

THE PERCEIVED MUSLIM SPIRIT OF DOMINATION

You will notice in this and the succeeding chapters that, as with Muslims in Volume 2, Christian opinion is largely unanimous. There may be some differences in detail, but by and large the picture is that of a single choir with different voices, all contributing to one harmonious whole. Unfortunately, when put next to the Muslim harmony, the two jar so badly that they produce a disastrous *disharmony*.

Within the Christian community there is an established culture of Christian political correctness that will not tolerate disharmony or serious dissent within the ranks. I submitted an article to a Nigerian Christian theological journal and referred to the opinion of Anthony Enahoro, one of the last remaining colonial politicians and a Christian. Enahoro is more positive towards the adoption of the sharia than is usually the case with Christians. The editors deleted the reference; it could not be tolerated. The rest of the article was received by the readers with considerable appreciation, but that one discordant note by a highly respected senior Christian elder was not allowed to stand, even though his opinion had already become public knowledge.

The Muslim spirit of which this chapter speaks does not refer to the entire spirit of the Muslim community. The discussion is restricted to the way Nigerian Christians view that spirit in the context of their mutual struggle for control and recognition. As mentioned earlier, Muslims were viewed sympathetically in Volume 2 and Christians somewhat negatively; in this volume the situation is reversed. This chapter or even entire volume does not accurately represent my personal estimation of the Muslim spirit in Nigeria so much as that of Nigerian Christians. It is this estimation that drives them.

There are five major terms that form the core of that Nigerian Christian view. These are: domination, intolerance, violence, suspicion and anger. These form the Christian bottom line. We have seen in the second monograph how suspicious Muslims are of Christian intentions, how oppressed and angry they feel. The same is no less true for Christians. This bottom line drives much of their outbursts and actions. These cries of anger and exasperation are heard time and again from almost every Nigerian Christian who has ever written on Christian–Muslim relations in Nigeria.

▲ THE SPIRIT OF DOMINATION —————

Nigerian Christians are of the opinion that Muslims have a natural instinct for domination. They have a need to dominate. They feel uncomfortable when not dominant.

Tanko Yusuf¹ had a sure conviction, born in the fire of experience, that Islam, especially in its fundamentalist expression, seeks to control the entire world, including Nigeria. This is one of Nigeria's two major struggles; the other is corruption. He did not regard the Muslim push for domination as an aberration in Islam.. It is an expression of its deepest nature. In Islam, "religion and government are one and the same."

It is considered legitimate for Muslim political leaders to use state facilities, institutions, and power to promote Islam. It

*seemed natural, then, when Nigerian self-government began..., to Muslim leaders that they openly use government for both religious and political purposes.*²

Yusuf used to hammer away at this theme without let-up. Throughout his political career, he saw himself as a watchdog for Christian interests versus alleged attempts of Islam to take over the country, attempts often unconsciously supported by the colonial regime. His public struggle against Muslim domination started the day he challenged the practice of opening the meetings of the colonial Northern House of Assembly with Muslim prayers. As the Chief of Kagoro tells the story in the introduction to Yusuf's autobiography,

*The Honourable Mr. Niven was creating the incorrect impression that Islam was the one and only religious faith in the northern part of Nigeria. Mallam Yusuf called the Speaker's attention to the fact that at least two or three religions were represented in the session. Would it not be only fair... that at least two different prayers—Muslim and Christian—be offered before the sessions began? The British-born Mr. Niven politely conceded.*³

Yusuf never tired of his warnings regarding Muslim domination of Nigeria. The country's "government, armed forces, and its powerful hard-line fundamentalist Muslim minority want absolute power only for themselves," he insisted.⁴ With great bitterness he asserted that Babangida, a former head of state, "and his corrupt cronies believe they must (and are the only ones who can) rule Nigeria. Only the few Fulani and the elite Hausa tribes, they say, have the talent, ability, and leadership qualities to rule Nigeria. It is their destiny. What arrogance!"⁵

Yusuf was well aware of the classic Muslim schematic with respect to the place of non-Muslims. He knew that Muslim tradition allows for only three alternatives, none of which are acceptable to Christians. "Infidels" must be converted, subjugated or elimi-

nated. This also underlies Muslim aims for Nigeria.⁶

It is not only the fundamentalists, extremists or so-called fanatics who seek to dominate. Even “moderate” Muslims, according to Yusuf,

*have pushed Islam as hard as they could...since our independence. They have maneuvered jurisdiction over religion, education, economic, and personal lives. They have set up Islamic judicial institutions and have instituted administrative policies that aimed to implement Sharia throughout the country.*⁷

If we can believe this experienced warrior, it would seem my suggestion in the previous monographs—that the fundamentalists in Nigeria may be the dogs of the moderates—is not so far off the mark; or are the moderates in the process of “fundamentalizing?”

Another more recent affirmation of this Muslim spirit comes from Adewale Thompson, a former chief judge of Ondo State in the West and the current National Secretary of the Yoruba Elders Council. Why can Christians not live at peace in Kano and why are Christians not tolerated in other places in the North? he asked.⁸ Thompson reached back into colonial history to 1942, when Awolowo, the leader of the Yoruba nation at the time, asked the emirs in the North to cooperate with the south to gain early independence. The emirs responded that they would not cooperate “unless we [southerners] accepted their religion.” Thompson commented, “It was there in black and white. That is the basic factor dividing us. Nobody knows about that unless you research into history and discover it. And so in order to achieve that purpose, they plan to dominate, impose their religion on us.” Today, Muslims are “following it up” in their behaviour.⁹

In the context of all this anger, suspicion and rancour, it is no wonder Christians take very seriously Muslim declarations of superiority and domination. Danjuma Byang considered a thirteen-year-old statement from Ibraheem Sulaiman still valid in 2000. Sulaiman declared, “Muslims must be masters, not servants” and that the

sharia outlaws “subservience and dependence. It is from this perspective that Muslims in Nigeria should press for their demands.”¹⁰

Of course, we have overheard Muslims in Volume 2 express this sentiment so openly that Christians have every reason to believe this. In their very presence, R. D. Abubakre, a Muslim senior lecturer at the University of Ilorin, *speaking in a very irenic mood*, declared “that the people of God should control the helm of secular affairs.”¹¹ He stated this as a matter of fact in the presence of Christian scholars without embarrassment or any attempt to hide this Muslim instinct for power and control. It is the natural attitude of Muslims they do not bother to hide; it is their “native air.” They display little sensitivity about the offence this attitude creates in others, let alone the suspicion and hostility. It is a domineering attitude expressed everywhere, in Nigeria and abroad. The Plateau State TV station in Jos, established for the very purpose of giving the Christianized Plateau people a voice of their own, quoted a spokesman of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain as saying, “The nature of Islam is to acquire power.”¹²

Please allow an author’s aside. No sense of “fairness” and no amount of Western so-called “common” sense seems capable of freeing the Muslim community from this power complex. This is not because they are devoid of rationality, but because, like everyone else’s, their reason is governed by their heart and by their world view. The secular, the Christian and the Muslim world views simply don’t mesh and therefore we lack the platform of a common rationality. It is never a matter of “religion within the bounds of reason,” as Kant would have it and as secularists prefer it, but, rather, always of “reason within the bounds of religion,” as Nicholas Wolterstorff of Yale so aptly put it.¹³ What seems perfectly fair, rational and common sense to one community seems absurd, irrational, unfair and even oppressive to the other. The idea of a global “common sense” is a pure myth used to impose Western secularism on the world, including Islam.¹⁴

▲ RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

The drive to dominate requires a certain psychological complex to support that drive. Nigerian Christians have not had to go far afield to recognise such a complex in the Muslim community. Intolerance and violence are among the dominant characteristics Christians pick up on repeatedly. They are difficult to separate, for the one often calls up the other.

1. INTOLERANCE

Ibrahim Yaro was blunt about these issues. He recalled that Christianity has had its phase of intolerance and oppression. Apart from the crusades, Christianity in the past has persecuted people for preaching heresy. Today, Christians regret such acts and are creating much more room for tolerance and freedom.

On the other hand, today, “Islam is persecuting non-believers, subjugating them, and obliterating their freedom and so is reliving the stone-age life.” Yaro hardly tired of the theme. “While other religions,” he somewhat exaggerated, “are receptive, hospitable and tolerant to ‘infidels,’ Islam is antagonistic, violent and intolerant.” Other religions, he claimed, welcomed Islam. Alas, little did they know that they welcomed “unbridled intolerance.” While Muslims today are building mosques in the traditional bastion of Christianity, intolerance in Muslim nations makes even alterations to church buildings difficult, let alone building new ones.¹⁵

In its Kafanchan Release,¹⁶ CAN affirmed that all these disturbances are the result of Muslim intolerance. This intolerance first surfaced publicly in the intra-Muslim skirmishes, but has since reared its head in the Muslim–Christian disturbances and undergirds them all.

In fact, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) report regarded religious intolerance as one of the basic underpinnings of Nigerian violence. It blames Muslims more than

it does Christians. Intolerance was said to be more in evidence among Muslims, with Christians “being more the target than the origin of intolerance.” Christianity in the south of Nigeria, insisted the report, “has over the years not been lording it over the other religions.” At least until 1986, NIPSS claimed that “Christians have been at the receiving end of the rising tension” between the two. “The Christians have so far peaceably absorbed and tolerated attacks on their freedom of religion.” This was in sharp contrast to the Muslims in Kano with their organised attack on Christians in connection with St. George’s Church. The report warned that tensions were rapidly moving Nigeria towards “the greatest danger ever to the future peace and security of the country. The earlier the government defuses this ominous time bomb, the better.”¹⁷

2. VIOLENCE

Ever since the 9/11 terror, Muslims love to quote the statement, “Islam is the most misunderstood religion in the world.” Nigerian Christians are more in tune with a quotation with which Ibrahim Yaro begins his monograph: “In Nigeria, Islam maintains the record of being the most bloody and controversial. This assertion may be regarded as a historical legacy rather than an aberration. Right from time immemorial, Islamic activities had been associated with violence.”¹⁸

“Vindictiveness,” Yaro insisted, “is at the core of the Muslim religion, and [it has] nothing to restrain or counter the human temptation to judge and condemn others.” Its “harshness is the direct result of its uncertainty about salvation and eternity. The Muslim fear of Allah’s judgement and condemnation turns outward into the same kind of action towards others.”¹⁹

▲ MUSLIM PLANS

Tanko Yusuf was absolutely convinced that Muslims have concrete plans to take over Nigeria. He was in the good company of

other leaders. Abashiya, another one of our “fathers,” went even further. Islam, according to him, has become aggressive and would

like to obliterate Christianity from Nigeria. The Kafanchan religious crisis was a testimony to this fact. Also various meetings and write-ups of the Muslims²⁰ have shown that the Muslims, or rather some of the militant ones, are certainly out for nothing less than the complete obliteration of Christianity in Nigeria. They want to make Nigeria an Islamic republic.²¹

Yaro was similarly sure of a “secret plan to overrun the entire nation.” A major “source” of his information was a random conversation he overheard between three Muslims in a taxi in which many components of such an alleged campaign were listed.²² The credibility of such a random source leaves something to be desired. My point in drawing attention to Yaro’s version of the allegation is to indicate the widespread popularity of this suspicion. It is as popular with Christians as is the conviction of Muslims that global Christianity is plotting to destroy Islam, an issue treated in Volume 2.

CAN’s Kafanchan Release²³ explained, “Muslim elite, together with the government and emirs, colluded to exterminate Christianity so that the unfinished work can be completed, that is, the declaration of Nigeria as an Islamic nation.” CAN declared the Kafanchan episode as “the first stage of the process of Islamisation of the nation.²⁴ There is evidence that the next stage would have been the killing of prominent Christians in the North.” CAN warned that

The continuous condoning of the Muslims’ religious intolerance by the government has aided the rapidly growing tension between the Muslims and Christians. As long as the government is seen to continue to collaborate and aid the Muslims in their design to intimidate, subjugate and terrorise innocent Nigerians into submitting to their political and religious manipulation, this will eventually break the country.

Concern for and conviction of Muslim plans continue to dominate our time period. Even a sober and careful judge as Haruna Dandaura hesitantly suggested, in the context of the St. George Church debacle in 1982, that there is indeed a conspiracy or plan on the part of Muslims to remove and destroy. He wrote,

Those who planned the building of the mosque near the church are...to blame. There was a wide expanse of land between the compound, Fagge and Sabon Gari and the planners could have shifted the construction of the mosque farther away from the church. It would almost appear that the planners had a mind to move the church and mission after they had built the mosque. Should we then believe that there was a deliberate intent to remove us from where we had been for over forty years before the mosque was built?

He ended the paragraph with a gentle but unmistakable threat, "I will, without hesitation, suggest that no heed should be taken to any such suggestion."²⁵

One prominent southern Christian leader we have not yet met is C. O. Williams, a retired federal civil servant who had a second career in the ecumenical world of Nigeria as long-time general secretary of both the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) and CAN. Williams presented a hard-hitting lecture to a group of German clergy in which he dealt with various aspects of Christian-Muslim relations. He recognised an increase in "fanatical" Muslim "aggressiveness" around 1977. He explained this phenomenon with reference to two important international Muslim conferences, the Conference of World Islamic Organisation in Mecca and that of the World of Islam Festival in London. Both of these conferences decided on plans that constituted an anti-Christian crusade or *jihad* that was to halt the Christian march. In Nigeria, their "grand" opportunity came when the military handed over power to the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari. The new Muslim governors "made no secret of their main goals: the advance-

ment of Islam at all costs and the total extermination of Christianity...in their respective states.” Williams listed the following steps planned for Nigeria:

1. Take-over of Christian schools and hospitals;
2. Substitution of Christians names of Christian schools with Muslim names;
3. Replacement of Bibles in hotels with copies of the Qur’an;
4. Circulation of “false and vicious propaganda” about Christians;
5. Ridiculing Christians and making “provocative pronouncements” about the Christian faith;
6. Making “unprovoked attacks” on Christians, especially in the North.

Williams was proud of the response of Christian leaders to such attacks. They would appeal to the government “to arrest the ugly situation, before it became uncontrollable.” In addition, they “took more positive steps” that “aimed at creating peace, understanding and harmony between Christians and Muslims.” One of these was the establishment of various forums for dialogue, but as soon as the civilian governors took over, these efforts were torpedoed and the new Muslim initiatives listed above were started. The Muslims promptly “boycotted the dialogues.” It was from that time that “fanatical or ‘Fundamentalist’ Muslims became militant and intensified their anti-Christian activities.”

Williams dubbed the decade of 1976–1986 a “remarkable” one for religious developments. It was “characterised by...blatant and vigorous attempts” by “Muslim fanatics, especially in northern Nigeria, to uproot Christianity.” Muslims made it clear in every way that Nigeria is a Muslim country. The impression was being created that “Christians have no right to be there, or that they are, at best, second-rate citizens.” “Blatant injustice against Christians”

was “given free reins and received the undisguised backing of the Powers-That-Be.” He referred to Kano’s St. George’s Church, where the Kano State Government allegedly backed the attempt to destroy a church that had existed for forty years. When the “fanatical Muslims” failed to achieve their aim, they destroyed other churches. “Most members” of the inquiry committee belonged to “the very fanatical group which had gone on rampage!” The accused were their own judges!

He had little to say about government reaction, but gave a glowing report on Christian reaction. After all “the provocative pronouncements and actions of the Muslim fanatics,” Williams reported proudly,

Christians have one, only one, consistent reaction: namely, presentation of written protests to the Powers-That-Be. Even when it was generally expected that Christians would return fire for fire, after the ungodly Kaduna State devastation, we simply drew the attention of the Powers-That-Be to the evil act. We also appealed to all Christians to keep calm and peaceful and to be full of prayers for Nigeria.

I confess to be somewhat taken aback by this one-sided, if not false, picture. Williams’ presentation was published in December 1995, some years after Zangon-Kataf. How could he simply ignore Christian aggressive behaviour during that mayhem, not to speak of the Christian role in some subsequent riots?

Some less prominent figures similarly insist on the existence of Muslim plans. B.S. Wadumbiya of the College of Education of Hong, Adamawa State, made no bones about it. Behind these riots lies the desire to turn Nigeria into a Muslim country with a theocratic government. In order to achieve that, its engineers use every tool at their disposal, including the ignorance and illiteracy of the average Northern Muslim, who does not know the meaning of democracy and constitution. They are “deaf and blind” to the

country's legal system. Religion is used for manipulation to divide and rule all of Nigeria and to control the economy.

A self-designated former Muslim, Emman Usman Shehu insisted that “it is obvious that there is a determined effort to turn Nigeria into an Islamic State.” He pointed to people like El-Zakzaky who “have not hidden this intention.” He also summarised the decisions by various international Muslim bodies such as the World Islamic Organisation, OIC and the Islam in Africa Conference, that “have drawn up resolutions...ensuring that Muslims subjugate non-Muslims.” He reproduced a twelve-point programme of the Pakistani Islamic Revolution that allegedly included the following:

1. A natural democratic state is radically different from an Islamic state.
2. Non-Muslims cannot be full citizens of an Islamic state.
3. Non-Muslims are to be treated as stateless citizens in an Islamic state.
4. Non-Muslims can only stay in an Islamic state on the basis of an agreement or treaty.
5. Non-Muslims cannot be entrusted with any key position for the civil or military service.
6. Non-Muslims cannot claim political rights.
7. Non-Muslims must be taxed more heavily than Muslims in trade or commerce.
8. Non-Muslims cannot be elected into legislative assembly.
9. Non-Muslims cannot be members of the cabinet or taken into the national body where state policy is determined.
10. Non-Muslims must have their separate cultural agency.
11. A Non-Muslim who embraces Islam will have his civil, political and military rights restored.

12. If a Muslim accepts another faith, he is to be punished even to death. This is known as the law of apostasy and is the main reason why a lot of Muslims are scared of accepting Jesus....

This programme, Shehu asserted, is very much like the Covenant Umar B. Al-Khatab drew up to regulate Christians in Syria some centuries ago. "It is no coincidence," Shehu suggested, that Usman Dan Fodio is often referred to as Al-Khatab. In addition to these prohibitions, Shehu summarised various concrete 1974 decisions taken by the World Islamic Organisation in Mecca. Their upshot is that all Christian activities and organisations in Muslim countries must be suppressed.

Skeptics, a group from which I was slowly and almost unwillingly forced by the facts to extricate myself, may reject this notion of a Muslim plan as an invalid and paranoid conspiracy theory. However, in Volume 2 there is reference to it in an important speech by the Sardauna in which he unabashedly talked about a master plan. It was important enough for him to repeat the idea later. It is clearly no mere figment of the imagination fueled by some fake conspiracy theory dreamed up by fundamentalist anti-Muslim Christians. CAN commented rather proudly that the Sardauna's plan to dip the Qur'an into the ocean has been overtaken by Christians' planting the Bible firmly in the northern desert.²⁶ Though this sounds like a Christian victory, that is not the conclusion to which this somewhat cute statement was meant to take us. Muslim oppression of and discrimination against Christians have not ceased with the planting of the Bible in the desert but, according to Christians, continue on a daily basis.

Even the NIPSS report referred to global plans drawn up by Muslims: "The Muslim/Christian relations in Nigeria should be seen partly from the worldwide perspective. It is instructive to recall the 1974 resolutions of [the] World Muslim Council...in Mecca that year." The report explained that the "principal aim" of

these resolutions was “to counter the influence of Christianity,” but Nigerian Christians tend to think of these resolutions as a plan for world domination. Perhaps the difference is the same! The resolutions include the following steps:

1. the establishment of Muslim centres to resist Christian missionary activities;
2. the establishment of Islamic radio and TV stations;
3. the takeover of secular expressions of Christian activities such as schools, hospitals;
4. the establishment of intelligence centres to monitor Christian activities;
5. the banning of Christian literature in Muslim countries;
6. the mobilization of the economic strength of the Muslim world to deny support to any country where Christian missionary activities are against Islam.²⁷

Conspiracy theories may be politically incorrect in religious studies, but we are not dealing with abstract theories so much as with life experiences, concrete reality and fears which have solid ground. There are various foreign documents floating around Nigeria that support the idea of the plan. Nigerians sometimes embrace these reports as authentic, even when there are good reasons to doubt them. It is the main topic of a kind of mysterious book written by Edwin and Jody Mitchell,²⁸ supported by many quotations from individuals and Nigerian newspapers and magazines. There is an article on the same subject by Susan Braungart allegedly published in the *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*. Allow me to reproduce the relevant part:

We indicated last Wednesday that President Ibrahim Babangida will formally proclaim Nigeria a Federal Islamic Sultanate on February 28, 1990. As a result of an exclusive interview with Dr. Hamid Al-Gabid, Secretary General of the

OIC in Cairo yesterday, we make the following correction. President Babangida shall proclaim Nigeria a Federal Islamic Sultanate on March 28, 1990. Nigeria became a full-fledged member of the OIC on...February 14, 1989, and Nigeria also automatically became a signatory to the Arab League Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation, which makes it imperative that Nigeria should be prepared to attack Israel whenever the OIC and the Arab League want her to do so.

Dr. Al-Gabid also confirmed that with this new development, the Sultan of Sokoto becomes Nigeria's undisputed supreme sovereign as Sultan of Nigeria, all the present group of traditional rulers shall become relegated and sub-servient to the Sultan. All forms of worship and religious promotions by Christians, Ahmadiyyas and tribal groups shall be banned and abolished for good, and Sharia Law shall be imposed on Nigeria. The foregoings are in line with conditions laid down by the OIC.

Frankly, this does not seem to be an authentic document. For one, the English is clearly substandard. Secondly, the predicted event did not occur, not even twelve years later—not even a single sign of any attempt to impose the Sultan on the country. Besides, would Babangida, who held on to his power so tenaciously until overthrown by a coup, voluntarily step down in favour of the Sultan? Thirdly, no OIC official would divulge such a “secret” plan ahead of time, for that would destroy it before it was even attempted. Fourthly, the attempt to verify the document's authenticity with *IHT* has yielded denial from the paper. Another part of this article gives some historical information about the Fulani that is fairly accurate and is probably meant to make the rest of the document credible, but it will not fly.

However, such documents are considered genuine by Christians. Nigerian Christians distribute them, because they

seem to accurately reflect Muslim ambitions as Christians understand them. To me they appear to be attempts to raise religious tensions to prepare the ground for more upheaval, possibly to create conditions ripe for a coup. I do not deny that Muslims have plans. I *am* denying the authenticity of this and some other circulated documents.

Probably a more reliable statement is from a Commissioner of Police of the defunct Gongola State who is not further identified. He fully agreed with this Christian allegation of a Muslim plan. This official investigated a number of people arrested in connection with religious violence and reported that “these young men belong to an organization whose objective it is to destroy the secular government and entrench a pro-Iranian Islamic government. According to them, this is a long-term effort which has already been set in motion. The young men are members of a larger organization existing in all parts of the country.”²⁹

▲ MUSLIM METHODS

According to TankoYusuf, Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna, once boasted that “he would use whatever means necessary to complete the unfinished work of Islamisation started by his great grandfather, Shehu Usman Dan Fodio...” The Sardauna “used his political position and power to threaten chiefs and traditional rulers; indirectly he forced weak ones to change to Islam; he bent the law to his own aims; he used district heads and district officers for the same purpose.” Yusuf continued, “So brazen was his abuse of office that toward the end of his life, Bello spent more time and effort “Islamizing” than as premier.... He used government planes, vehicles and other facilities openly and freely for his religious campaigns.”³⁰

Of course, the opposition between “Islamizing” and functions of premier is a Christian perspective. Muslims would argue that “Islamizing” is one of the major functions of a Muslim ruler.

Bello's example became standard for military regimes, one after another, using even Christians such as Yakubu Gowon who, in his capacity as head of state, took over Christian schools and hospitals. State governments used public funds to establish Muslim schools in Christian states. Yusuf, the diplomat, would occasionally burst out in some most undiplomatic language:

Public institutions—the judicial system, newspapers, publishing houses, and radio and television—were forced to operate in ways that promoted Islam and discriminated against Christianity. Christians have been denied access to electronic media in... northern states, while Islam monopolises 24 hours for its broadcast in the same area. Agents of the devil compound the misery by using the media to heap insults on Christians. Every hour the Muslims broadcast provocative statements about Christianity.³¹

Yaro's book is full of such vituperation about how "the most misunderstood" and "most bloody" religion tries to implement its plan in Nigeria.

Though Islam can offer me all necessary material gifts on earth, including employment and promotion, I cannot accept these things and agree to close my eyes to those things which diminish the dignity of the human person which Islam (or do we say its adherents?) tend to promote. Violence! Violence! Kill! Kill! Cheat! Deprivation! Social injustice! Monopolizing common goods and offices.³²

The early history of Islam in Nigeria is replete with stories of violence and wars termed, in religious euphemism, "Holy *jihad* ." The present history of Islam in Nigeria is full of stories of violence and spilling of blood.

Having described the parameters, Yaro proceeded to summarise the killing and destruction of the various riots described in Volume 1 as expressive of the nature of Islam. Nigeria is only a current exam-

ple of what happened in Egypt during its Islamisation process. Quoting from Ishak Ibrahim's well-known book on Egypt, *Black God and Holy War*, he warned that Egypt illustrates how Islam can invade, permeate, and subvert a nation and culture. Although Islam ultimately became the majority religion in Egypt, this national conversion was not accomplished without much bloodshed and destruction. Through manipulation, blackmail and outright obliteration of resistance, Islam became the religion of the majority in Egypt.³³

While Muslims in Western countries are building their mosques and enjoying their freedom, it is quite the opposite in Muslim countries, where Christians can neither build nor alter their buildings without permission from the highest authority in the land. Islam is intolerant of others and is constantly encouraging *jihad* against Christians. Gaddafi of Libya has allegedly said that “infidels” in the Middle East “should accept Islam, leave the country, or be eliminated.”³⁴

Referring to various developments in Nigeria, Yaro bitterly complained:

*Years ago, it was Moslem assault on Christian lives. Months ago, it was Islamic destruction of Christian churches. Weeks ago, it was Islamic seizure of Christian schools like Queen of Apostle's College, Kaduna, which they renamed Queen Amina. Days ago, it was Islamic attempts to sell our jointly-owned nation to the aggressive Arab world. Today, it is testimonies of Islamic this, Islamic that, positical³⁵ jihad, economic jihad, religious jihad, job-employing jihad, scholarship jihad. Islam, Islam, Islam!*³⁶

Yaro could go on and on. Muslims employ a variety of “means and agents” to intimidate us. “They victimise us, they crucify us.” And then, using the same agents, “they appeal to us to be calm, peaceful and law-abiding.” Should we “continue to be calm in the face of all these gross abuses and man’s inhumanity to man?”³⁷

If this allegation about Nigerian Muslim intention of wiping out Christianity still seems contrived and unbelievable, then perhaps the testimony of a former self-professed Muslim terrorist who actively participated in such a campaign will add some weight to it. We have already met Alhaji Aliyu Ibn Mamman Dan Bauchi in Volume 1, where I reported on his vicious attacks on Christians. Subsequently he converted to Christ and revealed the secrets of his Muslim mission of terrorism under the alleged sponsorship of Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI). He claimed to have been appointed by JNI as co-ordinator of a programme "to eliminate Christianity."³⁸ It was under that umbrella that he claims to have engaged in the campaign of violence and confusion described in Volume 1.

He told how, under the auspices of JNI, he organised a student riot at ABU in 1978. Both students and the people of Samaru were instigated to shout Muslim slogans. The ultimate aim of the exercise was to restore the leadership of Islam and to "eliminate Christianity." All the chiefs in the area were informed of these plans. The campaign was to start at ABU, extend to all of Kaduna State, spread into Plateau State and from there fan out into the rest of the country. The riot started but was quickly nipped in the bud by mobile police. Yes, sometimes the police *could* act decisively. Eleven people died in the incident, all of them Muslims.³⁹ This Muslim attack on Christians failed.

Dan Bauchi is not the only Paul-type figure in Nigeria. One Abdullahi Jibril was another former Muslim persecutor of Christians. Prior to his conversion to Christ, he described himself as "a great Muslim fundamentalist, waging war against Christians and Christianity." He led a group of fifteen who would go about disrupting church crusades in Kano. Though a fundamentalist, one would expect him to eschew occultism, but he "acquired voodoo powers from witch doctors" which, he said, "assisted him greatly in his persecution of Christians and protected him physically during attacks." On December 14, 1996, his group went to break up a

crusade in Koki, Kano State, but suddenly his occult powers left him helpless. To make the story short, this humbling experience led him to Christ—and now he became the victim of Muslim persecution. His family rejected him and forced him to leave his home. He has been wandering around trying to escape persecution while preaching Christ. “Many Muslims have threatened to deal with me. Some have said they will kill me,” he reported.⁴⁰

These confessions from former Muslims do much to corroborate the frequent accusation by Christians that Muslims, or, at least, certain major groups within Islam, are out to destroy Christianity and that the religious riots have religious-political goals. It appears that such an interpretation is not as far-fetched as some think and cannot be shrugged off as merely false alarm. As far as Christians are concerned, there is too much evidence to deny that terrorism was definitely part of an approved Muslim campaign.

Another source of violence was the world of students and their powerful organ, the Muslim Students Society (MSS). The NIPSS report presented a long list of examples of their intolerance and ready violence. Students “have often been encouraged to revolt against what are regarded as unIslamic traditions.” In some institutions they refuse to recite the National Pledge but prefer to shout “Allahu Akbar.” In a Potiskum school, girls demanded “a separate drinking water source, claiming that non-Muslim students had defiled their praying ground with fæces when, in fact (as investigation later revealed), it was they who did so in an attempt to discredit the non-Muslim students.” The MSS leader responsible for this action was suspended by the school but soon re-instated upon “intercession by the emir.” Muslim female students “demanded to be excused from wearing the school uniform which was considered unIslamic” and from “physical education which they claimed unIslamically exposed their bodies.” MSS members forced a group of Bendel State students to shut down a cultural show because it interfered with a Muslim meeting nearby. Muslim students partic-

ipated in a rampage at ABU, destroying properties and burning the Nigerian flag. Similarly, the “MSS were prominent” in the Kano disturbances of 1982 which led to the destruction of churches. The report concluded that “the MSS has become a group whose activities must be closely watched for the sake of the peace and security of Nigeria’s multi-religious society.”⁴¹

Others have also observed that violence by Muslim students, with or without MSS, has indeed been widespread. James Okoroma tells the story of Muslim students disrupting a national convention of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) at Bayero University, Kano, in 1993, in the wake of the Zangon-Kataf riots. Tension was high in the country because of the death sentences imposed on Major General Zamani Lekwot and seven others. Okoroma claims that more than half a million Christians had demonstrated in Kaduna demanding the release of these men. It had become so tense that even prominent Muslims, including Sultan Dasuki and some emirs, were appealing to the president for pardon “in the interest of peace and continued existence of the country.” In their view, the matter “had shifted from a criminal offence to a religious rift between Christians and Muslims, which, if not properly handled, could shake the foundations of the country.” NANS, for reasons of its own, had joined the bandwagon of those who were calling for pardon. An unidentified group of Muslim students, described as “fundamentalist,” jumped to the conclusion that NANS was thus supportive of CAN. The attackers explained that they took offence because NANS had been converted “into an arm of CAN.” The leader of the pack shouted, “You are infidels. We must kill you. You are against Islam. Allahu Akbar.” They were armed with guns, bows, arrows, daggers, charms and other dangerous weapons. They shot and wounded many conferees, though none were killed.⁴²

Any time Muslims feel that their plan is threatened by Christian developments, Christians claim that Muslims will torpedo, undercut, boycott, derail or do whatever it takes to stop

those developments. The TEKAN Action Committee recognised at least two such incidents. In a nation-wide local government election, Christians received about seventy percent of the votes. The plan had been for each local government chairman to represent his people at the Constituent Assembly, where the constitution would be reviewed. Since Christians were in the majority, “the powers that be were made to change the idea and to appoint or nominate others in a bid to neutralise the Christian majority and to ensure Muslim domination and perpetual rule as presidents.” However, even under the new plan, Christians still formed the majority in the Assembly. The Committee warned not to rejoice too quickly, for some of those were not “committed Christians.” They “could easily be persuaded by the mundane and material benefits” the Muslims would dangle before them. Prayer is needed to strengthen Christian members so as not to yield to any diabolical plan of the opponents. That plan included the use of money, girls “and other bad ways to divert the attention of some of the Christian brethren.”

During a recent National Conference of Nigerian Women, an uproar developed when Muslim women realised that a Christian woman was going to win the election. They promptly torpedoed the event so that no election was held. In another development, Muslims were accused of “emasculating” the Christian vote by buying off their registration cards so as to prevent them from voting altogether.⁴³

The Christian conviction of a Muslim strategy to undo them will not die. An editorial in *The Comet* warned the nation about a meeting of fifteen Northern Muslim governors, where the Governor of Zamfara of sharia fame allegedly made a pronouncement about such a plan. “He rose up, stoutly...pontificating that the plan to spread Islam to cover the four corners of Nigeria is a *fait accompli*,” an accomplished fact, with the establishment of the sharia.⁴⁴ The second issue in this article was that these governors together contributed a huge sum of public money to a Muslim cause.

C. O. Williams, national general secretary of CAN at the time, was very upset by the danger this presented. He circulated copies of this editorial to all Christian members on the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) along with a warning:

*As the contents of the publication are very grave and capable of engendering highly inflammable consequences, a copy is hereto attached for your very careful study—earnestly hoping that the fully-charged issue will be frankly discussed at the next meeting of NIREC and that the Council will take appropriate and realistic decision on it.*⁴⁵

Many documents, purported to be Muslim in origin, are circulating among Christians, which Christians take as proof(s) of a Muslim plan to subjugate Nigeria. These are among the documents that Christian leaders whisper about when they vaguely point out to the skeptic that they have the documents to prove that Muslims do indeed have detailed schemes to take over the country. One that looks more genuine than most is a communiqué allegedly published by the Islam in Africa Conference (IAC) held in Abuja at the end of November, 1989. It constitutes Appendix 1. The Conference pledged to take a number of threatening measures of alarming proportions against Christians. Please read the document before proceeding to the next paragraph.

In order to achieve its aims, a steering committee had been established which included Nigeria. Among its tasks in Nigeria was the conversion of the then National Republic Convention, a former political party, into the National Islamic Party of Nigeria. That was the only party to produce “leading government functionaries.” The permanent headquarters was to be located in Abuja. The conference ratified the admission of Nigeria into the OIC and “thanked the government and people of Nigeria for having generously donated US\$21 billion to the Islamic Development Fund of the OIC.” The communiqué closed with the request to the government of Nigeria

“to implement all policies and programmes of the OIC to show the whole world that Nigeria is truly an Islamic nation.” The end of the document features the seal of both the Islamic Council in London and of the President of Nigeria. Everything is hanging out. Literally nothing is left to the Christian imagination. This one feels, looks and sounds authentic, very authentic.⁴⁶

I had long been wondering how this document fell into Christian hands and assumed that it had been purposefully leaked to create disturbance in the country. Edwin and Jody Mitchell’s book solved the mystery.⁴⁷ It may well have been leaked for that very purpose. An anonymous party who identified himself as “Your Concerned Christian Brethren, Nigeria” sent the document to the Mitchells. The sender described the document as “nothing more but total declaration of war by the devil and his religion with an attempt to win God’s Nigeria into his devilish enclave of a darkened nation” and expressed the desire that it be forwarded to President Bush Sr. What with the seals of the Nigerian President and of the Islamic Council affixed, the Michells regarded it as a “top secret government document from Nigeria.” To their credit, they did weigh the authenticity of the document and ended up accepting it as legitimate—as did I. They also made numerous copies that were then sent to Nigeria. Subsequent letters from Nigeria tell of the thousands of copies its Nigerian recipients made and distributed on their own so that the Christian community was blanketed with it. The document caused surprise, dismay and more than a few gallons of tears.⁴⁸

There is a variety of documents of different degrees of trustworthiness. Attached to a photocopied circular from the tabloid, *Christian Victory* are two alleged Muslim documents. By circulating such documents, regardless of their authenticity, Christians have appropriated them as their own understanding of Muslim intentions and, as such, they have a place in this volume. One of these documents is said to be a statement of the Izala Action Group’s “Major Plan.” Because of its brevity, I reproduce it here in full.

IZALA ACTION GROUP—MAJOR PLAN

Muslims should be calm and prepared. They should strive to equal themselves in the forces through the help of other high ranking Muslims, which will enable them to make war by all means and Islamise Nigeria. At any time, assistance will come from Arab and Muslim countries to do away with *Kaferis*, that is, Christians.

- Top religious (Christian) leaders must be the first targets.
- No Muslim daughters must marry a *Kaferi* (Christian), but Muslims should use their wealth to draw *Kaferi* daughters to themselves and Islamise them.
- No *Kaferi* should ever be allowed to rule this country again nor hold any important position.
- Kaduna State Commissioner of Police gave out Police forms on 24th April to assist Muslims to be greater in Police Force.
- Izalatu seat of plan is at Katsina. Previous secret efforts to procure weapons by Arabs for Muslims was leaked by Old-man *Kaferi*.

The document is undated. The names of four very prominent Muslims are typed at the bottom: Abubakar Gumi, Major General Yar Adua Musa, A.A. Chanchangi, a prominent businessman and Ishaku Rabi. The poor English of the document makes its authenticity highly unlikely, since Yar Adua Musa would hardly allow his name to be associated with this level of English. However, the point is that Christians readily believe that this is indeed a Muslim plan, for they have seen evidences of most of these activities. I myself am no longer in a position to deny such Muslim plans, whether or not the document itself is authentic.

▲ INTERNATIONAL SCOPE OF THE JIHAD —————

Tanko Yusuf frequently faulted the West for failing to take the advance of Islam seriously. It seemed to be blind. “Sometimes,” he

confessed, “I tremble when I ponder the complacency of the world’s Christians [read: “Western Christians”] regarding our common adversary.” Islam is involved in a perpetual *jihad*, the Muslim term for “crusade.” That *jihad* governs all aspects of culture for them. Even its international trade with the West is a part of that *jihad*, though the West sees it as purely economic.

It may be well for Western readers to hear Yusuf’s warning about Muslim global ambitions, especially since 9/11. Nigeria is only one of their mission “fields.” Their aim is to conquer the heart of the entire world. He told of a Muslim scholar who predicted that “soon every third person in the world would be Muslim.”

Western nations do not seem to notice that Islam is steadily advancing in their countries. Yes, multi-million mosques are popping up here and there. No, this does not disturb the western world. Usually living among multi-ethnic populations with freedom of religion makes for a permissive attitude towards Islam.

“The lull of complacency makes a fertile soil for subtle *jihad*.” And they are using every means at their disposal—“political power, military strength, oil and petro-dollars, vehicles, national aircraft and more....” “To understand the OIC, one must understand the impact of petro-dollars on the world economy.” Islam is slowly gaining control over the Western economic destiny.

Look around you! Besides mosques, Islamic centers are springing up everywhere in the western world. Travelers can see Islamic shopping centers in Central London, on Regent Street, Knightsbridge, and in other parts of Europe as well as in the United States.

Yusuf was annoyed with Western blindness to the Muslim threat.

Is the world aware of Islam’s global growth? Its global ambitions? Islam is no longer confined to the eastern hemisphere

where capitalists can safely ignore it. All of western society is faced with the challenge of Islam. It is now on their doorsteps. Islam's objective, of course, is to bring the world under the umbrella of Islamic control.

Yusuf was not deterred by the restraints of political correctness. I have recognised, way before the fall of the Berlin Wall, that Islam is/was a threat to both the West and Christianity as great, if not greater, than was Communism. Political correctness and fear of being lumped together with Christian fundamentalists and right-wingers kept me from open espousal of that view. Yusuf had no such hangup. He chastised the West for failing to recognise this fact and thus concentrating exclusively on the Communist threat. He was greatly surprised at Western support of “the Islamic world and the Afghan rebels on the grounds of chasing Communists out of Afghanistan.” Communism can change, as events have already shown, but Islam cannot, for it is based on a supposedly eternal blueprint.⁴⁹

Islam has its OIC, while the West has its European Economic Community (EEC), but, warned Yusuf, there is an important difference. The EEC only has economic aims. “It is not a religious... weapon to convert people to Christianity or to subjugate or eliminate those who do not accept that faith.” “Wake up, western world!” cried Yusuf.⁵⁰ While the ambassador was deeply aware of the global aims of Islam, where he was ahead of most Christians, one may legitimately question the depth of his understanding of EEC in terms of its world view and aims. His preoccupation with Muslim challenges may have blinded him to the reality of the “other side.” Demonization of the one led to uncritical “sanctification” of the other.

▲ CLOSING COMMENTS

There you have the common feeling of Christians for Muslims in Nigeria, including the feelings of former Muslims who have been

there. Suspicion, strong sense of threats and oppression, trusting no one, aware of clever deceit and cunning, full of malice, exploiting the common people, not a trace of mutual kindness or cooperation. Whatever self-image Muslims have created for themselves, Christians recognise none of it. Muslims would do themselves a huge favour by asking whether they are merely fooling themselves.

If you have read Volume 2 of this series, you may remember that Muslims regard themselves equally oppressed by Christians. In that volume, Muslims are the victims and Christians the perpetrators. That is to say, the Christian self-image of an oppressed people does not come through to Muslims, either. Muslims do not recognise anything of it. To them, Christians are the oppressors. So, Christians would also do well to take a thorough look at their self-image and ask themselves the same questions.

This chapter presents the basic Muslim spirit as Nigerian Christians see it. This perspective, together with its Muslim parallel as outlined in Volume 2, constitutes the general climate within which the sparks find a congenial soil to explode. This is the Christian explanation for the background to the riots.

▲ NOTES

¹ For Tanko's identification see Chapter Two.

² Grissen, p. 73.

³ Grissen, p. xi.

⁴ Grissen, pp. xvi, 1-5.

⁵ Grissen, pp. 6, 78.

⁶ Grissen, p. 74.

⁷ Grissen, p. 75.

⁸ Is the problem only in the North? There are enough stories about the South in these chapters to think otherwise. Only recently a friend of mine from the Middle Belt who lives in a western state expressed surprise at what he referred to as a high degree of "Muslim fanaticism" in the West.

⁹ Olujimi, 20 July/2002.

¹⁰ D. Byang, 2000, p. 9. Sulaiman materials taken from *Inquiry*, No. 1/87, p. 32.

¹¹ R. D. Abubakre, p. 56.

¹² *Plateau TV* news broadcast on 17 Jan/92.

¹³ I let this statement stand even in the face of dangerous terms one should use very sparingly: "never" and "always."

¹⁴ The issues of this paragraph are among David Naugle's major points. I regard secularism as one of the unpaid bills of the church, called up to correct some devastating Christian distortions, especially Christian intolerance. Its effects are by no means all negative. Human rights are inherent in the Christian world view, but it took secularism, itself unthinkable apart from Christianity, to develop them. It also took secularism to derail them by separating them from its correlates of responsibility and realism. The issues of this paragraph are among David Naugle's major points.

¹⁵ Yaro, pp. 25, 10, 11.

¹⁶ CAN Release, 1987.

¹⁷ NIPSS, pp. 14-15, 30, 31, 33. Again, keep in mind the time frame—the eighties. Much water went over the dam since then.

¹⁸ I. Yaro, p. vi. *Times International*, 19 Mar/84.

¹⁹ I. Yaro, pp. 26-27.

²⁰ Christians often make such allegations, but seldom back them up with specifics like names and other details. Christians should realise that frequent undocumented allegations of this type weaken their credibility with potential friends and supporters outside the country.

²¹ J. Tsado, *TC*, 5/87, p. 7.

²² I. Yaro, pp. 17, 38-42.

²³ CAN Release, 1987.

²⁴ Though CAN's point is clear, the logic is somewhat muddled. It is difficult to understand how this riot can be both in "the first stage" as well as in a later stage of the Islamisation process.

²⁵ Dandaura, 3 Dec/82, p. 7.

²⁶ CAN, *Leadership*, p. 7.

²⁷ NIPSS, p. 30. The same Muslim programme was also published by *Christian Victory*, a magazine based in Denver, USA. Undated photocopies of the latter were distributed throughout Nigeria, attached to some other Muslim documents referred to below.

²⁸ Apart from its entry in the Bibliography, for further information about this book, see endnotes 46 and 47 of this chapter, along with the associated text materials, pp. 32-33.

²⁹ TEKAN Study Group, 1987.

³⁰ Grissen, pp. 79-80. It is likely that critics will regard Yusuf's emphasis on the Muslim *jihad* distorted because of his hostility. However, his assertions are fully supported in Paden's sympathetic work on the Sardauna, especially in Chapters 9 and 16. Remember that Yusuf's opinions are based on personal and repeated observations and experiences that span many years.

³¹ Grissen, pp. 82-84. This subject will be explored in detail in Chapter Five.

³² Yaro's description is similar to that of Dan Bauchi, a former Muslim persecutor of Christians. He writes, "We have seen how Islam is full of deceit, vile for vile, killings, argument and shame..." (Dan Bauchi, p. 54).

³³ I. Yaro, pp. 4-8.

³⁴ I. Yaro, pp. 8–11.

³⁵ A case of imaginative English in the making, probably referring to positions.

³⁶ I. Yaro, p. 12.

³⁷ I. Yaro, p. 33.

³⁸ Dan Bauchi, p. 49. I must admit that some of his allegations and claims become somewhat bizarre. I would not have referred to him if CAN had not published his story.

³⁹ CAN, *Leadership*, pp. 49–50.

⁴⁰ *MM*, Jan/99, p. 30.

⁴¹ NIPSS, p. 29.

⁴² Okoroma.

⁴³ TEKAN Action Committee, 17 Aug/88.

⁴⁴ *The Comet*, 23 July/2001.

⁴⁵ C. O. Williams, letter dated 31 July/2001.

⁴⁶ Various Christian documents contain summaries of similar decisions on the part of international Muslim organisations. One is found in *The Sharia*, CAN's National Youth Wing, 1987, pp. 23–24. The list of decisions is then followed by a list of steps Muslims have already taken in Nigeria. Pp. 24–25. For a Christian discussion of an Africa-wide Islamisation programme, see the article by Arye Oded.

⁴⁷ I hesitate to give much credence to the Mitchell book, because its sectarian view of the Roman Catholic Church would seem to place the authors beyond the pale of Nigerian Christianity. However, in addition to this book, Josiah Publishing also profits from the cooperation of an anonymous Nigerian writer who uses the pseudonym of “J. O.” “J. O.” is by now a respected Christian leader in Nigeria whose opinion counts. He has published his own book through Josiah Publishing, *The Hidden Massacres of Nigeria*. In addition, he apparently provides both the Mitchells and the British-based Barnabas Fund with reports of events in Nigeria. You will meet “J. O.” again in these pages. His cooperation with the Mitchells does increase their credibility with me. It appears that he takes a pragmatic approach of using their services while ignoring their sectarianism. Furthermore, the book received much praise as an eye-opener

from many Nigerian and other African Christians, including pastors. Unfortunately, for security reasons, their names are not revealed, a practice that is understandable, but which does reduce its standing as a reliable source.

⁴⁸ Mitchell, pp. 1-22. I restrict my use of this book also because it is not a Nigerian publication. However, it goes into great detail on Muslim plans to eradicate Christianity and expresses itself much more drastically than do most Nigerian writings on the same subject. I do use its quotations from Nigerian sources.

⁴⁹ Grissen, pp. 3, viii-ix.

⁵⁰ Grissen, pp. 2-4. There are two Muslim centres within one mile of the residence in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, where I wrote these lines originally, a city with a conservative reputation second to none.