expected that “at the end of their assignment, the society would be sanitised to ensure religious harmony and peace in the state.”<sup>424</sup>

The very day of my editing this section, former military President Ibrahim Babangida was reported to have implored youth in the Delta area to cease their violence, though theirs is due to indignation about the behaviour of oil corporations in their area, not due to sharia or religion. He followed up his urgings to youth by advising the authorities “to pay more attention to issues of food security, security of life and property, good and affordable housing projects, sound and affordable health care facilities, as well as improved infrastructures and facilities in educational institutions. He decried the high level of unemployment among the youths and frowned at the number of the destitute in the country, saying that the development was not healthy for the nation’s body polity.”<sup>425</sup> These general proposals represent the opinions of a wide range of people who indeed recognize that that is the direction in which the solution for youthful violence must be sought, whether it be inspired by sharia, politics or oil.

The Bauchi State Government also thought to have found a solution. Sani Abdu, Chairman of the state’s Youth and Women Rehabilitation Committee, disclosed that the majority of jobless youths had dropped out of school due to parental poverty. Of that group, “more than 60 percent” is on hard drugs. Politicians recognized an opportunity and started using them as thugs, a scene with which readers of earlier volumes are all too familiar. The Governor had already approved the opening of three centres to rehabilitate such youths. It was serious: The Government “had shown a lot of commitment to ensure the complete rehabilitation of youths on drugs within three months”! One of my emphases in this series is the need to be *realistic*. This one with its unrealistic time frame definitely does not meet that criterion,<sup>426</sup> though it is the direction to

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<sup>424</sup>S. Obassa, 25 June/2001.

<sup>425</sup>*Leadership*, 27 Mar/2007.

<sup>426</sup>*DT*, 18 June/2007. “Complete rehabilitation” ensured within three months?! I invite Dr. Abdu to my city of residence, Vancouver, and review both his time limit and his optimistic expectation! *Bari Allah Madaukaki ya ba da nasara!* [May God Almighty give success—a typical Hausa Muslim prayer.] A typical Nigerian method would be to bully the drugs out of the addicts by isolation and force. Since the soft liberal approach of Vancouver does not show many signs of efficiency, let alone success, it would be interesting to see whether an “enlightened bullying programme” would yield any better results. Dr. Abdu, a report, please, in three months.

pursue: Drug-free youths should not be as amenable to recruitment for violence, religious or any other kind.

Religiously, 2007 was a very restless year in Kano, not only between Muslims and Christians, but especially among Muslims themselves. Kabiru Tsakuwa described the situation in a Gamji article in familiar terms: “The system had failed to shoulder the responsibility of providing for the basic needs of all citizens due to the absence of responsible leadership; prompting many of our vulnerable and unstable youths into drug addictions, thereby becoming a ready tools and cannon fodders in the hands of unscrupulous politicians to manipulate and engaged into battle of attritions.” He then put it squarely before the authorities: “It is now crystal clear that, if our spiritual and temporal leaders fail to device a means to engage the large army of our restive youths, who are lurking in different corners for an opportunity of this nature to wreck havoc and partake in self destructions, honestly our sense of collective security and well beings are definitely in danger! Our frustrated youths are now, akin to human time-bomb, waiting for an auspicious opportunity to detonate with devastating consequences.” With obvious disappointment, Tsakuwa commented, “That common sense and reason was relegated to the back-bench leaving behind death, destructions and unwarranted commotions and sufferings among the warring factions and innocent victims was the most obvious fact.” And that was Kano, the proud Muslim and strong sharia centre of the North. Exactly a year later, Tsakuwa made the same complaints and comments about the Jos riots of December, 2008.<sup>427</sup>

Youth also caught the attention of Inter-Gender, which organized an interfaith youth seminar in Kaduna on which Moshood Lawal published a brief report. It was attended by 220 youths. Obviously it was of great interest to them, probably sweetened by a free meal or two. A brainstorming session uncovered a number of familiar causes of violence. Participating youths “all agreed to become vanguards of peace in their respective communities.” As in the case of Inter-Gender’s Women’s Seminar, so here Peace Monitoring Committees were formed. They “agreed to peaceful co-existence and respect for one another’s religious beliefs.” They claimed “they have been transformed and now believe in peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding.” They advised that Inter-Gender organize a seminar for religious leaders as well.<sup>428</sup> While clergy often accuse youths of violence, youths are not blind to clerical causation either!

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<sup>427</sup>K. Tsakuwa, Dec/2007; Dec/2008.

<sup>428</sup>M. Lawal, Nov/2004, p. 9.

**Inset --Ibrahim Sulaiman    xxxx**

Ibrahim Sulaiman had much to say about the measures to be taken to achieve victory and peace in the sharia struggle—and victory is what he was after, nothing short of it. It is victory that will bring the peace, Muslim victory, Muslim social order. He affirmed the truism that all human organisation, including nations, have a limited shelf life, after which they disintegrate and vanish. Nothing is permanent, as Nigeria’s lorries love to proclaim. Nothing in the current situation is set in stone. The future is therefore open and thus hopeful. Sulaiman approached it with gusto. He had solutions for the Muslim community, for the nation as a whole and for relations with Christians. His vision is indeed one of wholistic *da’wah*, though not altogether without ambiguity.<sup>429</sup>

Of course, the first enemy to overcome is that of secularism. He insisted that Muslims reject the limitations secularism imposes on them.<sup>430</sup> He was hopeful: It may well be that “the ongoing encounter between Islam and secular forces is an indication that history, like the mighty ocean, is preparing once more to shed off its scums.” Those “scums” were, of course, to be replaced by the classic formula for wholism.<sup>431</sup>

*We need to create appropriate platforms and mechanisms for a sustained mobilisation of the Islamic social forces. Islam has to be disseminated, not as a faith of scattered and disorganised individuals, but as an organised and solid movement which is concerned with fundamental human problems, current on pressing social issues and alive to its political and moral responsibilities to the people. Islam must therefore be made to permeate every facet of life, every sector of society and every institution in the country. Thus the intellectual community, students organisations, the labour movement and similar organs should be organised on Islamic lines. Women have to be mobilised for the Islamic cause. Above all, the ordinary people should be mobilised in the name of Allah and for His cause.”<sup>432</sup>*

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<sup>429</sup>For some of Sulaiman’s own writings, see J. Boer, 2005, vol. 4, Appendix 5 and 6. See also indices in vols 2, 4 and 6 for more discussions about him.

<sup>430</sup>J. Boer, vol. 4, 2005, pp. 36-37.

<sup>431</sup>For a more detailed idea of Muslim wholism, see J. Boer, vol. 4, 2005, ch. 3.

<sup>432</sup>I Sulaiman, Mar/86, p. 16. J. Boer, vol. 2, 2004, pp. 37-40; vol. 4, 2005, pp. 92-94, Appendix 5 and 6.

And again,

*The fundamental task before all Muslims today is to strive their utmost to consolidate Islam. The whole world is our constituency. We are free to traverse its regions to disseminate the message of Islam. National boundaries, racial or political barriers should be of little significance to us as our enterprise is essentially global—the dissemination of truth, the support of all just causes, the pursuit of moral excellence, the defence of human dignity. Hence, it is absolutely imperative for us to cooperate with Muslims the world over.*

Sulaiman emphasized several times that we must overcome negative thoughts that demobilise the community.

*One important step in this positive and far-reaching direction must be the elimination of the sense of desolation, despair and inadequacy that has pervaded the people of this country. There seems to be a widespread belief that we should remain within the bounds set for us by Britain, that we should retain all the institutions and legacies of the Empire, and that our nation should remain as defined and fashioned by the British genius. This is the belief that has created the logic under which the chorus of secularism is being chanted so vociferously.*

At another time, “We must make no concession to the secular state, nor compromise our fundamental obligations to banish neo-colonialism from our soil, and put the sharia once again on full course. We view as falacious the prevailing assumption that it is only the Europeans who have the inherent right to impose their language, law, political and economic institutions on others and that the only option left to the rest of mankind is to obey.”<sup>433</sup>

More positively, Muslims “should be thinking of a process involving the creation of a new nation for ourselves, a nation which, because it is founded on sound principles and directed towards noble objectives, will not only be an infinitely greater Nigeria, but will serve as a platform for the development of a full-fledged civilisation, a nation which will emerge from our [own] sweat and genius, the fruit of our [own] labour.”<sup>434</sup> Impatient with the pseudo limitations secular colonialism imposed on Muslims, he advised,

*Let us remember that as Muslims we have no limitations at all as to where to carry the message of Islam, and to whom. As Muhammad Iqbal has put it:*

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<sup>433</sup>I. Sulaiman, Mar/86, pp. 4-6, 14.

<sup>434</sup>I. Sulaiman, Mar/86, pp. 4-11. J. Boer, vol. 4, 2005, pp. 92-94.

*“Our range is from the ceiling of the skies  
To the sea’s floor, and Time and Space are both  
Dusts lying on our path.”<sup>435</sup>*

*The days of the conqueror are over. We now have, as a free people, to chart a credible course for ourselves without any hindrance or inhibitions. All conditions, institutions and values which have been imposed on us should all now be regarded as null and void; they must give way to a relevant dispensation based on fairness and equity and on a clear recognition that Islam, being a total way of life, is indivisible.*

Hence,

*Islam must be allowed to involve itself with all issues upon which the survival and progress of this nation depends. These include:*

- 1. A political framework which is acceptable to the broad spectrum of our society and which, at the same time, is viable;*
- 2. A legal system which is a complete alternative to the colonial legal regime, irrelevant to our needs, yearnings and aspirations and is capable of tackling effectively the menace of crime in our society. In short, such a legal order should be one which is just and one which gives all the various communities of this country no more and no less than their due and provides a means to the attainment of social justice in our society.*

*The object for which Islam exists is to make possible the emergence of a truly Muslim personality, who alone could shoulder the momentous responsibilities of life. In pursuit of this, Islam relies on the home, the school and social environment: these three must necessarily be islamised.*

*There are at least four issues that are of common concern to Muslims in Nigeria and need to be pursued in a spirit of solidarity. These are:*

- 1. The campaign for a viable political dispensation*
- 2. The struggle against neo-colonialism*
- 3. The fight against corruption and moral decadence*
- 4. The demand for a full-fledged sharia.*

There are various groupings and structures in society that have caused serious problems to Muslims and thus need to be identified and reformed. They “have pitched their camp on the

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<sup>435</sup>I Sulaiman, Mar/86, p. 16.

wrong side of history. This refers specifically to those who, as pampered and privileged groups, have acquired significant stakes in the dominant system.” The first among these groups is the Army,<sup>436</sup> an institution thoroughly pampered, totally lacking in discipline, rife with corruption and weakened by excessive and ill-gotten wealth. Then there are the emirs, who “urgently need to re-examine their role in society before history takes its course.” A major task of theirs is “to uphold the sharia in all its ramifications.” Alas, “it is not being upheld.” Instead, they have sold themselves to “the government of the day without any consideration of morality or honour.” The Ulama constitute another Muslim social pillar. Together with the Emirs, they have stood by silently as Islam was reduced in its scope of operation according to the dictates of secular forces. “They are fully aware that the fundamental laws of this country are not Islamic and that the sharia is being applied only in accordance with secular dictates.” They have done nothing to stop “the ousting of Islam from the political and social arena.” The Muslim business community has a high calling to use its wealth for the propagation of Islam and the protection the poor and weak. Instead, they have closed their eyes to the suffering all around them. But whoever we are or whatever our status, as Muslims “we have no cause higher than or apart from Islam. The essence of our existence is to safeguard the integrity of Islam, obey the dictates of Islam in all aspects of life and strive to make Islam supreme on earth.”<sup>437</sup> In fact, Sulaiman denounced all current structures and going plans or visions for social organization. The Sokoto Caliphate was doomed. Aminu Kano’s Islamic socialism was already dead.<sup>438</sup> “Democracy, so long as it justifies neo-colonialism, is a façade, which is now busy preparing its own death. Muslims must look to Islam for an alternative approach. We should no longer look forward to a relic that is already exhausted and dying. The challenge for Muslims now is how to launch Islam once again into the mainstream of the life of this nation.”<sup>439</sup>

Sulaiman loved to discuss structural change in various cultural sectors. He frequently wrote about required changes in law—and here, of course, pro-sharia arguments are offered—, in the economy, education and social morality. However, these have been treated in earlier volumes and do not need lengthy repetition here.

Legal concerns were among his most ardent interest. He suggested a programme of “overhauling the legal system” that was to feature the following:

<sup>436</sup>It almost seems as if Sulaiman regarded the Army as a Muslim institution! A slip of the pen?

<sup>437</sup>I. Sulaiman, Mar/86, pp. 4-11. J. Boer, 2005, vol. 4, p. 98.

<sup>438</sup>J. Boer, 2005, vol. 4, pp. 140-141.

<sup>439</sup>I. Sulaiman, 1983, p. 24.

1. Stop “the undue and exaggerated importance given to the English law in the Nigerian legal system.”
2. The complete sharia should be allowed to function in the Nigerian legal system.
3. The sharia must be taught in all universities “in its pure form,” that is, in the spirit of Islam itself, not in that of the secular “Orientalists.”
4. The judiciary must be reformed. One of the steps towards this is the revival of “Islamic criteria” for appointees to the bench.<sup>440</sup>

*Equally significant, there must be a definite commitment by Nigeria to abolish all aspects of imposed laws that are inconsistent with our fundamental values, norms and the demands of our faith. In fact, the entire colonial legal enterprise must be abolished and be replaced with our authentic and legitimate laws. This indeed is the irreducible minimum in our quest for genuine self-determination and sovereignty.*<sup>441</sup>

Towards the end of 1999, Sulaiman signed a conference communique that addressed the same issue. Gamtu, the reporter, referred to the event as “the First Judges Forum Conference.” The document “called for intensive training of legal practitioners on the principle of Islamic Law and urged the authorities of ABU to re-introduce a Diploma Programme in Sharia and Civil Law as well as to introduce continuing education in sharia for judges.”<sup>442</sup>

Government must accord Islam its rightful due and others, theirs. This is especially urgent with regard to law [sharia], social morality, economic setup and education. It needs also to acknowledge the fact that Islam, unlike the others, is a complete way of life. Nigeria, therefore, requires a fundamental adjustment in virtually every major aspect of life to reflect her multi-religious nature and in particular to accord Islam its rightful place in the scheme of things.<sup>443</sup>

Sulaiman demanded a total dismantling of Nigeria’s educational system. Once again, I urge you to read his comments about education in previous volumes.<sup>444</sup> He stated, “Our universities must see us as a people who have a right to be different from the Europeans. They must serve as ‘the spirit of our society’ and must endeavour to give us hope and confidence in

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<sup>440</sup>I. Sulaiman, 1986, pp. 71-73.

<sup>441</sup>I. Sulaiman, May/86. Appendix 6, vol. 4. See also his paper of Mar/86, p. 13.

<sup>442</sup>W. Gamtu, 30 Nov/99.

<sup>443</sup>I. Sulaiman, May/86, pp. 6-7.

<sup>444</sup>J. Boer, vol. 2, 2004, pp. 37-41.

ourselves, and save us from despair and feeling of inadequacy in the face of the West.”<sup>445</sup> “The colonial system of education must go. It is, on the whole, unsatisfactory; it is too alien; moreover it is perpetuating the conditions which make us incapable of resolving our moral, social and ideological crises. It runs counter to the ideals of Islam.” “As language is vital to any system of education, there must be an insistence that education for Muslim children should make Arabic compulsory. The present arrangement, which gives English pre-eminence over Arabic, must be challenged vehemently. Arabic, as the language of all Muslims, is a national language in a more profound sense than English.”<sup>446</sup>

In 1978, Sulaiman gave a lecture entitled “Education and Nation-Building.” It was during a time the concept of dialogue was not a pressing issue and so it was not mentioned. However, the ideas he expressed were those that later cropped up constantly in Muslim-Christian relations and were an early expression of his demand for the total revamping of education for the sake of the well-being of the nation. Proper education seeks “to establish a relationship of brotherliness, sympathy and mutual respect between human beings.”

*If men behave as if they are enemies or if each member sees himself as entitled to eat his own selfish dish of happiness and satisfaction exclusively and individually, you cannot get a society that succeeds in establishing social peace or that can promote the wellbeing of its members. You will have a society in which each and every person pursues his personal interest and feels satisfied to disregard whatever might be in the interest of others. Thus you will have a society which is established on greed and selfishness. In other words, an unjust society which rationalises its injustice by such concepts or slogans as “freedom,” “individualism” and so on.*

Sulaiman was not describing some imaginary society; he was talking Nigeria, disrupted as it was already then with corruption and religious animosity. “Other systems of education tend to neglect to establish a good relationship between people. To the extent that the more ‘educated’ their products are, the more arrogant, greedy, shameless and, indeed, destructive they are. The most educated among us are the thieves and plunderers of our national wealth.” “Other systems”-- that is the system in place in Nigeria that, in Sulaiman’s mind at least, was designed and operated by Christo-secularists.

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<sup>445</sup>I. Sulaiman, 1986, pp. 71-73.

<sup>446</sup>I. Sulaiman, “A Fresh Constitution...,” 1988, pp. 13, 14.

An Islamic system of education would encourage the development of “brotherliness, respect and sympathy” and create a society that would “promote both the individual and collective welfare” and see to it that “the problem of one member is the problem of the other members. That is, a society in which the individual problem is seen and solved as a collective problem” and vice versa. Individuals would see themselves as “duty-bound to promote those things that are of benefit to the whole society and to discourage all the things that undermine the happiness and peace of the society.”<sup>447</sup>

Indeed, the education Sulaiman favoured was radically different from what obtained in the country. His would radically restore relationships between Muslims and Christians. Foreigners sensitive to issues of Christian education but not familiar with the Nigerian situation must wonder how things Christian could have become so warped as to be identified with such a secular individualistic approach to education and to life itself. *This* foreigner—me, the writer--, being acquainted with both, can only agree with Sulaiman when it comes to his views on education and its endproducts. Things *did* become that warped.

There are certain issues of great importance to Islam that are for the Government to protect and promote.

*The first of these matters relates to values: The State must give full recognition to the Islamic value system. All things Islam declares to be morally good, such as worship in its widest sense, public decency and others, must be regarded as such by the state. Likewise, all things Islam declares to be morally reprehensible, like alcoholism and human exploitation, the state shall not protect them, let alone attempt to make profit through them. Prominence should be given to the enforcement of the sharia provisions relating to the maintenance of social justice.*

Then follows a long comprehensive list that are the Government’s responsibility from the Muslim point of view.

Sulaiman not infrequently addresses economic concerns. I again refer you to earlier volumes for details beyond what I provide here.<sup>448</sup> “Sharia should concern itself with the regulation of business and all economic activities in society. All such activities must be oriented towards human welfare and the fulfillment of the basic needs of the people.” He pointed to the *hisbah* as the institution that was to ensure sharia compliance in the economy: “Eliminate fraud,

<sup>447</sup>I. Sulaiman, 1978, pp. 14-16.

<sup>448</sup>J. Boer, 2005, vol. 4, p. 94

ensure the free flow of goods, break the backbone of all saboteurs.” “The Muslims should insist on the total disengagement of the nation’s economy from the clutches of Western imperialism,” he wrote. “Those who collaborate with neo-colonial powers to exploit this nation should be regarded as enemies of Islam.” Muslims should work towards “the dismantling of all Western influences as they affect us.”<sup>449</sup>

He offered a spiritual formula for healthy economic growth:

*In the course of our revolution, Shehu Usman Dan Fodio did not promise the people heaven and earth. Never did he do as your politicians do today, promising people food, water, prosperity and even those things that Allah alone can bestow, simply to win support. It was not in his character to deceive or cheat. The Sharia doesn’t permit it. He merely asked them to be true Muslims, confident that Allah would give them what He normally confers on those who live according to His Religion and His Law as well as every other people who abide by the “natural Law” He has established for the regulation of life in general.*<sup>450</sup>

Sulaiman was among the more wholistic spokesmen for socio-economic reforms prior to establishing a fuller sharia regime. He, Ibrahim Umar, Ibrahim El-Zakzaki and others seemed to demand a kind of utopia as a necessary pre-condition for true sharia to become effective. In an article in which he discussed Sulaiman’s views, to his question “What does it take to make sharia work?” Ibrahim Umar answered, “We need to create a socio-economic atmosphere that will guarantee everybody a chance to live within the law.” Of course, another condition was the generally accepted one of capable and incorruptible judges.<sup>451</sup>

Sulaiman wanted to bring women along in the march towards a Muslim society. He defended Islam against Western disdain for the Muslim treatment of women and insisted that Muslim men think of themselves as honouring women very much in their own way and see them playing a very special role in society. But he also criticised the popular notions held by many Muslims about women as a “pre-Islamic attitude” that is “vehemently condemned by the Qur’an.” “Such is the complete confidence reposed in women by God that He places in their trust His most precious creature: man.”! “God has charged men to live with women ‘on a footing of kindness and equity’ (Qur’an 4:19), and treat them with nothing less than absolute reverence.

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<sup>449</sup>I. Sulaiman, “A Fresh Constitution...,” 1988, pp. 15-17.

<sup>450</sup>I. Sulaiman, 20 Aug/2005.

<sup>451</sup>I. Umar, 2 Nov/99. J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, p. 44.

The sharia has categorically affirmed that a woman is a person in her own right and has invested her with full powers to acquire and own property and dispose of it to her benefit. It has given her the right to self-fulfillment, to education, social justice and full involvement in the upliftment of the society.”<sup>452</sup>

Sulaiman has his ideas about relations with Christians and others. He is always deeply aware of an antithesis between Islam and Christianity.<sup>453</sup> Apart from theological issues, Christians, according to him, “see their role as that of absolute and violent opposition to all that is Islamic. Their vehement opposition to the sharia is a glaring example. It is clear that Islam pursues goals and objectives that are diametrically at variance to those of Christianity: Islam wants, among other things, to abolish colonialism; Christianity clings to it for survival.”<sup>454</sup>

However, this antithesis should not prevent co-existence, he argued, and does not mean that there is no basis at all for peaceful or tolerable co-existence between the religions.<sup>455</sup> He wanted to start from scratch and do away with superficial tinkering. The most sensible solution is to work out a fresh agreement between Muslims and Christians “based on equity and fairness” that includes “mutual respect and reciprocal obligation” and will produce “sustainable and peaceful co-existence.” Islam, Sulaiman promised, “offers justice to all.” Sharia “grants automatic legitimacy to Christian laws and enjoins the Islamic government to facilitate their application. It grants others a high degree of social and juridical autonomy.” Sulaiman continued:

*This, then, is the Islamic recipe for human society, as far as the legal system is concerned. Social tensions and upheavals come only when the Islamic injunctions, recognising the rights of religious communities to maintain their laws, and enjoining upon the state to ensure that those rights are strictly observed, are ignored. In the context of Nigeria, these injunctions imply, (i) that the sharia shall enjoy full application in all areas where Muslims predominate, and that it takes precedence over all other legal systems in Nigeria, as the law that governs the majority of her people; (ii) that such other legal systems are accorded recognition in accordance with the extent of the following they command.*<sup>456</sup>

<sup>452</sup>I. Sulaiman, “A Fresh Constitution...,” p. 16.

<sup>453</sup>J. Boer, 2005, vol. 4, pp. 36-37, 40-41, 64-65.

<sup>454</sup>I. Sulaiman, Mar/86, p. 16.

<sup>455</sup>I. Sulaiman, May/86, pp. 6-7.

<sup>456</sup>I. Sulaiman, May/86. Appendix 6, vol. 4. See also his paper of Mar/86, p. 13.

Only a few months later, Sulaiman spoke similarly at the 1986 seminar at ABU, under the clear and simple title, “A Fresh Constitution Required.” He wanted to see the principles of the “Sacred Covenant devised by Prophet Muhammad embodied in Nigeria. In his own words:

*Muslims should co-exist with other communities within one nation only under a firm, secure and written agreement in which the terms are clearly set out. The rights and obligations of Muslims must be spelt out precisely and unequivocally. Likewise the right and obligations of non-Muslims. Another principle is that such a constitutional agreement must contain terms which are fair to the Muslims as well as to non-Muslims in addition to an irrevocable acknowledgement that the law of God shall remain supreme and the free expression of Islam shall in no way be hindered.*

*The most sensible option for Nigeria now is to work out an altogether fresh agreement between Muslims and non-Muslims based on equity and fairness. In order for the fresh covenant to command the respect of all, it must be based upon mutual respect and reciprocal obligation. It must be an agreement that genuinely aims to achieve a concordance which is in favour of a sustainable and peaceful co-existence.<sup>457</sup>*

But it appeared too difficult for Sulaiman to retain this spirit of generosity and fairness for long. His spirit just could not stretch itself that far indefinitely. So he warned,

*The unbelievers are allies of one another, in a common cause to spread their faith, maintain their supremacy over the world, and give succour and comfort to corruption. Unless Muslims unite and solidify their ranks and make all necessary efforts to gain control of affairs. **Allegiance to God is expressed by doing one’s best to make Islam prevail over all other systems, and not to relent in the endeavour.***

*An important aspect of this loyalty to God for the Muslims is to make their environment Islamic, and ensure that whatever endeavour they pursue conforms strictly with the sharia. **But even so, this involvement is essentially tentative in the sense that as long as Islam is yet to attain a clear-cut supremacy over every other way of life, no process of any kind can assume the stamp of finality.***

And another warning:

*The sharia will not be mutilated in order to placate a group of people who happen to have the backing of neo-colonial powers. The sharia will apply only on its own terms, not*

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<sup>457</sup>I. Sulaiman, “A Fresh Constitution...,” pp. 9-10.

*on terms dictated by others. Non-Muslims will enjoy the justice and fairness of Islam on an equal footing with Muslims. But where they flout God's law or offend against the integrity and sanctity of the Muslim society, they shall of necessity be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the sharia. No human being can expect to be exempted from the due process of law in a civilised society.*<sup>458</sup>

### **Final Goal—National Islamisation xxxx**

Islam, wrote Hamzah Dawood, is a “goal-oriented system.” “All aspects of life are interdependent.” “Its goals and values in one field determine the goals and values in other fields as well.”<sup>459</sup> That being the case, the end of this chapter demands a statement as to what is the goal of all this. Nigerian Muslims tend to be absorbed by this one notion: They must be victorious over the enemy that surrounds them everywhere. Bashir Sambo proclaimed Islam as a formidable tool to be used by Muslims “*don samun nasara a bisa abokan gaba.*”<sup>460</sup> As the Indian scholar Ashgar Engineer put it, “Islam’s basic objective was to produce a new human being, fashioned by higher values stressed by the Qur’an. The Prophet’s main objective was to transform this world entirely.”<sup>461</sup>

Nigerian Muslims can be disarmingly honest at times in their admission that the final and real solution to all the religious tensions and violence in Nigeria is for them to achieve control over the country. This came out especially during the BZ era, when people were perhaps more relaxed and not always on their guard. In earlier volumes you may have read of Christian allegations of Muslim plans to take over the country. Though some Muslims deny such a plan and may even dislike the very idea, there can hardly be any doubt about its reality. Not only have I brought out sufficient evidence for such plans, it seems that the very dynamic of Nigerian Islam naturally drives them in this direction, except where it has been derailed by secularism. In previous volumes I have quoted Muslim expressions of this dynamic. For example, apart from the bold sections towards the end of the previous section above, I quoted Ibrahim Sulaiman in Volume 6 as follows: “Islam is an unconquerable force which... must express its domineering will and

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<sup>458</sup>I. Sulaiman, “A Fresh Constitution...,” pp. 9-12, 15. Bold is by Boer. To fully appreciate Sulaiman’s discussion here, I encourage you to read further about him in vols. 2, 4 and 6.

<sup>459</sup>H. Dawood, 2 Nov/90.

<sup>460</sup>M. Sirajo, 14 Apr/89, p. 1. English translation: “for gaining victory over our enemies.” M. Zubairu, 7 Apr/89, p. 1.

<sup>461</sup>A. Engineer, 5 Dec/2002.

assert its authority over all other systems. Islam is too powerful to submit, forever, to earthly forces.”<sup>462</sup> And then there is our congenial Abubakre again, who asserted that every Muslim “should be convinced that the people of God should control the helm of secular affairs.”<sup>463</sup>

Bashir Tofa, the founder of the BIP, explained that the reason for his Bureau is “establishing the supremacy of Islam.”<sup>464</sup> More recently, Ali Ahmad declared at the 2004 UJ sharia conference:

***Muslims’ commitment to sharia is often tempered, but not completely eliminated, by the situational reality either of being a minority group or by normative constraints such as a constitution.***<sup>465</sup>

Sometimes Muslims seem almost naïve in their assertions. They strongly deny their own imperialistic impulse and are deeply offended when they perceive themselves the target of someone else’s imperialism. Nevertheless in the above paragraphs of this section and in earlier volumes they plainly and without embarrassment stated their imperialist ambitions. They *must* rule! Remember Ibrahim Sulaiman’s earlier statement about Muslim minority status: “**This involvement is essentially tentative in the sense that as long as Islam is yet to attain a clear-cut supremacy over every other way of life, no process of any kind can assume the stamp of finality.**”

Ibrahim Bello wrote a report on the launching of a book on Shehu Danfodio, the great jihadist of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the report you read about “the works of the 18<sup>th</sup> century jihadists whose path must be followed by contemporary Muslims for the restoration of Islam and Muslims’ glorious days.”<sup>466</sup> Those, as mentioned earlier, were the days of Muslim hegemony over the North and the days of horror for the Middle Belt as target of Muslim slavery.

Not all Muslims agree. Some reject the notion of Muslim domination in the complicated multi-cultural setting of Nigeria. Akanbi wrote, “Ours is a complicated society and no one group ought to be allowed to lord it over the other. Our clear duty is to encourage healthy rivalry, the sort of rivalry that assures our right to live as Muslims.”<sup>467</sup> At its meeting of November, 1999, the NCSCP “advised Muslims not to dominate or allow others to dominate them in the realisation of sharia.”<sup>468</sup>

<sup>462</sup>I. Sulaiman, 2007, vol. 6, p. 6. Original found in S. Rashid, 1986, pp. 53-54.

<sup>463</sup>R. D. Abubakre, n.d., p. 56.

<sup>464</sup>B. Tofa, 27 Jan/89, p. 11.

<sup>465</sup>A. Ahmad, 2005, p. 359.

<sup>466</sup>I. I. Bello, 27 Oct/89, p. 16.

<sup>467</sup>M. Akanbi, 15 July/88, p. 11.

<sup>468</sup>I. Adamu, 22 Nov/99.

Muslims, you've bared your mind, heart and soul in hundreds of pages in this series. I have heard you and have appreciated much of what you contribute to the table, though not without criticism. Thank you from the bottom of my soul. I trust that my co-religionists have heard you as well. Now relax, sit back and listen to your Christian neighbours. And after that, to the bargaining table, which I will chair. After all, I *did* organize this entire meeting. *Bari Ubangiji Madaukaki ya kwantar da hankalinmu da kuma rufe mu da salamarsa wadda ta fi gaban fahimtarmu. Amin.*<sup>469</sup>

### **Postscript: A Decadal Review—2009**

After closing this chapter a meeting was held in Kano to review the progress the expanded sharia had made in its first decade. So, without any lengthy comments from yours truly, I attach this short postscript along with two appendices to give you a sense of where things are at this point. These appendices not only provide a general feeling of the present state of sharia, but also give some additional snapshots of wrangling that had taken place between President Obasanjo and Governor Ahmad Sani. Isa Sa'idu began his report, "Disturbed by the impediments to the smooth implementation of Shari'ah in Nigeria, the Centre for Promotion of Shari'ah (CPS) organised a three-day workshop in Kano recently for experts to brainstorm on the way forward which, they believe, prominently comprises reconsideration of the legal system in the proposed constitutional review."<sup>470</sup> Abdulaziz Ahmad Abdulazez wrote a report on the same even but also exposed some of the wrangling mentioned above.<sup>471</sup> Read these reports as the latest available and decide for yourself whether sharia has faded out or not.

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<sup>469</sup> May Almighty God put our minds to rest and cover us with His peace that surpasses our understanding. Amen.

<sup>470</sup>I. Sa'idu, 10 Mar/2009.

<sup>471</sup>A. A. Abdulaziz, 10 Mar/2009.