

POINTS OF FRICTION

Mainly between Nigerian Christians and Muslims¹

For decades, things have been tense between Nigerian Christians and Muslims. In this paper I want to describe certain points of friction that constantly bedevil their relationships. Where appropriate, I will try to place these issues in a global context. This will help us see whether a particular problem is Nigeria specific or whether it is globally typical.

Psychological Aspects of the Muslim Worldview

Though the subject of worldviews is not the major issue in this chapter, it will be difficult to appreciate the problems to be discussed without an awareness of certain psychological² aspects of the Muslim worldview. The first aspect to which I draw your attention is the gigantic ***global paranoia*** that afflicts the Muslim community. Though adherents of all religions may talk of persecution, the Muslim sense of persecution is extreme. They consider themselves victims of a massive conspiracy in which all Western forces are skewed against them in a comprehensive plan to destroy them. These forces include Christians, capitalists, secularists and Zionists.

The Gulf War of President Bush is seen in the context of an all-out war by Western imperialism against the so-called Third World. It is “not an accident of history.” Its basis is located in “the global contradictions of imperialism in general and the exploitative activities

¹***Apologia: (A)*** This paper was originally intended to be included in my series *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations*. However, for reasons mostly lost in the fog of international travels as well as space concerns, it did not make it. ***It was written as part of that series and assumes familiarity with it not only, but the bibliographical sources in this paper are scattered throughout that series and are not complete here.*** From the point of view of proper scholarship, I should have doggedly done due diligence and retraced it all, but that would have been almost impossible without extensive travel, including various places in Nigeria and, very important in this context, Yale University, where the archives on which the entire series is based, are lodged. At the same time, the paper contains much that is valuable; it will help Christians everywhere, but especially Nigerian Christians, understand more of the Nigerian Muslim mentality. I judge it better to publish this paper in its imperfect—and annoying—state than to discard it.

(B) It is important to remind you that this paper was written in (AD) 2000. History has moved on rapidly and some of this material has been overtaken or changed. Nigeria’s current scourge, *Boko Haram*, did not yet exist.

(C) References to my own writings can be followed up by visiting them on the same website that you are currently visiting. Most of them are reproduced on this website on one of three pages: *Boeriana*, *Kuyperiana* or *Islamica*. They’re at your finger tips, all *gratis*. You are welcome!

²The term “psychology” is used here in a popular, not scientific or professional, sense .

of U.S. oil companies...since the end of the second imperialist war of 1938-1945 in particular.” It is placed in the context of the U.S.’ many violent interventions in other countries under its self-imposed duty of global policeman. A whole raft of evil interventions are adduced as examples:

...the US committed genocide against the Vietnamese, engineered the assassinations of President Allende of Chile in 1973, Patrick Lumumba of Zaire in 1964, Maurice, Bishop of Grenada in 1982, Murtala Muhammed of Nigeria in 1976, Amilcar Cabral of Guinea, etc. Similarly, assassination attempts have been made on the lives of patriotic leaders like Fidel Castro of Cuba, Muammar Ghaddafi of Libya and many others who refused to sell their countries to Western Powers.

The writers continue to expand their violent global view of the matter:

...the international community is confronted with a situation where the wealth generated by Third World countries are siphoned to enrich the western countries, while millions of people of the Third World... languished in abject poverty. The U.S.A. and members of the European Economic Community are today richer and enjoying better standards of living not because they work harder than us, but because they exploit us. The wealth that is generated in the Third World is siphoned and invested in the West for the expanded reproduction of their economies. The same wealth that was generated by the Third World... is later given to them as loans via the IMF, World Bank and other multilateral agencies. Thus the Third World is permanently indebted to the West.

The war in the Gulf is not therefore that of Iraq vs the U.S.A. and its allies. Rather, it is a war between the oppressed, exploited Third World... and imperialism. This is the first time in recent years (that) a systematic attempt is being made by a Third World country to destroy the economic tap-root of imperialism. Consequently, this war is making the best offer to the Third World... to free themselves from the shackles of imperialist domination and exploitation. The war must therefore be fought at all fronts. Thus, all symbols of U. S. imperialism, both personal and institutional, must be held responsible for what is happening in the Gulf.

We call on all patriots to come out and support the protest against Western imperialism. Our slogan should be now or never, down with imperialism—the Third World must be free.³

The above view with its emphasis on imperialism as the source of many of the world's troubles is widely representative of Muslim intellectuals. For the benefit of millions of naïve Americans who consider such an attitude towards the USA unlikely if not impossible, I attach Appendix 1 as a further demonstration. It leaves no doubt as to the picture America conjures up in the minds of these Nigerian Muslims. It is, of course, a variety of a theme shared by a broad range of other writers, including many Christian Nigerian scholars, the World Council of Churches, a considerable number of Christian scholars in the Reformed tradition, including yours truly,⁴ and Marxists.

There is thus nothing unique in this perspective, except that this Muslim version is extreme. It is blind to nuances among the different schools of socio-political thought in the West, blind to the fact that the West is struggling with strongly opposing views on these matters and that the struggle between these opposing views plays a dominant role in Western societies. This common Muslim perspective is blind also to the considerable opposition of many Western churches, including the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, to the policies of their governments towards Islam and the South in general. The entire West is characterized as one grand cultural, philosophical and spiritual entity that is in its entirety consciously poised to strike the deathblow to Islam. It turns every Westerner into a determined partner in a sinister international plot to enslave the entire world, especially Islam. The partners to this sinister imperial plot include under-dressed women in the media and on the world's beaches, missionaries and their churches and, of course the traveling hunting dogs of Western corporations.

³Abubakar Hassan Fulata and Mu'azu Maiwada on behalf of 10 lecturers at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, "The Gulf War and the Liberation of the 3rd World." *The Pen*, 15 Feb/93.

⁴

See my *Caught in the Middle*, pp. 56-58. There I summarize a long history of American invasions into a host of smaller countries. One could almost call it an American tradition, but one so well hidden that many American high school graduates have never heard of this aspect of their history. We are talking about an amazing, not to say shocking, list of invasions. This Muslim reaction is not as farfetched as some might like to think.

This perspective can rightly be described as paranoid, because it is such an extreme version of a widely accepted imperialist theory and because of its blindness or even refusal to recognize the above differences in the West. It is totally unreal and such an oversimplification that semi-sympathizers like myself are seriously over stretched in accepting any aspect of this scheme at all. In spite of the scheme's obvious falsification, I sympathize with the legitimate Muslim cries for recognition of their worth and for their liberation from Western imperialism and secularism. But, because these cries are embedded in such false simplifications and expressed with such intense anger and heated hateful emotions, it becomes difficult for people like myself to defend their aspirations in non-Muslim environments. The fact that the defenders of this Muslim scheme pour a great deal of personal and spiritual emotion into this theory makes calm, rational dialogue or even defence of its legitimate components very difficult. And, of course, the radicality to which this perspective leads only increases the difficulty.

Because of the disqualifying limitations of their secular perspective, Western governments and most of their citizens simply do not have the intellectual and spiritual and, therefore, political, tools to deal with this Muslim viewpoint. All they see is a bunch of primitive, irrational, hateful Muslim terrorists who do not have a single legitimate reason for their terrible outbursts of violence, without realizing that they themselves are also regarded as terrorists.

This paranoiac perspective underlies the video "The Last Crusade" as well as the pages of *The Pen* and *Alkali*, two Nigerian Muslim weeklies. Bosnia, Palestine, Nigeria are all pawns in this global crusade. The West is seen as having pulled out all the stops by harnessing all aspects of its culture in this campaign. Coca Cola's advertising campaigns in Nigeria are not merely capitalistic attempts to increase their market share and profits; their main aim is the destruction of Islam. Even though most of the crude Western women in bikinis in the media and on the beaches of the world give little thought to religion, they are all regarded as components of this conscious and deliberate conspiracy. It is all part of an international design to tempt Muslims with the hedonistic pleasures of imperialism and Christianity and to lure them from their high and impeccable moral perch. All the world is consciously ganged up against Islam.

This Muslim attitude is not only a gigantic case of global paranoia but an *equally gigantic attempt at politicizing the entire world*. In this scheme, missions are seen as nothing but an arm of Western imperialistic politics. This present conspiracy is merely a modern variety and, indeed, extension of earlier movements like the crusades and colonialism. The Nigerian church is regarded as a colonial tool to destroy Islam in Nigeria. Nigeria itself is sometimes regarded as a colonial creation dedicated to the same purpose. Muslims who share this paranoia are characterized by fierce unmitigated anger, unrelenting hate and are easily ignited to violence.

This perspective rears its ugly head in many unexpected places. Muslim writers are so full of it that no matter what the subject under discussion, very little is needed to trigger emotional outbursts against the West, especially the U.S. The Nigerian Muslim weeklies, *The Pen* and *Alkalami*, thrive by propagating this perspective. It is, I assure you, a typical mentality found through much of the Muslim world. An Evangelical Press report quotes Hassan Turabi, described as “Sudan’s Islamic leader,” as saying “America incarnates the devil for Muslims. When I say ‘Muslims,’ I mean all the Muslims in the world”—and that by one who obtained his doctorate from a cradle of Western sophistication, the Sorbonne.⁵ In the same report, a spokesman for Bin Ladin’s organization is to have said, “We, with God’s help, call on every Muslim who... wishes to be rewarded to comply with God’s order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it.”⁶

Another aspect of the Muslim worldview is an *incredible superiority complex*. Muslims are so infatuated with their religion that they simply cannot fathom that anyone would voluntarily refuse to become a Muslim. They are so proud of their religion. This attitude is openly displayed on the back of lorries and on bumper stickers: “I am proud to be a Muslim.” The TEKAN Memorandum to the government quotes Sheikh Abdullah Ghoshah, a supreme judge in Jordan, who allegedly claimed that “Allah... loves the Muslim to be

⁵Davis, J., p. 3.

⁶CC, 4 Sept/1998.

arrogant when he is fighting as it manifests that he is indifferent to his enemy and that he determines to vanquish him."⁷

In a review of a book by Ali Kettani about Muslim minorities in various countries, the anonymous reviewer twice refers to the superiority complex of Muslims. The first is an affirmation. A Muslim community may be "inferior in numbers," "but it could still be superior in political and social terms. Such a group is not a minority." The second is a question about this issue so important to the Muslim self-image. "Can the [minority] community affirm its difference, separateness and superiority while at the same time demanding that it be treated equally...?"⁸

Self-assurance is part of the same package. A Nigerian Muslim woman, member of what outsiders generally regard as an oppressed species, boasts, "We have a perfect system." They regard their book, their prophet, their theology, their moral system and their total worldview with an admiration so deep and profound that it is hard to fathom for a non-Muslim. So sure that others are wrong, Muslims are largely incapable of listening to others, incapable of understanding even for a moment the questions, fears and resentments Christians entertain. These are simply dismissed as mere hogwash. When Muslims hear Christian complaints, they rub their eyes in unbelief and amazement. How can you say such a thing about us, the people of peace and truth? Byang hits the nail on the head of Muslim pride--and I hope my Muslim readers do make an attempt to listen this time: "Once a man is afflicted with the psychological neurosis of superiority or inferiority complex, it is almost impossible to get him out of that mental fix. This is because he sees everything from the mask he is wearing."⁹

This attitude is not peculiar to Nigerian Islam. In fact, it appears to characterize the Muslim community everywhere. In 1921, Theodore Lunt wrote that Muslims are "still the same stalwart, virile enthusiasts for the faith" as they always have been. "How is it? Whence comes this spirit? Can it ever be explained?" He finds the secret in their passionate belief that the "one Almighty God had revealed Himself through His Prophet. To believe that... is enough to make men fanatics. Every Moslem warrior felt himself to be the 'Sword of God'."

⁷TEKAN, 1987, p. 54.

⁸Anonymous, "Status of Muslims in Christian Dominated Countries," *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, p. 11.

⁹*Shari'a*, p. 21. This explanation is not based, of course, on any psychological theory. Instead, it is the result of long-time observation and experience in the Nigerian context and echoes my own conclusions rather closely.

"The thunder of their cavalry was not more terrible to the enemy than the clamour of their short, sharp battle-cry and creed, 'There is no God but God: Mohammed is the Apostle of God'."¹⁰ To which one might add the other battle cry to which many a Nigerian Muslim has responded, "*Allahu Akbar!*"--"God is great!"

Atterbury, admittedly no admirer of Islam, years ago, in a day when the spirit of secularism was not yet dominant enough to proscribe such blunt honesty with respect to non-Christian religions, described "that terrible intolerance of zeal" as "an essential element" of the religion. Islam, he wrote, has no concept of love for the enemy. He reproduces a prayer that was said to be prayed daily in "the great university at Cairo:"

O Lord of all creatures, O Allah! Destroy the infidels and polytheists, Thine enemies, the enemies of the religion. O Allah! Make their children orphans and defile their abodes; cause their feet to slip; give them and their families... their possession and their race, their wealth and their lands, as booty to the Moslems. O Lord of all creatures! Fight Thou against them, till strife be at an end, and the religion be all of it God's. Fight Thou against them until they pay tribute by right of subjection, and they be reduced low.¹¹

Admittedly, there are similar sounds in the Old Testament, but these are abrogated in the New, which tells us to love our enemy. It is the kind of prayer that would be acceptable to no Christian today.¹² I have not found any such abrogation in Islam.

Some years ago, Hendrik Kraemer wrote that Islam "excels all other religions in creating in its adherents a feeling of absolute superiority." It is from this "superiority-feeling and from this fantastic self-consciousness" that Islam derives its "stubborn refusal to open the mind towards another spiritual world." That is both a major reality in Nigeria and a serious problem.

If Nigerian Christians and Muslims are going to find a way of living together before they blow up the country together, both parties must listen sympathetically to each other and

¹⁰T. Lunt, pp. 100-101.

¹¹Atterbury, pp. 90-91.

¹²

Of course, I realize that such a report is hardly acceptable to secularist with its selective bias, but then, I am not a secularist.

take each other seriously. They must understand the other's point of view and fears. They must learn some empathy, stepping in the other's shoe.

Another part of this same complex is an *overwhelming sense of self-righteousness*. It is, I believe, the result of an inadequate sense of sin. Muslims are always right. They will hardly ever admit to being wrong in their treatment of adherents of other religions. There is a certain blindness that prevents them from recognizing in themselves what others experience as an astounding sense of intolerance. Muslims will absolutely and vigorously reject such a charge with genuine amazement. This attitude makes it difficult for them to recognize the rights of non-Muslims. Muslims in Nigeria are often totally and sincerely puzzled by Christian complaints of oppression and by the latter's demands for greater equality and more equal access to the national cake. While Muslims proudly boast of their great tolerance, Christians complain of intolerance.

The observant reader may have noticed that not all my assertions in this section are backed up by footnotes. What are my sources? My source is my own experience of living amongst Muslims, of listening to them carefully and observing them closely for a full 30 years. Though I am quite aware that these observations will be regarded as scandalous by the average contemporary secular "enlightened" student of Islam or of religions in general, one will be hard put to account for Muslim behaviour if he refuses to acknowledge these realities. They underlie many of the problems dealt with in my eight-volume series for which this essay was written but never made. An awareness of them will greatly ease understanding the materials before us. Refusal to acknowledge them can only lead to a distortion of the facts. The secular tunnel vision of contemporary scholarship makes it almost impossible for its practitioners to acknowledge this distortion or take it seriously.¹³

¹³ An acquaintance of mine at one of America's Ivy League universities has told me several stories demonstrating the intolerance of secular scholars when it comes to Christianity. Somehow other religions are more deserving of secular tolerance than is Christianity. Already decades ago, Hendrik Kraemer identified this secular trend. It can only be described as intentional blind bias based on the same psychology as the Muslim mentality described in these pages and informed by the same hatred.

Gender Relations: Female Fashions

Gender relations are among the prominent irritants between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. A major issue is female fashion. In Nigeria this issue has two major aspects to it, namely, morality and freedom. The Christian Hannatu Monday refers to the "raging controversy" in some northern states in Nigeria about school uniforms. Christian children, she charges, are forced to wear uniforms based on Islamic dress code. In a lengthy complaint about Muslims reaping where Christians have sown, Salifu bitterly states the case as Nigerian Christians generally see it. "The Christian builds his school. They (Muslims) take it over and say the Christian children must wear Islamic dress."¹⁴ It is a standard complaint amongst Christians and they try to resist it. ¹⁵

The issue is really part of the larger issue that Muslims seek to impose their Muslim way on non-Muslims in general. It is *this* imposition that Christians object to and resist. The uniform issue is only one example of such imposition.

While to Christians it is a matter of imposing Muslim practices on them, Muslims see the issue in terms of general fashions and morality. Women's fashions are of major concern to Muslims, especially to Muslim men. The matter of school girls' uniforms is only part of it. The Pakistani writer Maulana Muhammad 'Ali states the general Muslim principle of appropriate feminine dress when the two genders intermingle, something that should be avoided as much as possible. On such occasions, "the Holy Qur'an requires the women to appear in their simplest dress, or to wear an over-garment which should cover their ornaments, at the same time requiring both sexes to lower their gaze."¹⁶

Sex seems to be feared in Islam. Women have to do everything they can not to constitute a temptation to the men. Hence, female fashions are carefully prescribed. The inspiration for this perspective is said to be derived from the Qur'an itself, which reads,

¹⁴ *TD*, no. 5, 1987, pp. 23, 20.

¹⁵It is not that Christians resent Muslim fashion. Christian men, including yours truly, will often wear Muslim/Hausa dress at public occasions, even on the pulpit.

¹⁶ P. 661.

Say to the believing women to turn their eyes away (from temptation) and to preserve their chastity: to cover their adornments except such as are normally displayed; to draw their veils over their bosom and not to reveal their finery except to their husbands, their fathers...¹⁷

The basic idea is to avoid what Islam regards as "that satanic flood of female liberty and license which threatens to destroy human civilization in the West...."¹⁸ Though the Muslim response may be extreme, too suppressive and based too much on male superiority, who dares deny the extreme negative fashion model of today's West, including Christianity?

Turning to the Nigerian situation, we overhear our famous Sheikh Gumi arguing that, "women have no business mixing with men and doing men's jobs." It is prohibited. In Mecca, for example, markets are run by men only.¹⁹ "You only find women in places suitable for them." Women should go out only if it is necessary. When they do, "they have to cover all their body."²⁰ . According to Nnanna, the late Gumi spent most of his time exhorting Muslim women to wear the *hijab* and the men to dress according to Islamic law."²¹ Mecca markets are not the only inspiration for such views. The Taliban regime in Kabul, Afghanistan, provides another example so radical that an Associated Press report on the situation deserves inclusion as an Appendix 4 to this paper.

A very prominent southern Muslim, Lateef Adegbite, affirms that whenever women appear in public, "they must cover the excitable parts of their body, an injunction which aims at discouraging indecency, but which some have interpreted so strictly that they compel their women to be heavily covered from head to toe..., clad in dreary and somber dark apparel."²²

Ibrahim Sulaiman of the Centre for Islamic Studies at ABU, discusses the whole issue of Muslim morality in the context of a bid to Islamize Nigerian society as a whole. Such morality would involve "the safeguarding of public morals and the suppression of indecent

¹⁷ Qur'an 24:30.

¹⁸ Donohue, 1982, p. 255.

¹⁹Even the scholarly Gumi can slip up. He did not know, apparently, that Caliph Omar appointed a female superintendent for the Medina market, according to Ijaz Qamar. Or did he suppress this information as inconvenient?

²⁰ *Quality*, Oct/87, pp. 34. 36.

²¹ *TSM*, 27 Sept/92, p. 10. I suspect this statement to be somewhat of an exaggeration.

²² Adegbite, 1976, p. 10.

behaviour, the protection of the honour of the womenfolk and the introduction of modesty in all facets of national life."²³ The protection of that honour includes preventing the mixing of genders. Suleiman is serious, for these statements are a repetition of what he wrote earlier to the government. "It is utterly unacceptable to Islam that the honour of women should be abused...." Abuse here includes the exposure of their bodies or the "public display of immodesty" as well as the "unrestrained intermingling of male and female" as practiced by and imposed on the country by Europeans.²⁴

Muhammad Basheer Shomotun describes *hijab* as "a simple dress designed by Islam to cover and protect the beauty of a woman regarding her figure and hair. It is a modest mode of dressing which helps to preserve the dignity and personality of women..., so that they are not mainly looked upon as objects of beauty and sex." They are to be covered entirely, he explains, "with the exception of the hands from the wrist downwards and the face." Many Muslim women, he laments, have been taken in by so-called modern fashions and ape Western women who see "nothing wrong in... moving naked in the streets." Womanhood is reduced "to the level of animalism" and civilization is being destroyed. The *hijab* is a tool "towards purifying... society from corruption and all other vices."

He then goes on to complain that Muslim women are *forced* to disobey Allah by wearing indecent Western dress in certain jobs, such as nurses and secretaries . If religious freedom is guaranteed in the country, why should Muslim nurses be prevented from dressing appropriately? After all, Christian nurses are allowed to wear uniforms that conform to their religion. This is a pure case of "victimization" of Muslims and of "deprivation."²⁵

One Alhaji B. T. Ogunseye expresses the disgust and wonder Muslims experience when they behold the sexual mores of the West. He describes the situation in strong terms: Sexual orgies, debauchery, promiscuity, pornographic, licentiousness. It is incredible and regrettable that modern man... in the so-called developed countries" can engage in all such horrors. This is another wonderful "feat" of the civilised countries, which are not unmindful of the fact that they are inviting Allah's wrath by leading humanity through

²³ I. Sulaiman, pp. 12-13.

²⁴ I. Suleiman, 1986, p. 17.

²⁵ M. B. Shomotun, "Hijab: A Must for Muslim Women." *The Pen*, 10-24 Mar/89, p. 10 .

the blind alley of destruction to annihilation. These "refined people" are conversant with the Bible and the Holy Qur'an.... May Allah have mercy on us. Amen.

This, the Alhaji rightly declares, "is misuse of freedom" and Islam is "vehemently opposed" to it.²⁶

An article by Alifa Daniel in the Guardian of July 27, 2000, brings us most of the issues. Abuja university set up committee on mode of dressing. Worried by the mode of dress by female students at the University of Abuja, the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Gambo Laraba Abdulahi, has set up a committee to look into the issue. ... the 11-member committee, headed by Dr. A.U. Okwodishu, was set up to stem what has been described as "unsavoury criticism" from parents and other members of the public. A statement from the university noted that the duty of the committee will be to find ways of ensuring decent dressing "for the integrity of womanhood." But the approach will be through pep talks and persuasions.

However in a furious reaction, some female students who spoke with The Guardian frowned at the development, maintaining that the idea was an infringement on their rights. A female student who simply identified herself as Joke said:

What rights have they (university authorities) to tell us how to dress? We hope they are not planning to introduce the Sharia in the university campus. We are not unaware that the Vice-Chancellor is a Moslem, while about four of the committee members are also Moslems. At least, two of them are known to be fundamentalists in their approach.

But the head of the committee, Dr. Okwodishu, is optimistic that the moral campaign will be successful because, according to her, some students have already taken the initiative to reward those who dress well. She cited the example of the Education Students Association which, she said, gave awards to students that dressed well.

Asked if the committee would recommend any punitive action against recalcitrant students, she said she was optimistic of the success of the crusade, "because some female students had expressed concern over the same mode of dressing." She also disclosed that a female student was recently slapped by her mother in front of the university library because of her mode of dress. The mother, who visited the university, unannounced, according to her, was shocked when she saw the clothes her daughter wore.

²⁶, p. 177.

Other members of the committee are: Hajiya Nara Quadri, Hajiya Bintu Mofio, Hajiya Halima Idris, Mrs. C. Kato, Mrs. Affiong Ekefre, Mrs. Agbonika, Mrs. Bose Ikhanoba, Mrs. U. Sylvester and Mrs. Laraba Habi. Remember: Names in Nigeria often reveal the religion of the bearers. By that standard, three are Muslim; six, Christian or, at least, not Muslim. It is also telling that the names of the Muslim minority come first.

In my estimation, it was a good thing that the issue was dealt with, but the good thing was perverted into a Muslim vs Christian issue, into another alleged shari'a trap. This time it was not merely Muslim men, but also Christians and women. The question of unbridled freedom came up and of the right to ignore all norms of modesty, a right neither sincere Christians nor Muslims espouse.

Muslims are thus not the only ones to object to this state of affairs. Many are the articles in Nigeria's dailies that criticize current female fashions. Often these articles are written by Christians. So, Muslims should not think they have a monopoly on aversion to such fashions.²⁷

However, it is also undeniably true that many "Christian" young women, both in the West and in Nigeria, dress provocatively, even in church and at Christian schools. Too many simply follow the trend. In the West, the issue of dress is considered one of personal choice, even in the church. Popular fashion in the West includes forms of dress no less extreme than what these Muslims advocate, though the opposite, as if fashion has no effect on sex or virtue. In my opinion, Western attitudes at this front are totally unrealistic. One hardly dares bring up the issue for fear of being considered an extreme conservative, a "fuddy duddy." How often have I been embarrassed in Nigeria about the dress of Christian women, even including missionaries. It is high time the church gathers the courage to condemn the trend and teach the basic virtue of modesty for all. Here might be a front where adherents of both religions could co-operate

The Nigerian Muslim community recognizes the dangers of playing fast and loose with sexuality in fashions and wants nothing to do with such "Christian liberties."²⁸ It largely

²⁷You may wish to read my meditations on the seventh commandment, no. 177-205, in my *The Prophet Moses for Today*.

²⁸The easy mixing of genders in Canada, for example, is listed as one of the foremost problems facing Muslims living there. It challenges the Muslim struggle there to retain appropriate moral standards (Mallon, p. 102). Yes, I can appreciate such a struggle in what has become a hedonistic society.

wants a return to Qur'anic morality. It is even turned into a political issue. Suleiman's discussion is part of a submission to the government.

It is no wonder that Muslims with their Qur'an and their strong legalistic morality would especially protest against such trends. And given their stand on the close relationship between religion and government, it is no surprise either that one Alhaji Zubair, an imam in Katsina State, and other Muslims call on the government to ban "indecent dress" among females throughout the country. Sheikh Abubakar Tureta warns Muslims to be on their guard against underground moves to sabotage the Kaduna State Government's intention to stop co-education with its abhorrent gender intermingling. He also advised that the change to the Muslim dress code in schools be sped up.²⁹

It does appear that the process of change was slow, for already four years earlier the Kaduna branch of the Muslim Student Society condemned a group called "Joint Action Committee of Kaduna State Women" for attacking the Muslim dress code approved by the State Government for Muslim female students. The Committee apparently argued that such a move would "dichotomize the students along religious lines."³⁰

For our purposes it is especially important to note that Nigerian Christians and Muslims accuse each other of imposing their views and practices. Christians react to the imposition of Muslim fashions on their school children and see it as one of the many components of a Muslim programme to Islamize Nigeria. Muslims react to the imposition by western colonialism of the gross immorality of co-education and fashion without shame. In their view, colonialism and Christianity are the same. This imposition, according to Muslims, continues today in schools, banks, in the NYSC programme and in nursing. That's another way of saying that both experience restrictions on their freedom to be themselves, on freedom of religion. Both feel threatened by the other. If nothing else, that at least they have in common. Christians would do well not only to object to the imposition of bleak Muslim female fashion but also to insist on modest dress among themselves. They should distantiate themselves clearly from the loose fashions of secularism as well as from the opposite Muslim extreme and present a clear Christian case. Can one really blame Muslims for their objections?

²⁹ *NS*, 7 Sep/93, pp. 10, 16.

³⁰ *The Pen*, 21 Apr/89, p. 16.

I reproduce a poem by Jawayriyya Badamasuly, a passionate plea for a return to the simple fashions and life style prescribed by the Qur'an and traditionally associated with the piety and simplicity required by Islam.³¹ It says it all so well.

Awake: Muslim Women

Oh, you Muslim women!

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 all that you have?

Why have you neglected your Islamic culture and
uphold to the useless and shameful fashion of the West?

Why do you need to bleach yourselves white

because the colonial masters are white in colour?

Why do you need to Europeanize your head, while

Allah has created the one that best fits you?

Why do you need to westernize your mode of

speech, eating, walking, when Islam has prescribed the way?

Why do you decide to strip yourselves naked

on the street when Islam has enjoined you to be modest

in your dressing?

Why do you shout the slogan "Women Liberation"

when Islam has liberated you?

Why have you reduced yourselves to objects of

entertainment from men, when you are not articles
of exhibition?

Is it that you are not proud of your culture and colour?

Is it that you deem yourselves inferior to the white people?

³¹ Reproduced in *The Pen*, 15 Feb/91, p. 7. I confess that much of it resonates also in my Christian heart, especially in so far as it constitutes a revolt against the overthrow of major restraints of decency as practiced by so many unthinking slavish followers of fashion. I experience something of a similar dismay in the Christian churches and schools of the community in which I find myself in 1999.

Do you consider the white women superior to you and subsequently worthy of being blindly copied without question?

Is it that you are not grateful to Allah with the mode of your creation?

Is it because abortion pill was not supported that you shout “Women Liberation?”
While you would not have come to this world if your mothers had aborted you?

Is it because maternity leave is not granted to unmarried women?

Oh, you westernized and westoxicated Muslim women, it is high time you awake your sleeping brain and make use of your senses.

These men bring and change fashion every now and then, while they remain in their coat, shirt and trouser.

Why do you accept the western fashion dogmatically, regardless of the price and inconvenience caused you and which render you naked in the street?

You must realize that Islam has come to relieve you from being buried alive.

It has liberate you from being sold as slaves, and has saved you from being made as property to your husband (i.e. property for inheritance).

You must realize that men are out to spoil girls, but none of them want spoilt girls.
Observe carefully everything that comes from the West we start to join in their propagation.

Try to ask yourselves the following questions before you start in the propagation of the organisation brought by them:

What are its aims?

Who are its members?

What is the origin and what are the reasons:

Of what use and benefit is it to you?

Is this movement actually out to liberate women
or they are after her strangulation the more?
Are there actual causes for women liberation under Islam?

You must realise that in Islam, men and women are
equal in religion but different in status.
Naturally, men cannot bring up a small child as well
as women cannot head a family effectively.

Honourable women of Islam, it is your duty
to make Nigeria an honest, sane and morally upright society.

Prove to all the men that you are dignified creatures of Allah.
Sit to your work and produce a sane society.
Nigeria's destiny is in the hand of Allah
and Allah has entrusted it to you women.
If you decide to direct her properly today,
you are in control, because you build the builders of the society.

Oh! Muslim women,
appreciate the favour of Allah on you.
And lose not your honour.
Retain your dignity.
Guide strictly your respect and modesty.

And remember the Holy Qur'an, sura 11, verse 138 says:
"Ours is the colour of God; who can be better than God in colouring?
And it is He alone we worship.

If you are a Muslim and believe in the Holy Qur'an
And you believe the above verse of the Qur'an, then
I see no reason why you will not hold strictly your
culture, colour, chastity and honour, instead of
holding another culture other than Islam.

May Allah guide us to the right path and cause us
not to deviate after and disgrace us not on
the Day of Resurrection. (Ameen)

This poem is included because it so well represents the spirit and emotion of much of Islam
all over the world.

Gender Relationships: Inter-religious Marriage

Another contentious issue is that Islam allows Muslim men to marry non-Muslim women, but not vice versa. In fact, Islam often encourages such marriages. Throughout history it has been an effective way of spreading Islam. Arnold recounts various cases of this type. Tartars living among Lithuanian and Polish Christians married the latter's daughters, but the reverse was not allowed. Their children were always brought up as Muslims. The same thing happened among the Cheremiss, a Russian people, among the Hindus of India, among Tibetans in India. Also in China, where in some parts Islam multiplied rapidly by this means. It took place also in the Malay Archipelago.³² However, the story in Iran of a Christian convert from Islam who married a Muslim girl, aroused the ire of the Muslim community who had his father jailed briefly.³³ Nehemia Levtzion reports how in West Africa Muslims from Hausaland and Bornu intermarried with the Ghanian people of Dagomba.³⁴

Such stories are not merely from distant history. More recent incidents of this nature are happening regularly. It has been reported that “especially in rural Pakistan, Christian girls are seized by force. A few hours later the family is informed that she has “embraced Islam.” She is then forced to marry a Muslim, and all further contact with her family is forbidden.”³⁵ There is the story about Pakistani Muslims who kidnapped “the daughters of two Christian families and tried to force their conversion to Islam. When the parents sought the help of authorities for their return, a public outcry prevented the court from giving the girls back.” A judge in Rawalpindi “ordered three girls to be jailed rather than returning them to their family. He said it would have been too dangerous for them” to be released. But let the report speak for itself:

In January, the landlords of a poor Christian family forcibly took three daughters from Khushi Masih and his wife. When Masih tried to recover them, he was told the girls (ages 15, 13 and 11) had converted.

They sent the girls to protective custody, where only the family was supposed to visit. However, four Muslim visitors a day have been visiting. At the hearing, 50 Muslim

³² Arnold, pp. 245, 250, 290, 293, 306-307, 365, 397.

³³ Miller, 1969, pp. 28-29.

³⁴ Kritzeck, p. 305.

³⁵ REC NE, Jan/92, p. 6.

lawyers showed up to protest the release of the girls, and an armed man threatened to kill them if they returned to Christianity. Someone even offered money to Masih to give up his claims. The judge still claims they will return the girls to their families, though the families may have to move.

Another man, Daniel Neno, has nearly given up hope of getting his daughter back after 20 months. She was first taken at the age of 14.... Her Muslim captor is a well-known local landowner. Instead of returning the girl to her parents, a judge accused her of immorality and put her in jail for safekeeping. There her jailors abused her.

After ten weeks, they allowed the daughter to return home. When Neno filed charges against the police officer who raped her, the officer threatened the family. In September, 1977, they took the girl again. After six weeks the landlord who took her the first time brought her to court, where she testified she had converted to Islam.

Neno, a poor and illiterate peasant, now believes he cannot win.³⁶

The aim and result are always the same: expansion of Islam.

In Nigeria we hear of some cases where Muslim girls marry Christian men who subsequently join Islam. However, there, too, it is more often the other way around. In fact, it happens often enough that it has become a serious concern amongst Christians. It was one of the complaints of the Kataf who provided the investigating Cudjoe panel with "lots of examples of the unequal exchange." The response of the Hausa was classic: Our religion so teaches.³⁷ In many cases, these are secondary school girls without deep convictions who are attracted to the wealth they usually cannot expect from Christians.³⁸

There are various reports floating about in Nigeria that indicate marrying and impregnating Christian young girls is part of several Muslim plots in Nigeria. Dan-Bauchi tells how during the course of his work with JNI, plans were made to "put all the daughters in Christianity in the family way." Prizes were even promised for proven successes! Dan-Bauchi, it should be remembered, prior to his conversion to Christ, was assigned by JNI to

³⁶REC NE, May/98.

³⁷ *Citizen*, 15 Jun/92, p. 12.

³⁸ Gilliland, pp. 95, 206.

persecute Christianity in any way he and his cohorts could devise. But let us hear the story as he tells it.

We arranged... that we shall put all the daughters in Christianity in the family way. There were prizes for any one that succeeded in putting Christian girls into the family way. Prizes varied from girl to girl, depending on how strong she is in the Lord. What we thought of was when the Christian girls were taken, then the youth who were not married then we shall have a way to Islamise them. But... there were only a few claims, which we were not sure whether they really had what they claimed.³⁹

Sociologist Danjuma Byang documents a number of cases. One Muslim traditional ruler in Kaduna State gave a Christian girl in marriage to a Muslim without parental consent and without fulfilling the obligations of local tribal traditions. When the parents took the matter to court, the latter ruled that this was a matter for a Shari'a court, since it touched upon Muslim personal law! This was pure Muslim power play over Christians. Byang presents three other cases of mixed marriages where the Muslim community had clear, unmitigated disregard for Christian rights and felt totally free to impose their way unilaterally on Christians. These make very convoluted and, sometimes, exceedingly complex, stories that defy simple summary treatment and that would have great illustrative value for the international readership of this paper.

Byang also refers to a "leaked classified document" of a group of northern Muslims who are actively pursuing such marriages as a method of Muslim evangelism. Young men are instructed to give the girls money and clothes, visit them on Sundays before church and impregnate them. Byang comments, "So then, the ultimate aim of the Muslims is to utilize every legitimate and illegitimate means to islamize Nigeria."⁴⁰

I have a Muslim document at hand that reads, "No Muslim daughters must marry a Kaferi (Christian), but Muslims should use their wealth to draw Kaferi daughters to themselves and Islamise them." This sentence is only a small part of a comprehensive Muslim campaign that includes a plan to enlist the aid of Muslim countries to "Make war by all means and islamise Nigeria" and "to do away with

³⁹ CAN, *Leadership*, p. 50.

⁴⁰ Pp. 33-34.

Kaferis, i.e. Christians.” It also refers to Muslim determination that “no Kaferi should ever be allowed to rule this country again or hold any important position. It is dangerous for me to identify the organization that allegedly produced this document or its very prominent signatories, at least one of which has since died.

The point of bringing this document into the present discussion is to demonstrate once again the radical difference between Muslim and Western thinking. It looks as if I moved from sociological gender concerns like marriage and dress to a full-scale all-encompassing islamising campaign. It is a move only in compartmentalized Western thinking. In Muslim thought I did not move anywhere, for that's where it's at. You simply cannot look at one segment of life and ignore or separate the rest if you want to understand Islam. All of life is subsumed under Islam. Religion is wholistic, total, comprehensive, covering all fronts. Such a worldview easily harnesses sociological, religious and political concerns into one grand design, crusade or *jihad*. It is this wholistic worldview that underlies their interpretation of the grand Western design upon them. The suspicion of this comprehensive, but imaginary, Western crusade is the natural result of their worldview. One who knows Islam will not be surprised at such a perception. It is the way Muslims themselves approach the world.

Some years ago, I would have dismissed such a document and disbelieved that anyone could think or act that way. However, my 30 years in Nigeria have forced facts of life on me that I can no longer deny even if it sounds redneck to Westerners. The Nigerian Muslim campaign is typical of the way Islam has spread, though it may be more vicious than in some other countries. A small foreign minority group of Muslims will show one face out of necessity; a larger entrenched group will show quite another-- *the real one*.

But we must pick up on the girl issue again. CAN organized a peaceful demonstration in 1989 in Kaduna in response to Sheikh Gumi's alleged practice of collecting young Christian girls, some under 18, for the purpose of giving them to Muslims in marriage. The demonstration went to the Commissioner of Police to indicate the annoyance of Christians and request that the practice be stopped.⁴¹

The most infamous case is that of the marriage of Christopher Abashiya's daughter, Hindatu, to one Khaleed Yusuf. The case was of special interest due to Abashiya' unusual

⁴¹Circular by J. P. Mambula of TEKAN to members of the CAN National Executive Committee, dated

identity. He is a Christian of Fulani extraction, who has held various high government posts, a very rare bird. The affair was therefore completely publicized in both *The Pen* and *Alkalami*. It took place in the home of Gumi. She converted to Islam and publicly invited her father to do the same. Abashiya apparently was planning to take legal action, but a writer in *The Pen* claimed that the former had no further right over her because the teaching of the Qur'an supercedes the law of nations.⁴²

There is another twist to these stories about gender relations. It appears that Muslims at the Constituent Assembly, an assembly assigned to draft a new national constitution, sought to entice Christian members with girls in a bid to neutralize Christian influence.⁴³ Though prostitution is constantly described with abhorrence in Muslim writings, if you can use it in evangelism, why not in politics? After all, politics is a major form of *da'awa* (Muslim mission) or *jihad* (*Muslim holy war or crusade*). Somehow, this gives a hollow ring to Muslim indignation about sexy fashion or to their high view of women.

Here we have a one-sided issue in the sense that only Islam engages in this practice and thinks in such wholistic terms. I have not yet heard that Nigerian Christians include marriage to Muslim girls in their mission outreach. Christians, in fact, are discouraged from marrying Muslims and tend to see it as an "unequal yoke" in Pauline terms or as a sellout to the enemy.

Public Utterances

The next contentious issue I want to pick up is the way both Christians and Muslims express themselves publicly to or about each other, whether orally or in writing. This includes their public use of their respective scriptures. If you remember that the Kafanchan series of riots was sparked off by Muslims interrupting a Christian meeting in a public college where a Christian preacher quoted from the Qur'an, you will realize that we have here another hot potato.

The spirit in which Muslims express and conduct themselves is that the Qur'an is "the literally inspired Word of God and that Christianity is perverted and false. It would be absurd

⁴²*The Pen*, 11 Feb/89, 10 Mar/89. A lengthy report about Hindatu's conversion in *Alakalami*, 17 Feb/89, does not refer to any marriage but paints her conversion as the result of an alleged long-time interest in Islam that was suppressed only because of her fear for her father, a prominent national Christian leader.

⁴³ Mambula and Datok.

to expect him to doubt either of these propositions."⁴⁴ It is the same strong sense of being absolutely right that comes to expression in this area of concern as well.

Usually, when a person quotes from the other religion, she does so in terms of her own religion. Without fail, when Muslims quote from the Bible or explain a Christian teaching, I do not recognize the meaning which they attribute to the issue. Often their interpretation is a standard classic one that Islam has tenaciously adhered to in conscious disregard of all standard Christian explanation. Such classic interpretations are rendered about subjects like Jesus' status as Son of God, the reliability of the Bible, and the identity of the Comforter. Those interpretations, though irksome because of Muslim's continuous disregard through the centuries of Christian clarification, I understand. At other times I wonder how they arrive at the meaning they do. And I suspect Muslims react similarly to Christian interpretations of their religion. They usually re-interpret each other not to seek truth so much as to show how wrong the other is or how blasphemous—or how unfaithful to their own scriptures.

Mukhtar Abubakar is a case in point. In an article in which he properly lambasts Christians, he quotes extensively from various Psalms and turns them against the Christian clergy whom he accuses of working contrary to those Psalms. Of course, there is nothing new about that, for even the Old Testament prophets and Jesus Himself used to inveigh against the political and religious leaders of Israel for disobeying the Scriptures. Since Psalm 41 pronounces a blessing on those who help the weak, how then, asks Abubakar, can the Christian clergy "stretch its hand against Islam?" The Psalms affirm monotheism as in Psalms 61 and 59, he writes. But Christian clergy are "slow to quote" them. On basis of such Psalms "there should be no room for argument between any Muslim or Christian about the oneness of Allah...."

In the volatile setting of Nigeria, the late Gumi's provocative statements about Christianity are a case in point. "Christianity," he said, "is nothing. Yes, I think it is nothing." Amongst the reasons he gives is that "there are no rules, no regulations, no anything." Islam has laws covering all of life, but "Christianity, it doesn't mean anything. On Sundays, you only go to listen to songs." When the interviewer, a Muslim himself, asked Gumi how much he knew about Christianity, Gumi responded, "I read the Bible. I read the Qur'an. Just the way I understand the Bible that is how I understand the Qur'an. So the advice to them is to

⁴⁴ Gibb, p. 68.

come and learn about Islam. What I believe is that any good Christian should embrace Islam." He sees religion as "the rules and regulations of the public written by your religion."⁴⁵

I trust you get the point. Gumi interprets all religion, including Christianity, in terms of Muslim legalism. A religion that does not have a legalistic structure like that of Islam cannot be a serious religion. Furthermore, he is sure that any Christian who begins to learn about Islam will of course turn Muslim. What else could he possibly do? There you have it again, the Muslim infatuation with their religion and their closed eye and mind towards any other. They simply cannot or will not imagine anything else.

A Westerner may be surprised that such an interview appears in a popular national newsmagazine. What is so interesting or vital about such statements? So someone says negative things about your religion. So what? That attitude, of course, can partially be traced to Western trivialization of religion. Actually, these statements have been at the centre of much Nigerian national debate, including other national magazines. Various Christians have felt the need to respond.⁴⁶

It must be remembered that Gumi was the idol and hero of many Muslims and that religion is one of the major national concerns in Nigeria. His statements of contempt will be internalized by millions of Muslims and be reflected in their attitude towards Christians. Next time a political issue comes up between the two religions or some other disagreement, many Muslims will remember Gumi's statement that Christianity is nothing. It will absolve them from any responsibility to listen to the Christian side. They can legitimately ignore the Christians and simply insist on their own advantage with a clear conscience. After all, Christianity is nothing. So, why bother with fairness? It is a very small step away from denying Christians any human rights.

Muslims feel free to say anything they please about Christianity, its conception of God, its Saviour, its Scripture, its doctrines and practices. They seem to experience absolutely none of the restraints they expect from Christians in their verbal abuse Christianity. *The Pen* is full of Muslim references to and diatribes about Christianity, always from a Muslim point of view and--you guessed it--always negative and usually very derogatory and

⁴⁵*Quality*, Oct/87, pp. 34-39.

⁴⁶E.g. Peter B. Tanko, a Roman Catholic priest, wrote a privately circulated paper entitled "Gumi: A Shadow of His Faith."

insulting.”⁴⁷ The Bible is berated as corrupt. The Trinity is nonsense. It is dismissed by a person who obviously understands little of Christianity as “a complicated freakish-looking three-headed God.”⁴⁸ The Christian view of Christ is debunked in ways Muslims would not allow if their doctrine about Muhammed were similarly attacked.. One Muhammad Rabi’u Tafida of Zaria wrote about a book that denied the Christian story about Jesus. “Christ did not perish on the cross, Christ’s body (was) buried alive.” The book “proved scientifically that Jesus did not perish on the cross, which signifies that... the background of the Christian dogmas is destroyed.”⁴⁹ Christ's resurrection is deceit. To declare Islam a false religion publicly, rejected by the Creator, would provoke great Muslim anger. Yet Muslims feel perfectly free to declare publicly that Islam is the “only true religion and that all other religions... will be rejected by the Creator. Believing that all religions are equally valid is said to be the first sign of religious assimilation.”⁵⁰ Christians are described as “the falsifiers of history,” a sentiment that is echoed repeatedly. This particular case relates to the Biblical story about Adam and Eve. God is said to have lied to Adam about the trees of knowledge of good and evil. That story “is palpably wrong. It came from the speculative insinuation of the falsifiers of history (the Christians).”⁵¹

Mukhtar Abubakar writes about “the unleashed dogs of CAN” who “spit foaming saliva in our [Muslim] faces.” He asks the (rhetorical) questions, “Is there then no sensible man among the Christian ranks who can deliberate with... calm and constructiveness? Are all the Christians in this country, wild, greedy, malicious and ungodly?” In all of this he is referring to the alleged Nigerian Christian participation in Western imperialism that aims to destroy Islam.

Not infrequently such attacks appear in published form, whether book or tract, cassette or video, for the specific purpose of creating tension that will make it easy to spark off violence, as we have already seen in earlier chapters. Dan-Bauchi reveals how, during his time with JNI, he and his colleagues disseminated publications attacking Christians just for

⁴⁷10 March/89, p. 3.

⁴⁸ M. E. Rwechunguar, “My Choice.” 24 Feb/89, p. 11.0

⁴⁹10 March/89, p. 3.

⁵⁰Anonymous, “Status of Muslims in Christian Dominated Countries.” A book review. 24 Feb/89, p. 11.

⁵¹Muhammad Ibrahim, “Adam Versus Iblis.” *The Pen*, 15 Feb/91, p. 10.

that very reason: "to provoke Christians to anger so as to find a cause of a Jihad." In addition, his group used verses from both Bible and Qur'an "to create confusion" amongst Christians.⁵²

Even government-owned media were/are allegedly used for this purpose. Radio Kaduna, according to Kantiok, devotes two-thirds of its air time to Muslim programmes, while Christians have only two hours a week. It gives live coverage to the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. The late Gumi used his daily radio programme to make "derogatory and inciting speeches against Christians." Similarly, he used his weekly programme on Kaduna Television to "denounce Christ. A favourite ploy of his was the use of Christian converts to Islam for this purpose."⁵³

However, Muslims do not grant the same liberties to Christians or other non-Muslims. As soon as others quote from the Qur'an or present their interpretation of any important Islamic tenet, Muslims everywhere easily turn to anger, persecution and violence. As to using government vehicles for the furtherance of their religion, Muslims do not grant that right to others either, though they have appropriated it for themselves. A Muslim evangelist, Sheikh Abubakar Muhammad Tureta, publicly criticized Jerry Gana, the Christian Director of the former MAMSER, a government agency, for using that agency for Christian purposes. Gana was reported to have said he would use his agency "to make sure that politics and religion were not mixed come next republic."⁵⁴

We have here a reference to a highly complicated situation. For one, Gana's alleged intention not only conformed to the Christian agenda, but it also represented the official government line. As Director of a government agency, he was carrying out government policy. But Gana was also member of the Executive Committee of CAN, for whom the highest political goal was the separation of politics and religion, an attempt that itself is highly political. To add to the confusion, CAN is a highly politicized organization. No wonder that Tureta described this exercise as "playing with the people's intelligence." Adding insult to injury, CAN was accused by Tureta of "making clandestine moves through MAMSER to present gubernatorial candidates in all Northern States." For purposes of this study, the main point here is not the confusing stand of Gana and CAN, but that the Muslim Tureta criticizes

⁵²Pp. 51, 53-54.

⁵³Kantiok, pp. 266-267.

⁵⁴*The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, p. 16.

the use of a government agency for Christian purposes. Muslims may use the government for their purposes, but Christians are denied that privilege.

There is no need to repeat the stories found in the series.⁵⁵ We remind you of the incident surrounding the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary. We recall the provocative publications Muslims distributed prior to the Kafanchan riot, but when the Christian preacher quoted from the Qur'an, Muslims responded with violence. And then there was the Katsina incident, when *Fun Times* allegedly insulted both Muhammed and Jesus⁵⁶, Yakubu Yahaya hauled thousands of people into Katsina with violence as the result, whether planned or not. Even when Christian students merely advertise their programme without mentioning Islam, as they did with their banner at Kafanchan, Muslims took offence.

Not only do Muslims feel free to berate the basic tenets of the Christian religion but also Christians themselves. Again, it is a one-way street, for Muslims do not tolerate anyone berating their own religion, its major actors or its adherents. Further along in this paper I will summarize the common Muslim reaction to Salmon Rushdie and his book *Satanic Verses*. In that context Christians and Westerners—Muslims usually fail to distinguish between them—are accused of the worst deeds and more than once associated with satan. Please refer also to the appendices associated with this paper where the harshest terms are applied to Christians with the harshest of emotions. Expressing his joy about Hindatu Abasiya's conversion from Christianity to Islam, Iro M Gaga of Maiduguri ends with the prayer that God may bring all *kaffirs* to their heels or humiliate them, a prayer that reminds one of some Old Testament Psalms, but that have no place in the era of the new covenant, a kind of prayer, moreover, that one would hardly expect a Christian to pray.. The nickname "*kaffir*" is a derogatory term Muslims apply to Christians that, it may be remembered, was one of the terms that angered the Christians of Zangon-Kataf very much and was advanced as one of the reasons for the violence.

⁵⁵See footnote 1 for explanation.

⁵⁶Those not familiar with Islam, may not realize that Jesus is also a revered prophet in that religion. Hence, an attack on or insult directed to Him as prophet is considered an attack on Islam. For that reason, when Jesus was satirized on British TV, British Muslims objected, calling it "degrading, mocking and insulting," while a spokesman of the Church of England, a "good" example of the lack of zealotry that characterizes so much of the Western church, described it merely as "innocuous." It has been suggested that Muslims used this incident to seek an expansion of British blasphemy laws to include Islam. They thus may have had political aims with their protest, but that would have been *religious* political aims. REC NE, Mar/93, p. 5.

It is not suggested that Christians never provoke Muslims in an unethical and unwise way. Sometimes Christians will go into the central strongholds of Islam in order to preach, for example, close to a mosque. Knowing the sensitivity of Muslims, they should hardly be surprised that they get attacked. Babs Mala, a well-known Nigerian Christian academic concerned with religious peace, tells the story of a group of Christians who gathered in front of a Muslim leader's house to hurl abusive language and condemning him to hell if he does not repent.⁵⁷ Though I have long admired my late friend, evangelist Paul Gindiri, I have often had doubts about some of his aggressive and provocative evangelism in Muslim strongholds. I do not know whether he gained any converts, but I do know he has helped free Christians from their slumbers and fears—and that surely was a needed service in his day. Nevertheless, whether or not the constitution leaves room for it, is provocation in tense situations the best way to live together? Could those fears not have been alleviated in some other way?

Bishop Onaiyekan is unhappy about the "inconsiderate use" of powerful loudspeakers mounted on the outside of churches and mosques. Here both Christians and Muslims are guilty. It often seems, he complains, that the aim is to force everyone in the vicinity to hear. It is even worse when they are used to hurl "abuse and ridicule at each other."⁵⁸

But there is little doubt in my mind that this problem is heightened by excessive Muslim sensitivity and intolerance. Salifu has a point. If you don't like someone's preaching, just leave or turn off the television. Salifu has listened several times to Gumi's preaching on TV. When he does not like the preaching, he says, "I put it off. I don't take my knife and pursue Gumi to get rid of him." He does not know of any incident where Christians have started throwing stones at Muslim preachers simply because they disagree with them.⁵⁹ From the Christian point of view, the real offence of Gumi's preaching was two-fold. First, it was on government-owned media that allegedly discriminate(d) strongly against equal Christian access. Thus, it constituted another alleged case of unilateral government support of Islam. Secondly, if Christians were to express themselves similarly, the entire Muslim community would be in uproar and probably start another riot. Muslims can say it; others can't. That's the bottom line.

⁵⁷"Christian-Muslim Dialogue," p. 13.

⁵⁸ *Encounter*, p. 11.

⁵⁹ *TD*, no. 5/87, p. 20.

Nigerian Muslims also decry what they consider “anti-Islamic propaganda” in Britain, the former colonial power in Nigeria. No matter how virulently and frequently Muslims berate others, when others critique Islam, the latter reacts with violent language where it lacks the power for violent action. The reference here is to an alleged “well co-ordinated propaganda... against Muslims in Britain.” It is “malicious propaganda” that “may prevent the spread of Islam.” “This tiny clique of anarchists...are wont to tag Muslims in Britain as ‘terrorists,’ ‘militants,’ ‘racist’ in order to discredit them and their faith.” The event is referred to as “inhuman and barbaric propaganda” against a “well-known non-violent Islamic organization advocating intellectual change as a means of achieving better quality of life.” “This intellectual terrorism has reached an extent in which textual references to Prophet Muhammad... were quoted out of context... to suit the anti-Islamic lobbyists....” This attack is decried especially since the group under discussion, Hizb-ul-Tahrir, “abides by Islam without any racial or religious prejudice against others...”⁶⁰ I ask Muslims whether they do not sense the hollowness of their protest in view of their treatment of Christians in Saudi and many other Muslim countries, including Nigeria? If they do not, others do. I do not know whether their attitude is a case of plain hypocrisy or of naïveté arising from Muslim infatuation with their religion that simply disables them from paying any empathetic attention to the criticism from members of other religions who all over the world complain of victimization.

The most famous internationalized example is, of course, that of Salman Rushdie. Many Westerners thought his death sentence was a case of exceptional and extremist Fundamentalist reaction. Little did they realize that it was classical and well within Muslim norms. The Nigerian Muslim community stood fully behind his condemnation. I am giving this case extra coverage because of its international standing not only, but also because it exposes the issues so graphically.

The Pen and *Alkalmi* accorded the saga considerable coverage and with hot anger. An editorial (24 Feb/89) on the subject in *Pen* is appended to this paper so you can get a feel of the sharp insult experienced by the Muslim community not only, but also how they related the issue to their global political perspective. A preacher at the mosque at the University of Ibadan proclaimed, "We pronounce our condemnation of the Satanic attempt of Salman Rushdie, his

⁶⁰ *Al-Madinah*, Nov/95, p. 27.

mentors and collaborators to undermine the basis of our faith; he must be brought to book, for Allah's sovereignty knows no territorial boundaries."

Not to be outdone, *Alkalami* published similar materials. Aminudeen Abubukar wrote a two-page article interpreting the book and denouncing it in strong and eloquently emotional language. Abubukar's main problem is that Rushdie claims that some Qur'anic passages were inspired by satan.

*Ba shakka, wannan ita ce karya mafi girma da dan Adam ya taba yi ya kirata ga Manzon Allah... Wannan ita ce karya mafi girma da dan Adam ya taba yi, ya shirgata ga Allah Mahalicci. Wannan ita ce karya mafi girma da dan-Adam ya taba yi, ya shirgata ga al-Qur'ani mai girma. Wannan ita ce karya mafi girma da dan-Adam ya taba yi, ya jinginata ga Muslumi gaba daba.*⁶¹

Abubukar goes into great details about the horrible punishments that await the perpetrator of such a sin. In summary: "1—*Shi kafiri ne*. 2—*Za a kashe shi*. 3—*Ko ya tuba, ba za a karbi tubarsa ba.... Ba wani zunubi wanda ko ka tuba za a fasa zartar ma da hukuncin kisa ba, sai zagin Manzon Allah....*"⁶² The Hausa-Arabic term "kafiri," is a strongly emotional term laden with hatred and contempt in Nigeria. When Christians hear it applied to them, they are deeply offended. It is experienced as such a deep insult that the issue comes up frequently in the various government commissions appointed to look into the riots of earlier chapters. Though the Old Testament has close parallels to such punishments, they have been abrogated, for they no longer fit the spirit of the dispensation of the New Testament. The closest New Testament parallel to Rushdie's offence as seen by Muslims is the sin against the Holy Spirit, for which, according to the Bible, there is no forgiveness (Mark 3:29).⁶³

⁶¹"Ayoyin Shaidan." La'anannen Littafi," *Alkalami*, 17 Mar/89, pp. 6, 11. Translation: "Without a doubt, this is the greatest lie ever uttered by man against the Prophet of God. This is the greatest lie ever uttered by man, the heaviest ever against God the Creator. This is the greatest lie ever uttered by man against the holy Qur'an. This is the greatest lie ever uttered by man against the entire Muslim community."

⁶²

Translation: "1—He is pronounced a non-Muslim. 2—He will be killed. 3—Even if he repents, it will not be accepted.... There is no sin for which one will be killed if he repents, except that of insulting the Prophet of God."

⁶³ I do not know of any attempt on the part of the church to establish a practice reflecting this Biblical statement, except perhaps the practice of shunning in the Amish community. In other Christian communities even excommunication, seldom practised these days, does not lead to economic and political shunning and certainly not to capital punishment.

A number of peaceful demonstrations were held to support Rushdie's death sentence, but also to reject the support Nigeria's one Nobel Prize winner, Wole Soyinka, gave to Rushdie. The hatred and utter contempt which this support earned Soyinka can best be conveyed by reproducing an article by one Ahmad Sa'ad who expresses the common sentiment very well.⁶⁴ One Ibrahim Lawal of Funtua reserves all kinds of insulting names for Nigeria's only Nobel winner: (a) "*dan barandan mulkin mallaka*," (b) "*dan amshin shatan turawa*," (c) "*karen farautarsu*." who "*ya nuna goyon bayansa ga... manyan kafiran duniya biyu Amerika da Ingila*." And then the Muslim lion's heart in Lawal's bosom begins to roar: Soyinka is motivated by the fear of (e) "*ganin yadda guguwar Islama take kadawa tare da jijjiga duniya za ta rushe daular Turawan yamma ta Kiristoci*." Anyone who is heard insulting the Prophet and the Qur'an, "*to, jininsa ya tabbata ta halatta a garemu da kashe shi. Kuma ba wani tausayi ko sassautawa a kansa*."⁶⁵ Aminudeen Abubukari ends his article in a similarly aggressive and harsh tone:

*...muna rokon Allah... ya ba mu karfin hali, ya daukaka Musulunci da Musulmi, kuma ya hallaka makiyanmu, da makiyan Addinin Musulunci, da makiyan Allah da na manzonsa.... Allah ya rugurguza kasar Yahudawa, da 'yan mishan, da zindikai, da wadanda suke makiya gaskiya. Allah... ya hallaka mawallafin wannan littafi da wanda ya buga shi, da masu goyon bayansa, kima Allah ya batar da littafin ga baki daya. Ameen!*⁶⁶

Ibrahim Bello urges the Government to fire Soyinka from his government post as well as ban the book.⁶⁷

⁶⁴See Appendix 2.

⁶⁵"Tir da Wole Soyinka!" *Alkalami*, 17 Mar/89, p. 3. Translation: (a) agent or gatekeeper of the colonialists, (b) pleaser of European devil [I do not guarantee the accuracy of this particular translation. There are several possible alternatives. The meaning is further made difficult by the possibility of either alternative spellings or spelling mistakes, neither of which is uncommon in this paper.] (c) their hunting dog, (d) he provides support to the two big non-Muslim [or pagan] countries in the world, America and Great Britain, (e) of seeing how the Muslim whirlwind is beating and shaking the earth, ready to destroy the privileged position of the Christian West, (f) it is surely incumbent upon us to kill him. There is no chance for mercy or for diminishing the sentence.

⁶⁶Translation: We pray God for courage, for lifting up both Islam and Muslims. May he destroy our enemies, the enemies of Islam, of God and of His prophet.... May God smash the land of the Jews, Christians, spiritual compromisers and all who hate the truth. May God destroy the author of the book together with those who published and support it. May God destroy the book itself. Amen!

⁶⁷*Alkalami*, 3 Mar/89, p. 1.

There you have it. Naked hatred. Bare emotions. Nothing left to the imagination. And far removed from any sense of pity for one who has wandered so far from the perceived truth of Allah. Equally far from any desire for reconciliation that would characterize a serious Christian approach to such a profound backslider. It is all there for the entire world to see and absorb. Not a pretty or reassuring picture. One is left with the impression of an unforgiving, harsh and non-compromising religion. It is only to be expected that the subsequent half-hearted apology of Rushdie, an obvious attempt at undoing the ban, was not considered acceptable. *This* ban is irrevocable.

In typical Nigerian Muslim fashion, the whole issue was not only blown up all out of proportion, but also heavily politicized. What many Westerners, mostly religiously blind secularists, could only see as a ridiculous religious squabble, Abu Dharr put in a much wider context that is typical of wholistic versus compartmentalized thinking. Why should the West insist on absolute freedom to destroy Islam, when various forces in the West control the media to ensure they support the West and its capitalist system? Those who own the media are not "ideologically neutral." Media owners and advertisers control the content of Western media.

Aminudeen Abubakar reports that in 1977, the British government heavily fined and imprisoned both the author of a book that allegedly affronted the Christian religion and the party who based a film on it, while both book and film were banned. The reason was to prevent violent demonstrations against the book. Why did this government not do the same with respect to Rushdie? Abubakar alleges hypocrisy. It does not seem to have occurred to him that just as Muslim countries did not fear violence because of that 1977 book and therefore did not need to ban it, so Britain did not fear violence because of Rushdie. Overheated emotion and hatred do easily becloud one's thinking!

But the point is: Western media are not absolutely free. So, why should the West demand that Islam allow absolute freedom when Muslim interests are threatened?⁶⁸ It cannot be denied that Dharr has a valid point, though overstated. Western media are more free than Dharr claims, but neither are they as absolutely free as is often pretended. I doubt that British law would allow a writer to say about their queen what Rushdie wrote about the wives of Muhammed. There are limits. Would that both Christians and Muslims recognize these limits

⁶⁸*The Pen*, 10 Mar/89, pp. 1, 5, 12. P. 12 features a review of the book. See also issue of 7 Apr/89, pp. 1, 8, 16. Samples of other anti Rushdie articles are also found in other newspapers such as *New Nigerian*, 27 Dec/90, 6, 12 Sep/93; *Nigeria Standard*, 12 Oct/93.

when it comes to writing about each other. *These limits do not always have to be set by law. The peace of the community demands self-policing on the part of both religions.*

The last Muslim argument is adduced against the call of *Vanguard*, a prominent Nigerian newspaper, to allow *Satanic Verses* free circulation in Nigeria. Free circulation “irrespective of whether the book is inflammatory or not”? According to Mohammed Danjuma in a letter to the editor, this call shows “clearly how devilish, selfish and mischievous” the publishers of *Vanguard* are. There were indeed signs of danger. A group of Muslim students at the Aminu Kano Law School held a demonstration demanding the banning of the book.⁶⁹ “*Dasuki na son gwamnati ta haramta Ayoyin Shaidan,*”⁷⁰ announces one headline. One Aminudeen Abubakar calls for the ban on basis of potential violence: “*Idan kuwa ta yarda ya shigo, to, wallahi! Zai tayar da tarzomar da ban san iyakacinta ba....*”⁷¹

“What sort of freedom,” Danjuma asks, “will prevent a responsible government from banning a book that could throw the whole nation into chaos?”⁷² There is a subtle and strange twist in this argument, of course, for which publisher had worked harder at creating a climate ripe for chaos? *Vanguard* or *The Pen*? Free circulation might have made for chaos, but what if *The Pen* had played down this matter instead of creating a near religious panic? Would free circulation have caused even a ripple? As is usually the case, the hot ravings about the book led many people to clandestinely obtain, distribute and read the book. *The Pen* may well have turned out to be the best friend of the publishers of *Satanic Verses* in Nigeria!

Evidences Throughout the Culture

In the above, I have concentrated on and dealt at length with two areas, namely gender relations and public utterances. One can almost go on indefinitely; there is hardly an aspect of life not touched by mutual irritation and rancour. There is the area of the teaching of religious knowledge in government schools.

This issue has been on the front burner in the north eastern state of Borno, one heavily dominated by the Muslim Kanuri, an ethnic group that, along with the Hausa and Fulani, dominate

⁶⁹ *Alkalami*, 17 Mar/89, p. 16.

⁷⁰ [Sultan] “Dasuki wants the Government to quickly ban *Satanic Verses*”—*Alkalami* 3 Mar/89.

⁷¹ “If it [the Nigerian government] does allow this book into the country, no telling what will happen! It will create a state of war the end of which I cannot foresee...”—*Alkalami*, 3 Mar/89.

⁷² *The Pen*, 5 May/ 89, p. 3.

the far north. The Kanuri have proudly out shone the other two in their resistance to the Gospel. There are only a handful of Christians among them.

While Islam is taught in government schools, Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) teaching was resisted. The state's CAN chapter turned to legal channels, insisting that the constitution gives them the same right. Below follows the report of the Nigerian e-mail news service *Du Jour*⁷³ Under the caption "Tensions between Christians and Muslims Increase in Borno State," the report reads:

Relations between Christians and Moslems in Borno state have hit an all time low following recent clashes that led to the death of over 20 persons. Moslem fanatics in the state are opposed to Christian institutions and have vowed to resist a growing trend of evangelical churches in the state, especially Maiduguri. The Association of Catholic Media Practitioners in Lagos yesterday appealed to Christians in Borno State to be calm in the face of alleged attacks, but such calls may be ignored as Christian leaders have told their congregation to defend themselves whenever attacked Moslim youths.

A government delegation has been sent to the state following last weekend's protest by a group of Islamic youths.... The delegation included the Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Ibrahim Coomassie and the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Vice Marshal, Al-Amin Daggash. The duo has held talks with traditional rulers, religious leaders and representatives of Igbo groups in the state. At the meeting were the Administrator, Wing Commander Lawal Ningi Haruna, the Shehu of Borno, Umar Mustapha El-Kanemi, two Islamic scholars, Sheik Ibrahim Saleh and Sheik Mohammed Abba Ayi. The chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Bishop of Maiduguri, Anglican Diocese, the Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Kana Mani, represented the association.

For those familiar with Nigeria, it is clear that this was a powerful blue ribbon delegation conferring with local leaders of the same level. The issue was recognized as extremely important and potentially explosive. Nevertheless, judging from the names, it seems also that the two government delegates were both Muslims as well as all the others in the above list, except that of the bishop. It seems strangely and ominously one-sided in an issue that required careful evenhandedness. Lack of evenhandedness on the part of Muslim authorities in such disputes has been a frequent Christian complaint. The former are not known for evenhandedness and fair play.

⁷³ 22 Dec/98.

The reaction of the Muslim community also showed the same insensitivity to fair play and equality of religions. When the government ordered that Christianity also be taught, Muslims began rioting in Maiduguri, the state capital and attacked three church buildings. CAN claims it had discovered the plan a few days earlier, but the government did nothing to prevent the attacks. At the end, the government withdrew its order to teach CRK.⁷⁴

Who was behind the rioting? Had this been a mere thoughtless mob, the government would have known and would not have withdrawn its order and taken steps to prevent re-occurrence. Such riots are usually engineered by people who know what they are doing. In the background is likely a group of influential people, possibly including government officials, who created the scene in order to give the government an excuse to retreat without being accused of intolerance. The government could now withdraw its order on the grounds of public safety. Of course, the veil was too thin for Christians to fall for it.

Another explosive issue since January, 1986, has been that of Nigerian membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Though Nigerians had attended previously as mere observers representing not the Government but the Muslim community, “out of the blue, the national French news agency broke the news that Nigeria had been secretly admitted....” This had been masterminded by President Babangida with the connivance of Muslim leaders but without the involvement of the appropriate government officials. As to motive, the various commentators only guess.

The move was, as Falola put it, “a costly miscalculation.” In fact, Falola asserts that Nigeria’s joining the OIC secretly “polarized the country... more than had any other issue in Nigeria’s history.” It erupted into a national crisis overnight, with leaders of the two religions reacting predictably. Christians demanded the immediate withdrawal; Muslims were thrilled and demanded continued membership.

I remember vividly the surprise and the anger of Christians when it became public knowledge. Obemeata strongly warned that this move will be firmly resisted by Christians, for they understand this as a step towards having Nigeria recognized as a Muslim country.⁷⁵ Falola’s history of the controversy showed Obemeata right. “Christians immediately mobilized.... Their... objections were

⁷⁴REC, Feb/99.

⁷⁵ *Independent*, 24 Dec/95, p. 2.

widely publicized in the newspapers and were the subject of sermons and church publications.... Churches issued statements and called for special prayers, rallies and fasts....”

The reasons for this strong Christian reaction was that this is an organization dedicated to the defense of Islamic interests. Indeed, in the preamble to the OIC’s charter one finds the following statement of purpose, namely “to preserve Islamic spiritual, ethical, social and economic values... and to consolidate the bonds of... brotherly and spiritual friendship among their people.” Among its purposes is the promotion of Islamic solidarity. Membership in such an organization would compromise the Christians and could force them into wars against fellow Christians in countries like Sudan. Nigerian funds would be used to promote Islam. Membership would increase the religious polarization of the country. The move was also seen as a threat to the secular nature of the Nigerian government and thus a “subversion of fundamental freedoms.” Catholic leaders called on their members to boycott the *National Concord*, a national daily, because of its support for OIC membership.⁷⁶

Muslims, on the other hand, countered that Christians were highly exaggerating. The OIC, the former argued, is more economic in its goals than religious. In fact, membership would bring considerable economic benefits to the country. OIC membership is parallel to membership in the United Nations. The membership includes Christian heads of state, not only Muslims. And it impinges no more on religious freedom than does Nigeria’s diplomatic relationship with the Vatican. *The Pen* joined other Muslim voices in demanding severance of diplomatic relations with the Vatican if Nigeria were to withdraw from OIC.⁷⁷

Muslims wanted to show they were serious in their defence of this move by threatening “calamity if the government should withdraw from the OIC.” The Council of Ulama, an organization of Muslim preachers, in reaction to the Christian offensive, published their list of demands that was only tangentially related to the OIC issue. I reproduce it here as it constitutes a useful summary of irritations Muslims experienced.

Withdrawal of diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

Replacing the Gregorian calendar with the Islamic calendar.

Replacement of Saturday and Sunday with Thursday and Friday as work free days.

Replacement of crosses with the crescent on government hospitals, clinics, institutions, ambulances, first-aid kits.

⁷⁶Falola, pp. 93-100. Kantiok, pp. 292-296.

⁷⁷ 2 Nov/88 .

Replacement of 1st January with 1st Muharram as the beginning of the New Year.

Changing the salutations of the Armed Forces from their “Christian” form.

Changing the designs of university academic gowns as these resemble those of the Christian choir groups.

Replacing the “Christian” common law with the Sharia.

Stopping laying wreaths at the grave of the unknown soldier as it was purely Christian.

Changing the vacation periods of educational institutions as they were turned to coincide with Christmas and Easter holidays.

Withdrawing landing rights granted to Christian organizations at Muryar Bishara airstrip in Plateau State and other places for their international flights without passing through our international airports for security checks.

I will resist the temptations to comment at length on these demands. The last is based on false information. A couple demonstrate the extreme cantankerous atmosphere the religions have developed, while others show Muslim readiness to replace what they consider “Christian oppression” with “Muslim oppression”—not a very profound or hopeful alternative. Replacing a Christian oriented weekend with a Muslim one only reverses the position of the parties and would solve nothing. This seemed like rock vs rock. These demands are hardly hopeful demonstrations of maturity or of the wisdom Muslims so easily claim for themselves.⁷⁸

Concluding Remarks

In this document I have reviewed a number of irritants between Christians and Muslims. At the moment, adherents of either religion can hardly make a move without irritating their counterparts. The atmosphere is full of mutual fear, distrust, threats and, not infrequently, violence. Leaders of neither religion seem eager to put an end to the fracas. They are all equally cantankerous and bent on scoring and outwitting each other so that one hardly gets a picture of spiritual maturity on either side. Kantiok, himself a Christian, is critical of Christian leaders, accusing them of copying Muslim methods of confrontation, rather than following the precepts of the Bible. He also disapproves of Christian bogus demands for institutions such as government supported Christian pilgrim boards and ecclesiastical courts.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Falola, pp. 93-102. The reader is strongly encouraged to read these pages of Falola for a fuller picture of the controversy. Same for Kantiok, pp. 296-305.

⁷⁹He disapproved of Christian reactions to the demand for shari'a as well as in the OIC wrangle.

Through it all, the poor Federal Government finds itself in a no-win situation, with both parties accusing it of collaboration with the other and both providing statistics and lists to “prove” their point.

Though we end the paper here, there will be another which continues with even more basic irritants. We will deal with the thorny issues of the right for both religions to evangelize, the right to convert, legal equality of both religions. Basically, these are all aspects of general human rights.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1-A: “America Is Doomed.”⁸⁰

America’s history has always been characterised by slavery, violence and massacres. Perpetually using the methods of blackmail, coercion, assassination and invasion to dabble into the internal affairs of weaker countries... on the pretext of curbing the so-called spread of communism. In reality, America is safeguarding imperialism, because she is created by the system and can never survive without it.

But most important, it is afraid of Islam, for as it is the truth which shines in the world, Islam exposes America’s weakness. It is a nation set on the course of deceit. The continuing slaughter of innocent lives in Palestine and Lebanon is America’s machinations yearning these places into theatres of testing her weapons. America’s raid on Libyan cities a few years back and the now increasing threats to draw Libya into confrontation is intended for the sole purpose of killing President Muammer Gaddafi because of his avowed opposition to her anti-Islamic antics. For sure, sense has deserted American leaders. In their fit of madness, they are scheming to plunge the world into total destruction of man. Are the Americans and the Jews branding themselves super human? In their shallow mind, nobody deserve sympathy, no matter how innocent, if he is not of their own creed. But let a single American or a Jew die while perhaps trying to execute sinister motives, the whole world would be prevented from sleep. Are these twin evils saying only they have the right to live and do as they like on this earth? Outright stupidity!

Kantiok, pp. 196-203, 285-287.

⁸⁰Muhammad Sadiu, “America Is Doomed.” *The Pen*, 24 Feb/90, p. 3.

America and her associates in the West should stop deceiving themselves that their exploitation of humanity will last forever. The blood of Muslims they have spilled will not go unavenged.

America's use of terrorism to portray the legitimate demands of the Palestinians to be given back their land forcefully taken from them is as hollow as putting water into the basket. The world knows the truth. America and its cohorts are the REAL terrorists. However, when Israel bombards Arab villages, killing women and children, or when America willfully shoots down Iranian or Libyan aircraft right in their own territory, that is self-defence! What an irony!

America now disturbs the world that Libya is about to produce chemical weapons, while unashamedly, she not only produces them and backs Israel to do the same, but also these notorious countries stockpile nuclear arms all directed against Muslims.

America has bitten more than it can chew. Their massive acquisition of armaments, scheming and manipulation of events to suit their satanic desires will NOT save them. Muslims will resist at all cost. Basically, America has signed her death warrant.

APPENDIX 1-B: "Understanding the hypocrisy of the US – the rogue superpower or 'shaytan-e buzurg'"⁸¹

Zafar Bangash, Director of the Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought, reminds us all of the true nature of the US, and why Imam Khomeini memorably called it "*shaytan-e buzurg*" – the great satan.

The title "rogue superpower", or "*shaytan-e buzurg*" in Imam Khomeini's celebrated phrase, commonly used for the US is not merely political rhetoric; it is the deeply felt and perceptive view of people wounded by America's crude and arrogant policies. What is even more revealing is that these feelings are not confined to those directly targeted by Uncle Sam; even its European allies have started to feel uneasy about the uncouth behaviour of the overbearing uncle.

*APPENDIX 2: "Comment."*⁸²

⁸¹ *Crescent International*, April 16-30, 2000.

⁸² "Comment." *The Pen* Feb. 24/89, 1-2. I have taken the liberty to correct some of the grammar mistakes in this and other quotations from *The Pen*. A similar editorial was published in *Alkalami*, 3 Mar/89, p.1, the Hausa-language alter-ego of *The Pen*.

We are outraged by the... blasphemous contents of Mr. Salman Rushdie's... novel—*Satanic Verses*. A Satanic book it is, that like its author, it must be wiped out of the earth surface.

Since the early days of Islam some 14 centuries ago, when the Qur'an was being revealed to mankind through Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), there has never been a more serious sarcastic attack against the over one billion Muslims of the world today, their Prophet Muhammad (SAW), their revealed book the Qur'an and their way of life—the Shari'ah. We recall even in those early days of Islam, the unbelievers and the hypocrites were greatly impressed by the personality of Prophet Muhammad and amazed by the contents of the Qur'an that almost all gave up the opposition and joined "the only religion in the sight of Allah."

Since then, Prophet Muhammad has been the greatest, most respected personality ever to live on earth and the Qur'an the greatest sacred and most widely read book. A fact accepted even by non-Muslims, as noted by the authors of *One Hundred Great Men* and *One Hundred Great Books*. This is why the Muslim world is appalled by the *Satanic Verses*, a book written by a one-time Indian-born Muslim and published in self-styled "great" country and supposedly enlightened and supported by those who have arrogated to themselves the knowledge of everything, including right and wrong.

Consider a writer referring to the world's greatest man as Mahound, a Jewish term meaning "evil." Consider the wives of the Prophet whom Allah called Ummahatul Mumineen—the mothers of the believers—being called "whores"—prostitutes.... Muslims, we repeat, have never been so insulted. Nobody ever abused us so cruelly.

Religion... has been the most sensitive issue everywhere.... Come to think of it, what else... does Mr. Rushdie deserve but death? We must not forget this is a printed matter. Only God knows the extent of its circulation.

Published in November last year, Mr. Rushdie's has been the greatest insult to Muslims world wide.

We... noticed, though not surprisingly, the growing concern and interest of the imperialists mass media... represented by the BBC, VOA,⁸³ leading newspapers in Britain and the US and international news agencies since the justifiable death sentence issued by Ayatullah Ruhullah Khomeini against... Rushdie. There has been a systematic attempt to build and mould public opinion on the false impression that it is just another demonstration of the fire-brand Islamic fundamentalism of the Shi'ite Iranian Muslim, thereby reducing the issue to a regional and sectarian one.

We refuse to agree that the Ayatullah's is a Shi'a sentence which the Sunnis⁸⁴ have nothing to do with. We also refuse to agree that the public "apology" by Salman Rushdie suffices to write off the sentence. We cannot agree more that Salman deserves nothing but death. We cannot be divided. If an Iranian passenger aircraft is cruelly danned or Libyan civilians are attacked by night marauding American jet bombers, then public opinion may be divided. But when the only Prophet of the world's most popular religion is attacked, when Islam's only revealed book is challenged as just another fictitious tale, we cannot but feel unanimously insulted by an audacious atheist. The imperialists and their powerful mass media must understand that we may have sects in Islam, but certainly we have no other revealed book but the Qur'an and no other Prophet but Muhammad, although we believe in all those sent before him by Allah.

The fact that demonstrations against the Satanic book started in Britain itself, followed by Pakistan, parts of India and then Iran shows that Muslims, irrespective of their denominations and geographical locations are no longer at ease.

The European Community may withdraw their diplomats from Tehran and London may politely dismiss Iranian representation, but certainly that will not shake the Islamic Mission balance on Rushdie. We similarly call on the UK Islamic Mission made up of Muslim diplomats and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to withdraw their diplomats from Britain without delay. Rushdie must die, the book banned and withdrawn, the publishers condemned and charged to court for insult to public feeling and faith.

We found the American postulation most ridiculous. President Bush's remark that death sentence "is against the norms of civilised behaviour" is certainly sycophantic. We are not surprised that it is supposedly in order to America to insult over one billion people but quite disorderly to call for capital punishment against an individual whose singular action has caused the death of many.

It is surprising that Britain has forgotten its irritation about the book *Spy Catcher* written by a former intelligence chief. Also, when James Kirkup wrote a poem which was seen as embarrassing to the church, he was tried and subsequently convicted along with the editor of the paper that published it.

We wonder if the American/European reaction... would be the same if a Muslim attacked a Judeo-Christian faith and Prophet in the same venom.

⁸⁴ Shi'a and Sunni are the two major divisions in Islam .

On the other hand, we are disturbed by the deafening silence of some important world Muslim leaders and organisations whose participation may have quickened the journey to justice.

In his capacity as the custodian of the Haramain, the Khadimul Haramainish... ought speak on the issue and call for a halt to the insult. By virtue of his position as the chief custodian of our two most holiest mosques, he is a leader to every Muslim and should have cause to be vexed when the Prophet is castigated.

Similarly, the world Muslim league known as the Rabita must also rise up to its prime task of defending the Muslim interest. At home, our leaders and organisations seem ignorant of what is amiss. The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Council of Ulama and the Jama'atu Nasril Islam must speak for us and together with the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria warn against the possible appearance of the condemned book in this country.

APPENDIX 3: "Soyinka, Satan Rushdie And the Illusion of Art"⁸⁵

If there is anything Wole Soyinka regretted... is the fact that he is created BLACK and not a Caucasian WHITE. If Shango⁸⁶...or such carved deities could have the power to turn him White, Soyinka could have made all the necessary sacrifices to achieve that ambition. Failing which, Soyinka wrote for the whiteman and at times in the name of art, he defeated the whiteman in the latter's language. Often times even the whiteman is at pains to get at Soyinka's obscurantism that is raised back to the level of art.

Western civilization... is known for elevating mediocrity to the level of perfection or excellence. At one state in the history of the civilized race, it is a sporting activity to release defenceless human being to hungry and ferocious lions, while the nobility watched the show.... It is equally the maker of civilization to watch gladiators in the amphitheatre as they maim themselves with all sorts of dangerous weapons.

Today, wrestling, boxing, karate, etc. are part and parcel of the international sporting activity. Moreover, in the name of freedom, homosexuals, nudes, pimps, whores, etc. have established fraternal associations with international headquarters in the capitals of the civilized nations, sometimes with representation among parliamentarians, politicians, business as well as government functionaries.

⁸⁵Ahmad Sa'ad. *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89 or 3 March/89, p. 5. Due to explanations in footnote 1, it is next to impossible to determine which of the two dates is correct.

⁸⁶Shango is a traditional Yoruba deity.

In the name of art, obscenity, mediocrity and absurdity are given universal acclaim, while works of serious intent and greater social commitment are relegated to the background or sometimes even suppressed. That's why it is not in anyway surprising... if, after several years of desperate services to please his masters, Soyinka is at least rewarded with a Nobel prize.

The Nobel laureate cannot afford to betray the very people who made him what he is. Since the poor artist cannot change his pigmentation nor deny his humble background in the wooded jungles of mother Africa, he can, however, as a temporary solace, languish in holding brief for the whiteman. Owing to the western patronage he enjoys, the poor artist picks hole with anybody or group that challenges Western arrogance. No wonder his acute hatred of the Muslim North. In his works it is always his land, his people and his gods that have any cultural refinements.

The saying that all nations outside Greece are barbarians holds good for Soyinka's Caucasian snobbery. This tribal tin-god who sees nothing good in Muslim values or history has the audacity to tell Nigerian Muslims, nay Muslims the world over, to their faces in the name of art, Satan Rushdie can abuse our Prophet and insult his wives. Again, in the name of freedom of speech, Satan Rushdie can write obscene literature insulting the conscience of Muslims and then get a Soyinka to circulate the obscenity all over the world, using the electronic medium of his godfathers. It is in roles like these that Soyinka can justify the honour done to him by the whiteman.

Perhaps what Soyinka needs to know is that Muslims' conscience cannot be trampled with impunity. He cannot hide behind Western arrogance and shamelessness to insult Muslims. Satan Rushdie will, *in sha Allah*, be killed as ordered by the Imam. What remains to be seen will be Soyinka's avowed determination to spread the gospel of Satan Rushdie. It is then the lessons of history will be proved against him: That Islam triumphs over its adversaries, however armed they may be. We live to see.

***APPENDIX 4: "Taliban Puts Widows out of Business"*⁸⁷**

Saying Islam completely forbids women from working, Afghanistan's hard-line Taliban... shut down bakeries run by widows, who are among the poorest of the poor here.

The bakeries were started by the UN's World Food Program and allowed widows to be paid salaries to make bread which was sold at a subsidized price to other women—also widows. The order left 350 widows without jobs, said Peter Goossens, country director for the WFP.

⁸⁷ Associated Press, Grand Rapids Press, Aug. 17/2000.

“The women and children who benefit from this program are among the poorest and most vulnerable people in Afghanistan,” UN deputy spokesman Manoel de Almedia e Silva said in New York. “The loss of support will result in increased poverty and possibly loss of life and health for women and children.”

The Taliban, which rules roughly 90 percent of Afghanistan, espouse a harsh brand of Islamic law and have imposed many strictures on women since taking control of ... Kabul in 1996.

The Taliban at first closed all girls’ schools and drove all women out of the work force. It later made concessions on education and health, and women began to return to work for foreign aid organizations, wearing the all-encompassing burqa that covers them from head to foot.

In early July, the Taliban barred women from working for international organizations, with the exception of the health sector. The UN had hoped the bakeries also would be exempt, but Wednesday the Taliban closed the doors and told the women to go home.

“The rules of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan are clear and they have been ignoring the rules,” said... the Taliban’s ambassador to Pakistan. “We do not allow women to work.”

Women who had been working at the bakeries were devastated.

“Give me poison and give my five children poison. Then we will die fast instead of a slow death from starving and shame!” one woman yelled from inside a bakery.

The UN estimates that 28,000 widows live in Kabul, a city of 750,000 people. Most residents rely on international aid to survive, UN officials say.

Many of the widows lost their husbands in a bitter, bloody war between rival Islamic factions that killed an estimated 50,000 people, most of them civilians.