

DAWA: MUSLIM MISSIOLOGY¹

Introduction

This paper is a twin to the one entitled “Points of Friction.” In this paper the discussion of volatile subjects continues. Whereas the issues in that paper were at the level of substantial irritations, in this paper we will deal with the even more thorny and basic issues of mission, conversion and freedom of religion. That complex of issues drives us straight into the bosom of the still more basic subject of human rights, which I do not treat in this paper.²

The question of mission is indeed a major point of friction between Christians and Muslims. On the one hand, this situation is surprising, since both are missionary religions at their deepest cores. If you are driven by mission, then I would expect you to understand and appreciate that drive in others as well. If you claim the right to conduct mission, I would expect you to accord that same right to others, even if only to protect your own right. These expectations are not always realized, as we will see in this essay. There are factors at work here that override the rational aspect and any sense of fairness.

¹Apologia: (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.

²See my discussion on the subject in my *Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together*, listed elsewhere on this website page, Chapter 7.

On the other hand, this situation is not surprising. Since both religions always border each other, they will naturally challenge each other where they meet or overlap. The resulting friction is further fed by the fact that Islam appears ready to use almost any method and to apply any type of unrelenting pressure, fair or foul, private or public, moral or immoral, that will produce mission results. We have observed that tendency in the twin document. The facts covered in that paper have led me to the conclusion that in *da'wah* the end often justifies the means and that the foul is sometimes sanctified if it advances Islam. Though as a Christian missionary I appreciate Islam for its missionary *spirit* and understand its drive, I cannot always say the same for its missionary *methods*. True, I have been skeptical about Christian missionary methods as well, but my doubts were not usually of an ethical nature. They were and still are about certain underlying aspects of worldview.

Muslim Mission/Da'wah in General

I have earlier drawn attention and do so again to a distinction that is crucial for understanding Muslim views of missions and related subjects. It makes a world of difference, for example, whether one is dealing with a minority Muslim community living in a secular Western country or with fundamentalists in a majority Muslim community that feels its traditional hegemony threatened. The former constantly looks over his shoulders to gauge the reaction of the non-Muslim majority. Minority Islam in the West, especially in North America, usually takes on the looks of tolerance and broadmindedness. The language will be moderate, calm and rational to appeal to the Western mind. The same is largely true for Muslims in Muslim majority environments if they know they are overheard by the larger global community. A case in point is the international group of Muslim leaders interviewed by Joyce Davis for her book *Between Jihad and Salaam*.

The language of the fundamentalist in a Muslim environment that feels threatened tends to be much more violent, emotional and abrasive, often characterized by hatred and warmongering. His aim is a revival of true Islam and overcoming the enemy, which includes moderate Muslims. His method is often to incite fellow Muslims against the perceived enemy, in our case, the Christian. In between the two, one finds the apparently more moderate

Muslim in a religiously pluralistic environment like Nigeria, *seemingly* more tolerant than his fundamentalist brother, but in reality letting the latter do the dirty work for him. As J. T. Yusuf put it with reference to the Nigerian situation, “Nigerian Islam leaders, even though they be moderate Muslims, have pushed Islam as hard as they could.”³

Again, the reader is reminded that Islam is wholistic in its approach. Its mission covers all of life. It includes politics and government, peace and war, human rights and slavery, economics and business, female fashions and sexual relations, and, it seems, both morality and immorality. In fact, in the context of mission, immorality is sometimes promoted to morality as we have seen. Mission is both *jihad*--holy war or crusade-- and *da’wah*, both worldly and spiritual. Muslim writers repeatedly harp on this characteristic of their religion. They rightly recognize it as a major difference between them and Christians who have embraced some soft form of dualistic secularism.

It is helpful at this juncture in brief compass to establish the meaning of *da’wah* as seen by Muslim strategists with reference to the West. Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, an eminent Indian Muslim scholar, locates the foundation of *da’wah*, its source and pinnacle in the Qur’anic sura 14:24-25, “Ibrahim”: “Do you not see how Allah has given the example of a good word? It is like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and whose branches reach the sky, ever yielding its fruit in every season with the leaves of its Lord. Allah gives examples for mankind that they may take heed.”

These verses, Nadwi lectured, “succinctly lay down guidance for the *da’wah* of Islam in any age and help humanity protect itself against dangers. They graphically show the path of deliverance.” This passage gives “a graphic account of how to carry out *da’wah* in any given time and place: how to introduce Islam; how to invite people to it; how to highlight its distinctive features; and how to guide man in both this life and the next.”⁴ The rest of Nadwi’s lecture expands on these comments.

Elsewhere, Nadwi bases *da’wah* on sura *al-Anfal* 8:73, which reads, “If you do not do this [i.e. spread the message of Islam], there will be persecution and great corruption in the land.” This passage is seen as instruction to disseminate the message of Islam and to

³1995, p. 75.

⁴1992, pp. 9-10

liberate mankind from *Jahiliyah*, a term referring to a lifestyle characterized by unbridled freedom and self-gratification, and to invite them to Islam, i.e. to worshipping God and to total surrender to Him. They are told that if they do not do so, it will engender great mischief and corruption in the world.

Referring to the Islamization in the Persian and Roman empires, Nadwi writes that Islam brought about a total transformation in people's ideals, norms and thought patterns. It marked freedom from mental and ideological subjugation to the two great empires of the day.... The ideas of these cultures were no longer considered as the yardstick to measure one's position. Rather, obedience to Allah and emulation of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) *Sunnah*, following in the footsteps of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in all departments of life—be it culture, one's social life, customs and rituals, dress and all outward forms—were taken as the standard. This change affected everyone, rich and poor alike, the powerful and the ordinary, as is borne out by history.

Nadwi declares that “in the wake of the new faith—Islam—both the worldview and people's thought patterns were changed as well. A worldview is of immense significance in that it rules the way of life.” The early believers “were called upon to bring about a revolution throughout the world. They were entrusted with the onerous responsibility of following and leading others to a path characterized by godliness, God-consciousness, love for fellow human beings, sacrifice and divine guidance.”

Nadwi holds up the story of one Rab'ibin 'Amir as an example of a bold sense of *da'wah*, a veritable Muslim version of John the Baptist. Rab'ibin was summoned to the court of Rustum, an ancient commander-in-chief of the Persian empire: Rab'ibin's

dress was marred with patches and darning marks. He was carrying an ordinary sword and shield. He entered the Persian camp riding an ordinary horse. Dressed in his unimpressive outfit, he entered the court, crushing its plush carpets. He tied his horse and approached Rustum. As he was armed with his shield and sword, guards at the entrance objected and asked him to lay down his weapons. Ra'I refused, saying... Rustum had invited him. If the guards did not let him enter in his armed state, he

would return to his camp. Rustum allowed him to retain his arms. Unaffected or overawed by the sumptuous setting of the court, Rab'I approached with great confidence. Rustum asked him what had brought the Arabs to Persia? With his indomitable courage and conviction which owed its origin to the divine Scripture and the Prophet's message, he curtly said: 'Allah has sent us so that we may liberate fellow human beings from subservience to fellow human beings and bring them to obedience to the One True God. We are here to take them from the narrowness of the world to its spaciousness. Our aim is to free them of the persecution... by other religions. We want to bless them with the justice and equity of Islam.'

Nadwi comments that Rab'I's message was not surprising, "for this was his very faith."⁵ This is what Muslim *da'wah* is all about. The more "manly" or militant its expression, the greater the admiration it evokes from Muslims.

It is this *da'wah* that, Muslims insist repeatedly, is wholistic, i.e. covers all of life.⁶ Islam is not a religion that can be distinguished from the rest of life. It is not something that is conducted in some corner or section of life. It is an entire way of life. *Life is religion*, a concept that is basic not only to Muslim *da'wah*, but also to the Kuyperian Reformed tradition from which I gratefully draw major inspiration. Religion is not a separate area or realm of life, but it is an aspect underlying all of life. As Darsh puts it, "Every religion is way of life. And every way of life is a religion." He continues, "Our social beliefs, our national beliefs and all our other beliefs are by nature religious. To define religion as something confined to a private relationship between an individual and his Creator to the exclusion of all other aspects of life is to ridicule God and reduce the domain of His authority."

Darsh goes on to talk about the role of *da'wah* in society. He laments the current situation: Islam is "divided, separated, corrupt, backward and in a state of complete disarray." However, in its essence Islam "has a complete set of views" about God, creation, the human race and its purpose. It has a complete moral and legal code. It is fully democratic, a claim

⁵ 1993, pp. 8-11, 16-17.

⁶ Christian missiologists have every reason to be jealous of their Muslim counterparts. Whereas the latter enjoy the prestige of dealing with the heart of their religion, the former constantly lament that missiology is a separate academic discipline divorced from the other theological disciplines and that mission is a marginal activity of the church instead of its central concern. David Smith asks, "How did we manage to treat mission as something additional to the Church's life when it is... obvious that it belongs to the very essence of her being?" (p. 37)

that Muslims like to backup with stories of early Islam that illustrate relations between commoners and rulers. Presently, Islam is not in a position to give scientific and technological leadership, but “it can, and must, offer moral and spiritual leadership to rescue modern society from its moral bankruptcy and spiritual decadence.”⁷

Some other features of Muslim mission also surface in Nadwi’s presentations. One notes the repeated references to deliverance and freedom. As surprising as this may seem to non-Muslims, it is a favourite Muslim theme that crops up wherever Muslims anywhere in the world discuss the social impact of Islam.⁸ There is the call to surrender and obedience, to true piety but not to a pietistic other-worldliness. This is an egalitarian religion, incumbent on all regardless of status. Its true sons are simple, bold and aggressive, if not war-like—much like Rab’I.

But Islam is not only “manly.” It also reserves an important role for women. Surprising as it may seem to non-Muslims, Darsh insists that women are crucial in the formation of a Muslim society. He refers to “the positive role” which they play both in the family and community, “particularly in co-operation with other women in the school, the office, the college and the hospital.” They have “always played a vital role in the past and they must continue to do so today if Muslim society is to prosper.”⁹ Though the traditional separation of genders appears desirable to Darsh, this is weakened by the public roles he wants women to play.

Pacifism would have a hard time in Islam; war and battle have always been an integral part of its *jihad* and militarism has generally been admired in efforts to establish the Muslim peace, though in a minority situation this aspect is usually played down. There is a strong sense that Islam is a blessing to the world and that it is therefore foolish to reject it. In fact, it is incumbent on all to embrace it and the only rational thing to do. It is the only religion that has the divine right to exist. These same emphases also are found in the statements on *da’wah* coming out of the more volatile Nigerian context.

⁷Darsh, 1980, pp. 26-29.

⁸Joyce Davis interviewed 17 Muslim leaders throughout the Muslim world, revolutionaries as well as members of the establishment, but they all share this insistence on Islam as a religion of peace and tolerance. And they are all surprised that non-Muslims do not associate these with Islam.

⁹Darsh, 1980, p. 78.

The wholistic character of Islam encourages Muslims to use all the resources and powers available to them in their pursuit of mission. In a sense one could argue that Islam is *da'wah*, for it includes every aspect of the religion. The separation of religion and state is rejected outright. In fact, the very purpose of government machinery is to further Islam.

Years ago Atterbury wrote:

Mohammedan advance is not due to a missionary propaganda such as we are accustomed to... in connection with Christian work.... But the indigenous agency on which Mohammedanism principally depends is the power of the... Mohammedan state, exerted mightily to conquer and thereby convert.¹⁰

This has been so throughout Muslim history and is constantly attested to as a classic method of Muslim advance in Arnold's equally classic *The Preaching of Islam*, one non-Muslim book that is frequently praised by Muslims. Arnold's history of *da'wah* is significant because of at least two reasons. First, Muslims today frequently appeal to him approvingly. He has portrayed Islamic *da'wah* in its most favourable light and they are grateful for it. Second, his primary concern is to tell the peaceful part of the story, though he does not deny the practice of *da'wah* by force.

It seems that Arnold could not amass enough evidence of *genuinely* peaceful penetration without including many stories about governmental and political involvement. One has good reason to deny many of his accounts of *da'wah* as examples of *peaceful* expansion or of *voluntary* conversion. His examples contain too many elements of pressure and force for them to so qualify. Many of his examples are peaceful only in the sense of non-military, but hardly non-militant or peaceful.

In addition to governments and politics, one must draw attention to the role of Muslim traders in mission in West Africa. We have a most sympathetic account from Edward Wilmot Blyden¹¹ upon which it would be hard to improve:

In going from town to town,... they go simply as the bearers of God's truth. They take their mats or their skins, and their manuscripts, and are followed by their pupils, who

¹⁰ Atterbury, p. 84.

¹¹ For identity of Blyden, I refer you to G. H. Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, p. 70.

in every new pagan town form the nucleus of a school and congregation. These preachers are the receivers, not the dispensers, of charity.

The Arab missionaries...go about without "purse or script" and disseminate their religion by quietly teaching the Koran. The native missionaries... united with the propagation of their faith active trading. Wherever they go they produce the impression that they are not preachers only, but traders--but, on the other hand, that they are not traders merely, but preachers. And in this way, silently and almost unobtrusively, they are causing princes to become obedient disciples and zealous propagators of Islam. Their converts... become Muslims from choice and conviction....¹²

All ideology apart, Atterbury summarizes it well: "In this missionary advance, the sword and preaching, the soldier and the missionary, the state and the individual, supplement each other."¹³ There is enough evidence to affirm that Islam in many places has spread peacefully, but also enough to affirm that in many other places the sword and war have played major roles along with government policies and political pressures that can be dubbed "peaceful" only by stretching the imagination.

Ideologues on both sides of the fence tend to highlight the one method at the expense of the other. Even Arnold does not deny extensive violence, though his book deals with the history of peaceful penetration. That there was more peaceful penetration than most Christians think cannot be denied. But it was often a "peaceful" penetration that employed all the means of powerful persuasion, including force, pressure and bribery—everything just short of military. That also cannot be denied.

Nevertheless, most Muslims themselves think of their expansion as a peaceful one throughout. This represents the main Muslim self image. Muslims have the mandate to wage war against unbelievers, but in the context of that war, we are told, "No aggression is allowed in Islam, not even against an unbeliever, and Islamic history is rife, not just with accounts of

¹² Blyden, pp. 194, 13. Atterbury does not like this interpretation and prefers that of Bishop Crowther, the first Black Nigerian Anglican bishop, who wrote that "The real vocation of these so-called apostles of the Koran is that of fetish peddlers" (Atterbury, p. 87).

¹³ Atterbury, p. 88.

individual acts of compassion towards the Jews, Christians and Pagans alike, but that the main causes of the spread of Islam in all countries of the world were tolerance, diplomacy and kindness.”¹⁴

Muslim Da’wah in the West

Before we turn to Muslim *da’wah* in Nigeria, it will be useful to draw attention to the missionary meaning of today’s Muslim migration to the West. It must be remembered we are dealing with Islam, a wholistic religion applicable to everything in life. It also applies to migration. A basic element in all Muslim migration, asserts Darsh, is “a sense of mission deeply rooted in the heart of the migrating Muslim, the feeling that he was entrusted with a Message which he felt obliged to convey to whoever crossed his path.” Darsh finds Arnold’s *The Call of Islam* “a moving example of those Muslims who were instrumental in establishing Islam in the faraway countries where they found themselves.” Darsh then proceeds to give some examples of Muslims who bring Islam to Europe.¹⁵ These are not mere immigrants; they are Muslim missionaries.¹⁶ Wherever there are Muslim migrants, the missionary strategist is not far behind.

Nadwi states it clearly with respect to Muslims in the USA. He asserts that the West has lifted “every veil from... nature and unfolded almost all its secrets,” only to find itself “dazed and bewildered.” Meaninglessness stares the Westerner in the face. In such a context, Nadwi asserts, “the future belongs to Islam.”

I do not believe in... chance happenings. ...there is the Hand of God behind everything.... It is no accident that you Muslims have come to live here in large numbers.... In all walks of life you will make your mark, have some influence. ... Islam

¹⁴ Mukhtar Abubakar. “The Sword of David,” *The Pen*, 18 Nov/88, p. 13.

¹⁵ P. 77.

¹⁶ A similar sense of mission was expressed within the Reformed immigration movement to Canada after World War II of which I was a part as a young teenager. There was a strong sense among members of the Reformed Churches of The Netherlands (*Gereformeerde Kerken*) of a serious responsibility to confront the secular spirit of Canada with wholistic Christian alternatives in all aspects of life. Present accusations of early triumphalism notwithstanding, some of the alternative structures they designed have become strong national witnesses to the freedom of the Gospel in secular Canada that even the Federal Government cannot ignore, even into the third millennium, and that has become a major factor in the current Evangelical thrust for religious freedom in Canada that goes far beyond the personal and extends to the nation’s structures and legal system.

is spreading in America. It has made a dent. A number of Americans have either embraced Islam or are ready to do so. Our Black Muslim brethren are a source of strength to us.

But now the circumstances are taking a favourable turn. Muslims are migrating to America in a steady stream from different lands and for different reasons. There is no Islamic country whose finest young men are not found there....You should... realise your responsibility.... You are not here only to earn and take back the money... and provide for your families. You should know that it is your duty to give this country what it lacks.

In an earlier book by Nadwi, Khurram Murad of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, UK, provided the Preface in which he summarized Nadwi's conviction that the only justification Muslims have for being in the West is to "communicate... Islam..., both by words and example." A Muslim may have come to the West for any reason, but "this duty is foremost."¹⁷

Nadwi goes on extensively about the mission of Muslims in the USA. His two strong emphases are that the West is suffering from a spiritual vacuum and that Islam has the wherewithal to fill that vacuum. Muslims in the West are expected to be up and doing. That is how Islam spread through much of the world. What reasons are there to doubt it can be done in the USA? And so he goes on to lecture about living "as emissaries of Islam," as the "main duty of Muslim immigrants," and creating "a universal Islamic society."¹⁸

Nigerian Muslims are also conscious of the missionary thrust of Muslim immigration, even though their methods of propagation are generally more violent and forceful. An anonymous reviewer of Ali Kattani's book, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today*, asserts that "The basic premise" of the book not only but also of the movement described in it, "is that minority status for Muslims is a transitory state that is to be accepted as a challenge rather than a permanent condition to which one must acquiesce or accommodate." Kattani reports that such prestigious bodies as the Muslim World League and the Organization of Islamic Conference are actively concerned with the plight of Muslims in dispersion. An Institute of

¹⁷Nadwi, 1983, p. 7.

¹⁸Nadwi, 1993, pp. 88-89.

Muslim Minority Affairs exists that publishes its own journal. While hospitable and tolerant Westerners, naïve Christians and blind secularists alike, host these Muslims and aid them in getting settled, world strategists of *da'wah* teach these immigrants how to relate to their non-Muslim hosts. “Their relationships... would be restricted to a minimum, maintained for the sole purpose of *da'wah*, of converting them into Islam.”¹⁹

If Westerners tend to shrug their shoulders at such Muslim ambition, it is only because of false pride and ignorance about both the dynamics of religion and the powerful witness of Muslim history. The dominant secularism of the West with its anemic view of religion renders her almost incapable of appreciating the seriousness of this challenge. Muslims have historically known how to capitalize on cultural and spiritual vacuums, such as presently characterizes the West. While many contemporary Christian missions with their micro vision hardly look beyond the noses of their little five-to-ten year plans, Muslims have the patience of centuries that matches their daring macro plans. Islam has over the centuries proven its staying power more than that of Communism by far. And it has replaced the Christian church more often than the other way around.

While most Westerners, both Christian and secularist, tend to be naïve about the thrust of Muslim migration to their part of the world, Muslims are naively puzzled by resistance to the aspects of their *da'wah* programme of which Westerners *are* aware. After all, their serious reasoning goes, the essence of Islam is peace. Why would anyone resist that? Does not everyone desire peace? Syed Nadwi is strong on this point. A spiritual vacuum is impossible. Lack of *da'wah* will bring corruption in the land but effective *da'wah* has always brought peace to a community. In the communities where it succeeded, “Islam brought about a total transformation in people’s ideals, norms and thought patterns. It marked freedom from mental and ideological subjugation....” Islam came “to liberate fellow human beings from the narrowness of this world and to take them to its spaciousness.” Continuing with Nadwi’s theme,

Allah had sent them to liberate those whom He wills from subservience to fellow human beings and to bring them to obedience to Allah, to free them from the narrowness of this world, to bring them to its spaciousness and to enable them to benefit from Islam’s

¹⁹ *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, p. 11.

justice and equity by freeing them of the oppression of other religions.

That was the past, but also the present and future. As Islam freed the wild savages of the Arab world, so it is called to the same *da'wah* in the West. The typical Muslim characterization of the West is that of a spiritual vacuum of secularism in which the most barbaric licentiousness is given free reign. Nadwi buys into this view without resorting to the sordid details found in publications such as *The Pen* and *Alkalami*. He wants the West to “feel the vacuum that mars their life,” a life marked by “self-gratification, Mammon-worship and unbridled freedom.” The West “has popularized worldliness, materialism, godlessness and atheism.” He wants to lead them to the stage where “they ask for breaking away from this life of darkness.” He is “sure that Westerners will soon realize that they can derive this light only from Islam.”

Again, Khurram Murad in his Preface to Nadwi’s 1983 British publication summarizes the latter’s view of the West. It needs to be rescued “from the consequences of its own follies.”

The West’s entire concern is with man’s outer world; it is totally indifferent to the world that lies inside him. Having refused to submit to One God, it has become a slave to its own progress and technology. Devoid of faith, material progress... is hollow. Technology has placed vast powers in the hands of Western man...; yet it has not equipped him to handle these powers in the interest of mankind. The West’s attitudes are characterized by...arrogant superiority....²⁰

Sometimes Muslims recognize that the basic impulse of the West is not Christian so much as Greek. In his brief introduction to Nadwi (1983), Mohiuddin Ahmad gives Nadwi the credit for what both “critics as well as eulogizers of Western civilisation” have overlooked, namely “that the modern West is moved by the philosophic vision of ancient Greece.” This is the reason for that traditional Western dualism that separates religion from other aspects of life and “rejects everything beyond the visible and tangible and makes man the measure of all things.” Nadwi describes it as a “hideous schizophrenia” over against which he advocates the “unity of life” where life and religion are intimately intertwined. Here lies the deepest antagonism and incompatibility between the West and Islam.²¹

²⁰Nadwi, 1983, p. 7.

²¹Nadwi, 1983, pp. 17, 102-103.

Again, we have here a fascinating similarity of insight between Muslim thinkers and Reformed Christian thinkers of the Kuyperian school, such as Herman Dooyeweerd. The radical insight is correct, but Nadwi is certainly not the only one to have discovered these roots of Western thought, not even the first.²² Kuyperians have not only recognized it long ago, but also battled it seriously at many fronts not only in their originating country, The Netherlands, but in many English-speaking countries as well.

In the context of Western secular hedonism, *da'wah* is to be carried out in ways that remind me of my Christian mission courses in seminary back in the 60s. Nadwi's approach is a far cry from the typical Muslim approach in Nigeria. Typical of Muslims in a minority position, Nadwi advocates a totally peaceful form of *da'wah*, one that I personally would highly appreciate and that would be fully appropriate in such an environment. Nadwi writes, "What is imperative is that they [Muslims] should have unshakable faith, a conduct marked by boldness and strategy and absolute conviction in the message.... They should live by a high standard and not suffer from any inferiority complex." It is in this context that Nadwi tells the story about Rab'I bin 'Amir that appears in the twin paper and that "illustrates the point so well." Nadwi explains further:

While residing here, if you set a new model, a new pattern and a unique lifestyle, reflecting total dissociation from the Western lifestyle..., Westerners will have the curiosity to study Islam. They will visit you and ask for books to know the source of your uniqueness. They will be eager to find out what has transformed you and endowed you with such excellence.

²²Several generations of Kuyperian writers have hammered away at this Greek foundation to Western culture. They generally recognize this foundation as the root of much that is wrong in the West. Herman Dooyeweerd is a seminal writer in this respect in, among his numerous writings, *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options*. Trans. John Kraay. Eds. Mark Vander Vennen and Bernard Zylstra. Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1979. See also Dooyeweerd's *In the Twilight of Western Thought: Studies in the Pretended Autonomy of Philosophical Thought*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960. Muslims would do themselves a huge favour by studying the literature of this Christian tradition. I predict they will be greatly and pleasantly surprised by it. They would find much to affirm and it would deepen their generally superficial understanding of the wells of Western culture at a philosophical and theological level. Here is a Christian tradition that has rejected those Greek foundations in contrast to other Christian traditions that have largely acquiesced with these Greek roots and, in fact, have generally been unconscious of them. It is only in the closing years of the 20th century that English-speaking Evangelical Christians have started to become aware of this part of their heritage, a process I suspect to be one of the ripple effects of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

...You should play an independent, effective and fundamental role in society. Your life should be an ideal one which may draw the attention of others. It should agitate the minds of the local people who may be compelled to contrast their own life with yours. Your life should make them curious for gaining sound information about Islam.

The term “curious” occurs frequently in Nadwi’s presentation. Muslims in minority situations must be models of a way of life that will make others interested and eager to know more. “This is the only radical way in which you can play an effective role in non-Islamic societies.” Modeling and arousing curiosity are the main terms in minority *da’wah*.

Nadwi concludes his *da’wah* lecture with an encouragement from two couplets from the poetry of Iqbal:

**You are, indeed, the trustee of the original (pledge of) honour.
You are the right and the left (hand) of the Ruler of the Universe.
Made of earth! You belong to time and space, as well!
Drink up the wine of Faith; get away from the idol-house of doubt!**

Wake up, wake up, wake up from this deep slumber.

And arise!!

Seek refuge from the heart-captivating snares of the Franks.

Stay aloof from their sweetness and their aristocracy.

Europe’s Genghis-like tyrants have turned the world into a barren Waste.

O! builder of the Ka’bah! Rise, once more, to reconstruct this ruined World.

Wake up, wake up, wake up from this deep slumber!

And arise!!

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe.²³

Nadwi’s approach is not an isolated one. S. M. Darsh, Imam at the London Central Mosque, advocates a similar irenic approach. Muslims should explain their differences with adherents of other religions, he advises, but this “should not impair human relationships or result in acrimonious attacks.” The Prophet Muhammed learned that in the face of

²³ Nadwi, 1993, pp. 8-19.

opposition, a missionary does not need to kill himself. “The shining wisdom came to remind him that he is but a Messenger, that he has to deliver his Message, not to kill himself with grief and sorry,” an attitude based on the Qur’an (18:6 and 26:3).²⁴ The way to call people is “with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and reason” (Qur’an 16:125). *Da’wah* is not a matter of “abuse, insult or resorting to immoral ways.” It is not a matter of argumentation (Qur’an 29:46). Islam “affirms human brotherhood,” “friendship and good relationships [are] the norm of Muslim life with others.” “Social relationships with [Christians] are encouraged. Inviting them for meals, accepting their invitations, eating meals prepared by them, marrying... their daughters.”²⁵ Darsh calls for various forms of cooperation even between the two religions, but a prerequisite for this is trust and, in the case of the West, a feeling of welcome on the part of Muslims. “What is needed is the creation of an atmosphere of trust and confidence... and a cessation of religious warfare which saps the energy of both sides, and inhibits their mutual cooperation for the welfare of both sides.” And then Darsh makes a statement that has profound implications for Nigeria: If Muslims are to have a chance in Europe, there needs to be a “revival of the true spirit of Christianity and Islam.”²⁶ Hello, Nigeria! Is anyone there listening.....?

Yes, there is this antithesis²⁷ between the West and Islam. There are “unbridgeable distances” between them. Nevertheless, Khurram Murad, in his Preface, advises Muslims to “be open minded and generously recognise... contributions that the West has made towards the advancement of ... knowledge and civilisation.” They should encourage cultural exchange with the West by critically adopting “what can be adopted within the framework of Islam.” So, the Muslim *da’wah* does not exclude positive recognition of Western achievements or even critically adopting them. This is a far cry from the current angry Muslim attitude in Nigeria which admits only a radical antithesis and cannot generate the generosity of spirit that would recognize common interests vis a vis secularism and would be open even to limited forms of cooperation.

²⁴ Muslim readers offended by a Christian quoting from the Qur’an, should remember that I am only quoting Muslim authorities and am not presenting a Christian interpretation of the text.

²⁵ Darsh, 1980, pp. 58-63.

²⁶ Darsh, 1980, p. 73.

²⁷ Nadwi, 1983, pp. 10, 12.

Again, the above call is not a denial of this antithesis. It is affirmed time and again. Iqbal Siddiqui is a writer associated with the Toronto-based Muslim newspaper *Crescent International* that recognizes that even the freedom of religion and speech that Muslim minorities enjoy in Britain does not undermine the power of secularism that is “aggressively taught in schools” or the persistent “Islamophobia” that pervades the country.

I get the feeling that Muslims in the West are developing genuinely new ideas and attitudes more befitting their new situation. I have often asked myself whether Islam is open to changes in response to other environments. Obviously it is, for Islam takes on different colours in different societies. But both Darsh and Nadwi are breaking new paths under new circumstances.

The novelty of these strategists lies neither in a different interpretation of Muslim basics nor in a more positive evaluation of Western culture or of Christianity. Here both are totally traditional and orthodox. The sharp antithesis between Islam on the one hand and the West and Christianity on the other is not erased. They are equally wholistic in their orientation. Their difference lies in mission strategy and in attitudes. My prayer is that theirs is not a temporary adjustment designed to tide them over till Muslims can take charge. *My prayer is that they have brought something new and lasting into the mix—and may that mix spill over into Nigeria. My prayer as a missionary is that Islam will develop the capacity for basic change and the resilience to emerge from it a better and stronger Islam that is more attractive to others without giving up its essentials.* An orderly and open Islam will be better to both live and dialogue with than the chaotic version we are experiencing today. And, of course, it would help even more if we could have a revival of an orderly and open version of Christianity. I am not sure which of the two religions is farther from its own mark today.

These materials about Muslim *da'wah* in the West have been included here to demonstrate that the subject of the relationship between Christians and Muslims is relevant even on Christianity's historic major home turf. We are not talking of issues relating only to Africa and Asia that are totally foreign to the West and, therefore, irrelevant. The aim of the international Muslim community with respect to the West is clear. These are not merely

immigrants or refugees; they constitute the vanguard of Islamic *da'wah*, of a community that has lots of patience and, in contrast to hasty and superficial Christian missionary strategists with their little ecclesiastically-oriented five-year plans, thinks in terms of generations and centuries, of nations and cultures. The Nigerian part of the story is prophetic as to how the Muslim community is likely to act when they reach the stage of parity with people of other religions. Hence, developments there should be of vital concern to anyone interested in the future of both Nigeria and the West.

Da'wah in Post-Colonial Nigeria

We can point to two very prominent *jihads* in Nigeria's past as examples of *da'wah*. The first is that of Usman Dan Fodio, the famous jihadist of the Napoleonic era, more than a century before the country of Nigeria was created. The second is that of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna, the Sultan of Sokoto, Premier of the Northern Region, who was killed in the first coup of 1966. We will briefly examine the *da'wah* strategy of the latter, a powerful ruler who described his autobiography as the story of an "attempt ... to do his duty by his people and the principles of his religion."²⁸ Among those principles was the determination to harness all the resources of his government to the demands of *da'wah* in Nigeria.

Sir Bello took it upon himself to "consolidate" the mission of Dan Fodio.²⁹ He would complete the "Islamization of all the people." During his younger days, the Sardauna publicly proposed that if the people in southern Nigeria wished a united country, they "should embrace the religion of the prophet."³⁰ He had at his fingertips all the powers of the Northern Nigerian government and he used all of them for the advance of Islam without embarrassment. It was one of the basic goals of his government. The first six years of Nigeria's independence were marked by "a political situation that was so integrated with Islam that a separation would be impossible," according to Gilliland. Politics, government and *da'wah* were one for him.³¹ His lavish missionary journeys were at the expense of the

²⁸ P. ix.

²⁹ Byang, p. 54.

³⁰ Gilliland, p. 159. Gilliland borrowed these two quotations from Ahmadu Bello, *My life* (no page number given) and from James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, p. 361.

³¹ Gilliland, p. 158.

government, including the many gifts he left with new converts. His international prestige brought in millions of pounds from abroad that generously complemented indigenous funds. He aimed at all levels of society: communities and their chiefs, individuals and even at the civil servants.

In his capacity as Vice President of the World Muslim League or Congress, Bello stated the following in an address to that League:

It is a most difficult task for any individual to carry out a big expansion work of our great religion. It is therefore necessary for us to bring our heads together and formulate a *master plan*³² and efficient organization which will be able to withstand the present day world of competition. I have personally devoted my life to the cause of Islam and... am sacrificing... all that I possess towards that cause.³³

Paden gives a graphic picture of the Sardauna's first missionary journey. It was to Kuta, Niger State, in September, 1963. The Sardauna's retinue included the Grand Khadi, the Speaker of the Northern House of Assembly, four regional ministers, two provincial secretaries, the Provincial Secretary, various chiefs, an assortment of officials of various local as well as the regional government and members of the NPC, a mission agency under the thin guise of a political party. In a hierarchical society where people have almost a mystical regard for such authorities, this was like pulling out all the stops on behalf of Islam at government expense. 1357 Traditionalists out of a total population of 8870 were converted. Not a bad day's haul! This was only the first of many such tours all over the North.

Another example of a typical Sardauna missionary journey was to Jalingo, now the capital of Taraba State. The purpose was "to take up the cause of Uthman dan Fodio in a peaceful *jihad* which changes hearts of people." Muslims, Bello assured his audience, were increasing and the party³⁴ would soon become "one for all the people." He then gave a cheque of 1,000 pounds to the emir to be used for the spreading of Islam. The more than 300 converts

³² Nigerian Christians have repeatedly warned about a Muslim master plan to take over the country. Skeptics, a group from which I only slowly extracted myself, reject this notion as an invalid conspiracy theory. However, here it is in an important speech by the Sardauna. He repeats the idea later in his speech. It is clearly no figment of an imagination fueled by some fake conspiracy theory.

³³ Paden, p. 540.

³⁴ "The party" refers to Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), a party closely affiliated with the Northern Muslim establishment of the day and the party in power in the North.

present were each given a new gown and prayer beads.

All the powers, authority, prestige and wealth of the government were dedicated to Muslim da'wah. In terms of protocol, all the area chiefs would be present at such occasions, but only the Muslim chiefs would sit close to the Sardauna. Whenever a non-Muslim chief would meet him, the Bello would refuse to shake hands with him. Thus their position in the hierarchy of power was made obvious. Each district head was ordered to produce a number of converts from among mostly Traditionalist peoples. In other words, non-Muslim chiefs who knew on which side their bread was buttered, ended up recruiting people for a religion they did not really want for themselves--but few Muslims would have qualms about such minor issues. Even new traditional titles were concocted to be distributed among the new sheep, a temptation few Nigerians can withstand. Where his NPC party did not have strong support, he might build a mosque to bolster his local popularity.

Similar stunts were pulled among politicians and civil servants. Local politicians, often Christian, accepted the Sardauna's invitation to Islam and then embarked on their own local mission, one coming in with over 6000 converts.

Promotion in the civil service was often influenced by one's religion. Though some of the Sardauna's advisors opposed such use of government resources, Alhaji Kaita, a prominent leader, commented that "the conversion of pagans did not harm anyone. After all, pagans have no religion"³⁵--an attitude of contempt all too common among Nigerian Muslims.

Bello himself, in his speech to the World Muslim League, summarizes the efforts he has expended in this mission. He has built mosques for new converts. Islam is to be taught in all government schools. A Qur'anic Teachers Training College has been opened to provide teachers. Qur'anic schools are developed throughout the Region. An Arabic faculty has been established at ABU. The JNI has been founded under his tutelage for the training of missionaries. From November, 1963 till March, 1964, Bello claims to have converted 60,000 individuals!³⁶

Many converted to Islam for the political and economic benefits the Sardauna held

³⁵ Kukah, pp. 20-23. Gilliland, pp. 163-164.

³⁶ Padan, pp. 540-541.

before them. Throughout my years in Nigeria, from 1966 till 1996, I kept hearing stories about Muslim civil servants, army officers, governors, chiefs and others who had been bought over from Christianity to Islam. Many traditional chiefs converted. Some Christian chiefs converted a second time, first from ATR to Christianity and now to Islam. A case in point was a chief in the Rukuba area, close to Jos. Thousands brought into the fold--100,000 in Zaria and Niger provinces alone.³⁷

Yahaya Kwande was a Christian who became a Muslim³⁸ and who subsequently became a powerful politician and businessman. His purpose may have been less selfish, but it was equally pragmatic, namely to infiltrate the party in power, the NPC, ostensibly to defend the interests of his own people in Shendam, who were largely a mixture of Traditionalists and Christians. That, at least, is the justification he offered. When he explained himself, he received a major shock: his attempt was seen as subversive of NPC and the northern establishment. He was said to be opposed to the Sardauna's missionary campaigns.³⁹

The campaign drew the attention of the press, both friendly and hostile, and became a major subject. It is now dubbed "*jihad*," "Muslim crusade" or "holy war." "Sardauna declares Holy War," shrieks one headline. "Islamic Campaign Breaks through Christian Fortress... 9,000 become Muslims in Jos," screams another. The number of converts everywhere runs into the thousands--3000 at Chafe; 6000 at Kotorkoshi; 9800 at Karoma; 7000 in Argungu.⁴⁰

At least, the campaign *seemed* successful, what with all these impressive numbers. Gilliland throws doubt on their long-term effectiveness and asserts that upon the death of the Sardauna, many reverted to their earlier religion.⁴¹ I have no doubt that a considerable number did so revert, but I also have met and heard of enough cases who years later were still Muslim.

Here we have a campaign aimed at a people who proved ready to sell their souls for

³⁷ Paden, pp. 540-541.

³⁸ His wife remained a Christian, apparently without being pressured to become Muslim. That is an unusual arrangement.

³⁹ Kukah, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Paden, pp. 566-569.

⁴¹ Pp. 164-165, 183.

money and power. The Sardauna understood his people very well. He knew what made them tick. Beneath all his efforts lay his awareness of the substratum of African Traditional Religion (ATR) in the bosom of his people. The essential aim of ATR is not to serve God but to exploit spiritual forces for the benefit of the community in the past, but now, just as often, for the benefit of individuals. It is not truth that is important but pragmatic goals of ethnic or personal advancement. It is the influence of ATR in the hearts of Nigerian Christians and Muslims that is the compelling engine. It is especially Yorubas who rather freely admit this strong tendency towards syncretism on their part. Religion harnessed to human ambitions and subservient to them. How else can you explain the absurd journey of many from ATR to Christianity to Islam and then, for some, back to either Christianity or ATR? We have here a case of a religion, a worldview, that subsumes the spiritual under the material, the religious to the economic.⁴²

. I wish to avoid a serious misunderstanding. The above does not imply that all convert to Islam for false, ulterior, or non-spiritual motives. Nor do all convert due to force or pressure. The personal testimonies of converts published in the regular column, "My Choice," in *The Pen* seem genuine enough and made by free choice, not infrequently in the face of opposition from family and friends.⁴³

Da'wah in Contemporary Nigeria

⁴² See my "Old Wine in New Skins" for further explanation of this phenomenon. We have here a sort of convergence of Kuyperian and Marxist thought. Kuyperianism defines the human person as basically a religious being, while Marxism opts for an economic definition. In this ATR convergence, the economic aspect of life has been idolized and represents the essence of the religion.

⁴³ Kahdija Fezoui of England. *The Pen*, 18 Nov/88, pp. 7, 15. Mussa Rwechunguar of Tanganyika. 24 Feb/89, p. 11. Abdul-Aziz Apenyo (country not identified). 7 Apr/89, p. 11. Musa Alhassan of Ghana. 15 Feb/91, p. 6

When we turn to contemporary Nigeria, da'wah language becomes much more aggressive, more militant and much more coarse,⁴⁴ more so than both the language of strategists in the West and that of the Sardauna era in Nigeria. Things have changed since that era. At that time, the Christian community was still largely quietist in its approach to both Muslims and government.

The roots of this quietism were several. First, it was an attitude inherited from their forebears. Secondly, they were a minority, though significant and growing. Thirdly they inherited an evangelical, pietistic, apolitical type of Christianity from their missionaries.

That quietism was the major reason the Government could so easily take over Christian schools and hospitals in the 1970s during the days of Gowon. However, that takeover stimulated Christians to take a second look at themselves. In addition, the shari'a debate of the mid-70s and the religious riots of the 80s have radicalized Christians and turned them into a more aggressive community. Furthermore, the number of Christians has exploded since then. And then there were the campaigns of the Institute of Church and Society in both Ibadan and Jos, through its conferences and publications, for a more wholistic Christianity that contributed significantly to this awakening.

This new situation tends to bring out the more aggressive and militant side of Muslims. It makes them uneasy and nervous. They do not know how to behave in such an ambivalent situation. They have so much power and so many millions of adherents. By all rights, they should be able to impose their stamp on the nation. Alas, they are prevented by the countervailing power of despised Christians, mere *arna*. In the case of radicals, they are downright enraged about this insult and they are ashamed before their foreign co-religionists at not being able to fly the Muslim flag over their country.

Nigeria's Activists remain well within the fold of Muslim wholism. They repeat this concept almost *ad nauseam*. No room for Western compartmentalization of life and religion. No nature/grace dichotomy in Islam. The anemic dualism of Western Christianity imported into Nigeria is treated with great contempt and hostility by these Muslims. They sense deeply

⁴⁴ I avoid using the word "radical" here. It refers to roots but is often misused to mean "aggressive" or "militant." Nadwi is much calmer in his expression than are contemporary Nigerian activists, and more polite, but no less radical.

the weaknesses this dualism has bequeathed Nigerian Christianity. Here is located an important seed for the Christian-Muslim clashes of the last few decades. Aminudeen Abubakar, a fully representative writer, affirms this strongly in the Hausa language:

Addininmu... babu wata matsalar da babu a cikinsa. Wadansu su na cewa babu ruwan Musulunci da siyasa. To, addinin Musulunci kuwa, kashi tara bisa goma duk siyasa ce. Manzon Allah (S.A.W.) ya na cewa:- "Addini shi ne Mu'amalla." To, mu'amala kuwa ita ce siyasa. Bature shi ne ya fassara siyasa da cewa ita ce "Bakar Wasa." To, mu kuwa a Musulunci, siyasa ita ce hanyar rayuwa.⁴⁵

A religion that is so wholistic and so political, one that is, moreover, so infatuated with itself and so proud, will have no qualms to unilaterally harness all the powers and resources of the government in its mission. And so we witness on a grand scale the open continuation of the Sardauna's method without embarrassment. In twin paper, I have already referred to the use of Federal radio and television stations on behalf of Islam. Of course, *the entire pilgrimage setup, largely on behalf of no more than a quarter of the population⁴⁶* is a clear example. Think of the huge government expenditures on its national and state offices and officers, its handling of travel affairs and airlines, its offices and other facilities in Saudi and, above all, its many thousands of participants with government subsidies. A huge government expenditure indeed for what is at least *meant* to be a purely religious ritual for a minority group.

Another huge case in point is the entire establishment of sultan and emirs, leaders of the Muslim community, all of them both appointed and paid by the government. It is with government funds that emirs are “to safeguard the... shari’a.” They are “to ensure that the Shari’a is supreme and the Muslims first and free citizens.” They are to “ensure the safety, supremacy and sanctity of the faith and practice” of the people. “The people” referred to here are the Muslim people. Never mind the others. They are not even worthy of consideration.

⁴⁵ Translation: "There is nothing that does not concern our religion. Some people say that Islam has nothing to do with politics. The truth is that nine-tenth of all Muslim concerns are political in nature. The Prophet of God (...) says, '... that is politics.' Europeans call politics a 'dirty game,' but to us Muslims politics is our way of life" (*Alkalami*, 31 Mar/89, p. 11.)

⁴⁶ The “less than a quarter of the population” formula is based on the assumption that Traditionalists comprise about ten percent of the population and Christians about 47 percent. This leaves some 43% Muslims. Of these about half are women of which very few do the *hajj*. That leaves us with some 25 percent of the population from which to draw.

The Pen's critique of the emirs is precisely that they have not defended the incorporation of the Shari'a into the national constitution.⁴⁷

The governments, federal as well as several of the northern states, are involved in all kinds of Muslim projects. They build mosques in public institutions such as airports, schools, government offices, governors' residences, often at public expense. Abattoirs, paid out of public coffers, are treated like Muslim property where only Muslim slaughter rites are allowed. Only animals acceptable to Islam may be slaughtered at these public institutions. Christian attempts to break such public Muslim monopolies have led to violence in various places and to significant bloodshed in Tafawa Balewa area of Bauchi state.

Sometimes the government will grudgingly pay towards Christian equivalents as in the case of Abuja with its national mosque and national ecumenical centre. And then there are the various Christian pilgrimage boards sponsored by various state governments.

Possibly taking their cue from the Sardauna, the Northern Board for Arab and Islamic Studies has been putting pressures on the federal and northern state governments to uplift Muslim educational institutions, especially the Qur'anic schools. "It is the duty of the Northern States Governments to give Quranic education a proper place in the new national policy on education... in a way that it would be more beneficial to Quranic pupils." The Board further calls for governmental support, recognition and monitoring of the entire Muslim educational establishment. Finally, it asks the government to organize competition events in the memorization and recitation of the Qur'an as well as quizzes, debates and dramas to be used for the mass media.⁴⁸

Some of these state governments indeed do try in various ways to improve the Qur'anic schools one finds in all Muslim villages, schools that only teach Islam at a very elementary level. It is boldly announced on the front page that "Gwamnatin Kano Zata Kafa Makarantun Kur'ani."⁴⁹ The state governor had noticed how well Kano children were doing in competitions for Qur'anic recitation and he wanted to give them an further boost. Every local government in the state was to have such a school. On the same page there is a similar

⁴⁷ *The Pen*, 18 Nov/88, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, p. 16.

⁴⁹ *Alkalami*, 31 Mar/89, p. 1. "Kano State Government Will Establish Qur'anic Schools."

announcement from the Katsina State Government.

Indeed, Muslims expect the Nigerian governments to be fully involved in almost all aspects of their religion. We have seen how they demand not only that the government ban Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, but also that Wole Soyinka, Nigeria's only Nobel scholar, be fired from his government post for supporting Rushdie.

Christian missions had established an elaborate network of schools, both primary and secondary, and medical institutions, both clinics and large-scale hospitals. This was not to Muslim liking. During the early 1970s, they somehow were able to persuade or force—who will ever know the real story?—the Christian Military Head of State, the gentle Yakubu Gowon, to take over these institutions in most states. Though traditional Islam officially feels a greater affinity with Christianity than with other worldviews, in this case it preferred to bring these institutions into the camp of secularism, a worldview they positively abhor. They would rather see them destroyed at the hands of undisciplined and corrupt secularists at the expense of students and patients, than leave them in the hands of Christians. No one was surprised when almost all of these institutions were destroyed. It was the natural outcome of Muslim *da'wah* that expects so much from governments, even, apparently, from secular governments, the very type of government against which it bristles. This was *da'wah* gone berserk, *da'wah* based on unholy anger and thus totally gone astray from its Muslim precepts.

Nigerian Muslims boldly state their claim to an unrestricted right to evangelize. Their insistence on this right, unilateral as it is, is based on aspects of Islam we have already noted. There is their strong sense of a great commission that provides the basic mandate. In addition there are some other factors, namely their admiration for their religion and their notion that Islam is incumbent on everyone.

If it is the duty of the government to advance Islam, Muslims cannot tolerate a government that is secular or neutral or that seems to be advancing Christianity. Where they think to recognize government support of Christianity they explode into holy indignation. There is no room for balance or neutrality here. Government has a *da'wah* to support all that is true and beautiful—and that means Islam. It is *not* to support falsehood—and that surely includes Christianity. Thus, when it is felt that government attitudes or programmes support

Christianity, Muslims get very upset, for that is a betrayal of the very purpose of government.

A case in point is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), a programme under which all university graduates serve a community for one year in a part of the country other than their own at greatly reduced salaries and at considerably hardship. Adam Ahmad of Bayero University, Kano, presented a lecture to the NYSC Muslim Fellowship in which he stated a commonly held opinion that NYSC is the brainchild of Christians meant to instill non-Muslim ideas into the minds of its Muslim participants. They are forced to sing songs that give glory to the Nigerian nation that may only be given to God. They are forced to do anti-Muslim things at the training camp. There is no provision for doing the five daily prayers. Genders are carelessly mixed while immoral activities such as drinking, gambling and prostitution are regular features.⁵⁰ The article does not make mention of the non-Muslim uniform women have to wear, but it often comes up in such discussions. We have here a betrayal of the government that is supposed to advance Islam.

Muslims raise similar complaints on various issues in various states. The government of Oyo State, where Muslims claim a majority of 65%, allocated only three cabinet positions to Muslims and seven to Christians. Of those seven Christians, three were women, while not a single Muslim woman was appointed. Only two Muslims are found among the Directors General of the state. The education ministry had become “a no-go area” for Muslims. All the prominent positions were given to Christians: the Commissioner, the Director General, In addition the Primary Schools Management Board and the Central School Board had Christians as their chairpersons and director generals, with the latter Board having a Christian majority. Furthermore, while Bible knowledge was being taught, the Schools Board refused to recruit teachers for Arabic and Islamic studies. All of this clearly showed the Governor’s “total disregard for Muslims,” it was claimed. The Muslim community demanded immediate cancellation of Christian Religious Knowledge classes where there was no Muslim equivalent. They also demanded adequate Muslim representation at all levels of government, with a minimum of three Muslim Commissioners, the recruitment of Muslim Religious Knowledge teachers and an immediate stop to “the prosecution and detention of Muslim

⁵⁰Mukhtar Zabairu Sirajo, “An Yi Tir da Shirin Bautar Kasa.” *Alkalami*, 14 Apr/89, p. 2.

leaders without offence.”⁵¹

The reverse discrimination against Christians is no problem at all to Muslims. How many Christians occupy prominent government positions in the far northern states? Faruk Umar calmly observes that Christians were unhappy with the government of Buhari “because most of his appointees, including the next-in-command, were Muslims.”⁵² He expresses no concern about this situation. Of course not: Muslims are in control. That’s the way it is supposed to be. Again, that amazing naïveté and insensitivity Muslims keep displaying in a context where such one-sidedness is a major contributor to instability and restlessness—especially when it is skewed against Muslims as in the case of Oyo.

Education is an area where Muslims frequently complain. Abubakar Muahmmad Makwalla draws the attention of Muslims to the alleged “calculated conspiracy to indoctrinate Muslim children in nursery schools... into the Christian faith.” Maakwalla calls on the authorities to take “absolute control over nursery schools to avoid manipulation of one religion over another.... In the alternative, Islamic scholars should be dispatched to nursery schools to teach ... Islamic knowledge.” Muslims must establish their own schools to prevent subjecting children to Christian evangelism. All of this is seen by the author as one “grand conspiracy.”⁵³

Another educational example is from Oshogbo, Osun State, where Muslims, probably without government funds or permission, built a mosque on the campus of a secondary school founded by Christians but confiscated by an earlier state government. The state’s Governor, a Christian and, apparently, a strong member of CAN, banned its use in response to a petition from CAN to the government. Muslims argued for its legitimacy on the ground that no one would be forced to attend its services. The fact that the school was built by Christians was as irrelevant to them as was the affront of this mosque to the Christian founders of the school.⁵⁴

It appears that Muslim leaders watch Christian missionaries closely. Faruk Umar, a staff member of the Bureau for Islamic Propagation, the publisher of *The Pen* and *Alkalami*, presented a lecture on the subject at the 7th Islamic Conference at Tehran in 1989. Here he

⁵¹ “Muslims Decry Composition of Oyo Cabinet.” *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, pp. 1-2.

⁵²F. Umar, *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, p. 12

⁵³A. M. Makwalla, “Systematic Indoctrination of Muslim Children into Christianity in Nursery Schools.” *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, p. 13.

⁵⁴ *Al-Madinah*, Nov/95, p. 24.

covers a wide range of subjects, including not only traditional missionary topics but also the international policies of the West, subsuming them all under one heading as if Western politics and Christian missions are all under one management. Though the uninitiated non-Muslim may be surprised at such a wide approach, it represents a typical Muslim wholistic view that subsumes international politics under *da'wah*, but that so totally misinterprets the Western missionary scene by the imposition of the Muslim *da'wah* model that it seems almost ridiculous.⁵⁵ It is attached as an appendix below.*

Muslim *da'wah* is stimulated by the current Christian challenge. With Christianity having gained rapidly in numbers since the 1960s and probably having overtaken Muslims in numbers, the Muslim community understandably feels threatened. This has considerably enhanced their sense of evangelistic urgency and put it clearly on the front burner. The realization that many of these converts are from Islam, has turned the urgency into an emergency. Publicly, they ignore the trend and pretend that such conversions are minimal, while they continue to insist on being the majority religion.⁵⁶

In spite of the blatant Muslim aggressive approach to *da'wah*, using all public resources, they deny that same right to Christians. When a Muslim does so convert, Islam often turns to violence. In fact, a Muslim convert to Christianity becomes largely a *persona non grata*, an unwanted person. In Nigeria, this is not due to any official law or constitution, but strictly to what I can only call general Muslim intolerance. I can think of no more appropriate term for it.

The strangest thing here is the general Muslim surprise when they are accused of intolerance. They will point to their history of tolerance and claim that through the centuries they have shown more tolerance than other religions. That may be so. Nevertheless, to me such Muslim surprise is nothing short of amazing, when they know very well they do not allow conversion from Islam and will oppose it fiercely with all the weapons at their disposal, foul and fair. No, none really foul, for in this context even the foulest becomes fair, if not

⁵⁵F. Umar, *The Pen*, 24 Feb/89, p. 12.

⁵⁶ I have personally met numerous Christians from Muslim backgrounds, including some of the most prominent Christians in the country such as Ishaya Audu, Tanko Yusuf, Christopher Abashiya, Haruna Dandaura. One finds them everywhere among grass root Christians, with many of them being ardent evangelists. This trend is neither a figment of the imagination nor a propaganda ploy as we shall see later in this document.

sacred. Here the end justifies every possible means available.

This attitude is, I believe, to be traced to their extreme infatuation with their religion, an infatuation that totally blinds them to all calls for mutuality. When you have such a corner on the truth, it makes no sense to them to be tolerant of the highest folly a person can commit—to forsake the way of the Prophet Muhammed. Darkness and lie have no right and do not deserve fair treatment.

Of course, this problem is not peculiar to Nigeria. It is a general phenomenon wherever Islam wields power. Malaysia reportedly has a Muslim population of only 58 percent, but its constitution makes it illegal for a Muslim to convert.⁵⁷ Saudi and Mauritania do not allow their citizens to be anything but Muslim. Finish. No wiggle room of any kind. I read almost daily reports of extreme oppression, including murder, torture and imprisonment of Christian converts in Pakistan. The Muslim community has devised various ways of dealing with an "apostate" or a "*murtadd*." According to Syrjanen, the Qur'an threatens an apostate only with punishment in the afterlife, but the Traditions or the Hadith introduces the death penalty.⁵⁸ Muslim jurisprudence has it that a sane, male apostate acting under no compulsion must be put to death. Other consequences of apostacy include suspension of right of ownership of property and annulment of marriage to Muslim wives.⁵⁹

Nigeria is not to be left behind. Father Matthew Kukah reminds us that the Kafanchan riot originally centered on the fact that Rev. Bako, the preacher who quoted the Qur'an, is a Christian convert from Islam.⁶⁰ That, from the Muslim perspective, is the worst of all animals who deserves death, remember? And such a non-person, such a beast quoting from the holy book? That is unforgivable and cannot be ignored. It was almost a Christian invitation to

⁵⁷ *The Banner*, 25 Oct/93, p. 19.

⁵⁸ He refers to sura 3:86ff and 16:106f. xxxxx

⁵⁹ Syrjanen, p. 165. In footnote 332, p. 166, Syrjanen reports that some modernists reject the death penalty. However, such attempts are strongly resisted by more popular traditionalists. In order to keep the flow of the essay going, I resist the temptation to adduce concrete examples of such treatment, but entire organizations exist that track these incidents of intolerance and oppression and that expose them in their numerous websites, story for story, incident for incident without let up. You can find plenty of details in my series *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations*, which you can find on the very page of the website you are currently on.

⁶⁰ Kukah, p. 254. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood (1980-2002)*, pp. 50-55.

violence. From the Muslim perspective, it was a highly provocative situation to be blamed exclusively on the Christians. The stories of horror experienced by Christian converts from Islam are too many. Such a stand makes nonsense of the constantly repeated Muslim phrase that there is no compulsion in religion.

Muslim discussions of this element of their religion can take amazing forms. Lateef Adegbite emphasizes that Islam safeguards freedom of religion and encourages free thought. However, if a Muslim opts for another religion, "he is liable to be killed as an apostate, though this capital punishment is often deferred to give the apostate enough time to repent and return to Islam."⁶¹ And that is admitted in a paper that boasts about Islam's freedom of religion and thought, about an Islam that continues to repeat there is no compulsion in religion! No sense of contradiction here at all! This is an aspect of Islam that never ceases to amaze me. Doublethink? Doublespeak? It sounds like it, but it surely is not meant that way. It is said in all sincerity and without embarrassment.⁶²

The Muslim majority claim assumes the identification of the entire Hausa community with Islam. This is a false identification in view of a considerable number of Maguzawa, a Hausa people who never became Muslim, but who have been hidden in the villages and were marginalized culturally, politically and economically. They have been "discovered" by Nigerian churches who are actively evangelizing them. Their number has caused surprise. Even the claim by Falola that the far north is predominantly Muslim⁶³ may be false. For reasons of their own but not hard to guess, the Federal Government decided to eliminate religion from the last national census.⁶⁴ This fact helps keep the waters murky, with both sides

⁶¹ Adegbite, "Human Rights in Islamic Law," p. 10.

⁶² Not all Muslims hold this opinion. M. M. 'Ali, an Indian Ahmadiyya writer, rejects the death penalty for apostasy. According to him, it is only an apostate who joins a people at war with Islam who deserves death. Apostates who join a people living at peace with Islam are to be left alone (M. M. 'Ali, pp. 593-595). It should be noted, however, that many Muslims do not recognize Ahmadiyyas as Muslims anymore than most Christian churches recognize Jehovah's Witnesses as Christian. One Shehu G. Durbunde writes, "Kungiyar Ahmadiyya ba kungiya ce ta musulmi ba." ("Ahmadiyyas are not Muslims.") Another agrees, "Dukkan musulmin duniya sun yi ittifaki akan cewa 'yan Ahmadiyya dai ba musulmi ba ne." ("Muslims throughout the world agree that Ahmadiyyas are not Muslims.") (*Alkalami*, 14 Apr/89, p. 16.)

⁶³ Falola, pp. 1, 76.

⁶⁴ Kantiok expresses the common Christian opinion that the major reason is that the number of Muslims has been decreasing since 1963, a fact the Muslim community does not wish to face (p. 343).

claiming a majority. It is, however, quite clear that Nigerian Islam desperately and militantly seeks to defend a status quo that, it refuses to admit, no longer exists.

What a far cry the da'wah methods in Nigeria are from those in the West! Nadwi's and Darsh's are methods and models others can live with not only, but that are also likely to attract more people to Islam than is presently the case with all the bloodshed, violence, destruction and hatred in Nigeria. So, Islam *does* have its own resources for peaceful extension without any semblance of force. True, that is only the method of the minority, a position that is tolerated only as temporary. True also that peaceful co-existence is never a voluntary choice but, rather, a wise strategy forced upon Muslims by circumstances beyond their control.⁶⁵ But could even a huge minority, such as we have in Nigeria, not borrow a leaf here? What could a community of 50 million models not accomplish? It could be staggering!

Nigerian Muslims, don't you see the direction in which your victory is to be sought? Does it take a Christian missionary like me to point you to a more viable direction? Unless they have an ulterior motive or are rejected by their own, people do not convert to a religion that is hostile, aggressive towards them. They do not join a community that is angry at their own community and oppresses them. When are you going to trade in your anger, hostility and aggression for the wisdom and peace you are so fond of claiming? You presently model little more than negatives that are guaranteed *not* to arouse the curiosity Nadwi talks about.

Christian Reactions to Muslim Da'wah

I begin this section with an overview of the reactions and opinions of Jolly Tanko Yusuf. He is a man with all the relationships, experiences and courage one could possibly hope for. He is also an example of the Christian reaction to Muslim aggressiveness the previous paragraph warns against. Yusuf grew up in a prominent Muslim family. His grandfather was a Muslim scholar and missionary who received a special award from Shehu Dan Fodio, the great 19th-century Muslim reformer. During his youth he converted to Christ, after which he suffered considerable persecution from his devout father, including being chained. After working as a builder for some time at the hands of the Sudan United Mission, he entered the political arena. He soon found himself in high positions and had the privilege of

⁶⁵Botha, 1998, p. 9.

close relationship with the Sardauna. He was a member of the Northern House of Assembly and later held a variety of important posts, including that of ambassador. The last decades he devoted his considerable political talents to the Christian community, especially in the forum of CAN from local to national level. In fact, he became a church politician in the good sense of the word. The aftermath of a “Christian” coup resulted in his imprisonment, though he was soon exonerated. His experiences with and understanding of Nigerian Muslim aspirations is second to none, while his opinions of and attitude towards them are representative of the general Nigerian Christian stance. Therefore, by unveiling Yusuf’s response to Muslim *da’wah* we will have an accurate presentation of both Nigerian Islam and the Nigerian Christian reaction.

A major emphasis of Yusuf is that the Muslim mission is to dominate Nigeria not only but to turn it into a Muslim country. Nigeria has two main problems, according to Yusuf, corruption and “the determination of Nigeria’s fundamentalist Muslims to make our country an Islamic state.” “Currently, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is using naira (the unit of value of Nigerian currency) and petro-dollars received from Nigerian oil...to bring all Nigerians under Islam. Oil is its strongest weapon.” Again, “Islam is using its dictatorial political power to bring Nigeria—every person and every institution—under the heel of Islam.”⁶⁶

It may be well for Western readers also to hear Yusuf’s warning about Muslim global ambitions. Nigeria is only one of their mission “fields.” Their aim is to conquer the heart of the entire world. He tells 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

⁶⁶Yusuf, 1995, pp. xvi, 2.

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 is 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.

Islam has its OIC, while the West has its European Economic Community (EEC), but, warns Yusuf, there is an important difference. The EEC has only 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!” cries Yusuf.⁶⁷

Returning our attention to Nigeria, we learn from Yusuf that not just any Muslim may rule the country. When the southern Muslim Chief M. K. O. Abiola, supported by many Christians, won the election on June 12, 1993, it was quickly nullified on false pretences by the military Head of State, General Babangida. Fumed Yusuf, “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!” Behind all that arrogance lay their economic interests and their lust for power they were not ready to relinquish.⁶⁸

Having been brought up in a Muslim environment and having worked long in a political climate dominated by Muslims, Yusuf knows that this Muslim thrust for power is not merely a temporary phenomenon or accident. “Because of its very nature,” he writes, “Islam...will continue... to impose its will upon the people.” Here lies the reason for the bitter conflict between the two factions in Nigeria. Since the early beginnings of Islam, religion and

⁶⁷Yusuf, 1995, pp. 2-4. There are two Muslim centres within one mile of my current residence in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, a city with a conservative reputation second to none.

⁶⁸Yusuf, 1995, pp. 4-5,8.

government have been one. This unity has made it natural for “Muslim political leaders to use state facilities, institutions, and power to promote Islam. This natural tendency also found its expression in Nigeria as per Sardauna and his successors in contemporary Nigeria.”⁶⁹

This unity of government, politics and religion would drive a Muslim government to interfere in all cultural aspects, through the imposition of Muslim law, the *shari’a*. Muslim scholars

maintain that *Shari’a* requires government to supervise all aspects of Nigerian lives, no matter how trivial.... Included are such matters as mode of dress, relationships, attitude towards work, and the way Muslims enter their houses! Anything contrary to such regulations is tantamount to rejection of ... Islam. Thus an Islamic government that follows the provisions of the *shari’a* will govern all aspects of human life.

Muslims have pushed hard to attain this situation in Nigeria. “They have maneuvered jurisdiction over religion, education, economics and personal lives. They have set up Islamic judicial institutions and have instituted administrative policies that aimed to implement *shari’a* throughout the country.” Indeed, the *shari’a* covers all “from cradle to grave.” Yusuf takes us for a walk through sections of the Model Constitution submitted by the Council of Ulama to the Constitutional Review Committee of 1987. And indeed, that document aims at the supremacy of the *shari’a* over all of life’s details. For example, Article 25 would compel “all persons in governmental offices on any level, including the Heads of Armed Forces, to follow the *shari’a* in letter and spirit to uphold ... Islam at all cost....” And all this can stand without any sense of contradiction with Article 12, which proclaims “There is no compulsion in religion.” Yusuf comments, “I shake my head.” And a bit later, he bursts out, “What a despicable contradiction.”⁷⁰

Yusuf was a strong personality and leader, but he was not the only one to object to these Muslim tactics. Paul Unongo, a Christian Tiv politician, observed that these campaigns generally evoked great resentment and rage among the non-Muslim people. Poets voiced the anger of the people in their poetry.⁷¹ Christian civil servants were enraged, their main

⁶⁹Yusuf, 1995, pp. 76, 73.

⁷⁰ Yusuf, 1995, pp. 73-77.

⁷¹ Kukah, pp. 22-23. Muslims countered this accusation by accusing Christians of using MAMSER funds, a government organ, for their own missionary purposes (*The Pen*, 2 Dec/1988).

objection being forced to use government resources on behalf of Islam, a segment of the population, at the expense of Christians.⁷² Instead of curiosity, Nigerian Muslims arouse anger, hatred and resistance, the very opposite from what the strategists in the West recommend.

Closing Reflections

The situations described in this paper constantly raise the issue for Christians to what extent to kowtow to Muslim sensitivities that, it cannot be denied, include a generous dose of intolerance. Or should such sensitivities be ignored and Christians simply exercise their constitutional right of freedom to practise their religion--and let the chips fall where they may? In the Kafanchan case, Christians had the constitutional right to invite a convert from Islam to quote from the Qur'an, but was it wise? Christians in Kano had the constitutional right to advertise a crusade, but given the provocative situation, was it wise?⁷³ When do you emphasize constitutional freedom and when do you kowtow to intolerance? Should the government limit such freedom in *ad hoc* situations when its practice endangers the peace? It has often attempted to do so. However, in a situation where both Christians and Muslim Activists suspect the government from having sold out to the other side, such *ad hoc* restrictions always produce accusations that the government unilaterally supports the other religion. It is a no-win situation.

The answers to these questions are not easy. It can be argued that there are no answers in the present situation. The entire situation itself has to change. Trust and toleration between the two religions must be created. The governments must learn and be allowed to act in evenhanded ways that are seen to be fair to all parties. But whether the two religions can agree on what is fair for the government to do is tied up in their mutually exclusive worldviews and definitions of religion! This paper, of course, is part of my larger body of Christian-Muslim materials dedicated to help move our beloved country in that direction. In the meantime, in this context the Hausa proverb applies: *Ran wanka ba a boye cibiya*. That is

⁷² Paden, p. 575. Muslims countered this accusation by accusing Christians of using MAMSER funds, a government organ, for their own missionary purposes (*The Pen*, 2 Dec/1988).

⁷³Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood (1980-2002)*, pp. 41-46.

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to say, a spade must sometimes be called a spade.