

A TRAGEDY OF WASTED OPPORTUNITY

TWO DECADES OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

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Questions for the Theological Society

PROLOGUE: The Context of This Paper

This paper is part of a larger project that should eventually turn into a published book. An interim phase may take the form of a series in a journal. In the larger project, this material is preceded by some introductory materials and will be succeeded by extensive background and interpretative materials as well as tentative proposals for some parameters required for a new start. The entire project is a recommendation of a wholistic Reformed worldview that I judge to possess genuine potentials for healing in this Nigerian situation. It will require a more wholistic perspective from Christians and greater tolerance from Muslims. There may be some allusions in this paper to events or persons that will be explained in the completed document. While this paper contains a number of appendices written exclusively by Christians, the completed documents will also feature Muslim appendices. The value of the completed book may well lie in the rare documents from both sides more than in my own discussion.

This paper was originally written for and delivered at the West Michigan Theological Society, Grand Rapids, MI. May 19, 1999.

The book referred to in the above paragraph became the first volume of the series *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations*. The book is found earlier on this website page.

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this paper is the long series of religious riots that have characterized Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria from the late 1970s into the 1990s. The emphasis is on the events themselves. The causes and interpretations of these riots will be the subject of subsequent papers. A hard distinction between fact and interpretation is mythical, of course, for we see facts only through our interpretation. Nevertheless, we will try to emphasize the event aspect of these developments, while realizing that interpretation is inevitably involved. In subsequent papers we will try to turn the tables around by concentrating on interpretation.

As dubious and fluid as Nigerian census statistics are,¹ they leave us no doubt that we have here two huge religious blocks facing each other in a dynamic that is totally unique. No other country has the dubious distinction of having two such huge and relatively equal blocks of Christians and Muslims face each other with such mistrust.² These two blocks are at such dangerous loggerheads with each other that the country has several times tottered on the brink of another civil war. This religious tension is often cited as one of the two most serious problems threatening to destroy the country.³

Muhib Opeloye describes the Christian-Muslim situation in Nigeria as "marred by dissension, acrimony, rancour and discord leading to perpetual religious crises and controversies which have constituted a threat to the stability of the nation."⁴ Correctly spoken. To the Westerner with his tendency to trivialize religion, these riots are almost unbelievable in their ferociousness and intensity.

Though I am not about to delve into past well-known conflicts between Christians and Muslims such as the crusades and colonialism, it should be realized that the resentment and suspicion these have provoked are still very much part of the Muslim psychological baggage everywhere, Nigeria included. One can hardly understand the resentment and suspicion of Nigerian Muslims toward both Christians and Westerners without remembering those historical movements. So-called "radical" Nigerian Muslims frequently appeal to those Christian offenses whenever the former plan an attack either on Christians or on the government.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the widest ecumenical body in the country representing all Christian traditions from Charismatics to Roman Catholics, published a full report on the Kaduna riots of 1987.⁵ That release lists nine previous well-known riots as to year, location and principal actors and then goes on to describe the tenth in detail. Their list includes:

¹ In my forthcoming book, the materials in this paper will be preceded by a short discussion on the statistics issue.

² Of course, Indian statistics would be more impressive, but there neither Christians nor Muslims would even think of claiming majority status. Lebanon provides somewhat of a parallel, but the numbers there are minuscule compared to Nigeria.

³ Two of the many prominents who have warned the country about such a possibility are Prof. I. Audu and Dr. C. Abashiya, both prominent Christians from Fulani background (*TC*, 5/87, pp. 4-5).

⁴ Olupona, p. 89.

1980-- Zaria and Kano
 1982-- Maiduguri, Rigassa and Kano
 1984-- Jimeta-Yola, Gombe
 1986-- Ilorin, Ibadan
 1987-- Kaduna State⁶

However, even prior to the Kano riot of 1980, according to a government report, there had already been over 30 "violent incidents of riots" in the northern states.⁷ Since then, others have occurred as in Katsina, Bauchi and, again, Kano in 1991, in Zangon-Kataf in 1992 and in Jos during 1994. On May 31, 1995, on my way to the Kano airport, we needed police escort to work our way around the city to avoid a riot between local Muslims and Ibos, who are largely identified as Christians. Reports keep coming in of demonstrations and skirmishes in 1998 as well. The list grows longer by the day. By the time this study appears in a published book, it will certainly be outdated in terms of the riot list.

Types of Riots

These riots have had a number of different motives and shapes. At times they are intra-Muslim affairs, with one sect attacking another. Sometimes they are aimed at the government and could be considered political in nature, though a more accurate description might be "politico-religious," for religious concerns are never far from Muslim politics. At other times, they are directed against Christians. Often a combination of motives is at work that is difficult to ferret out precisely.

Nigerian governments dislike labeling riots "religious." They often attempt to give them a political colouration or dismiss them as the work of hooligans, as did Kaduna Governor Umar with respect to the Kafanchan riots.⁸ Christians will usually claim Muslim intolerance as the main reason. Two other major interpretations hold that these riots are the result of either political manipulation or of worsening economic conditions. We will meet all of these interpretations as we go along

1. *Intra-Muslim Riots*

As to intra-Muslim riots, the December, 1980 riot in Kano is a good example—or, rather, evil example. The Maitatsine sect unleashed a three-day riot in which almost 4200 people were killed, mostly Muslims. The purpose apparently was to reform Muslim worship and get rid of whom they considered Muslim infidels. Some Christians were also killed and many church buildings were attacked.⁹

⁵ CAN Release: "The 1987 Kaduna State Religious Disturbances: A Modern Day Jihad Being Inflicted on Nigeria." 1987.

⁶ List also appears in *Tidings*, No. 2/87, p. 28.

⁷ Kukah, p. 154.

⁸ Kukah, pp. 200-201.

Another intra-Muslim riot took place during October, 1982, when the same Maitatsine sect killed some 400 people in Maiduguri and destroyed much property. The government banned the sect. But in February, 1984, they struck in Jimeta, Yola. 763 were killed and almost 6000 were displaced. In 1985 the same sect killed over 100 people in ten hours of fighting in Gombe.¹⁰

2. *Anti-Government Riots*

An example of an anti-government riot is the one that took place in April, 1991, in Katsina. Yakubu Yahaya, according to some, a leader of the Muslim Shi'ite sect,¹¹ defied the state governor. The situation soon turned into chaos as buildings and cars were set ablaze. 2000 followers had been brought into the city to support Yahaya. The spark that triggered it was a magazine article that allegedly insulted both Christ and Mohammed.¹²

As Yahaya himself tells the story, his group first went to the sales office of *Daily Times*, a Federal Government newspaper, where the offending magazine was lodged. They took all the copies of the magazine outside and burnt them. He explains,

While doing that, we did not touch any of the staff of *Daily Times* nor did we insult anybody. We burnt the publications in order to express our displeasure with the *Daily Times* for putting up two of our prophets to ridicule. We know that the punishment of whoever ridicules our prophet is death, but we could not carry out this sentence because we did not know the actual person who was responsible for the act. This was why we had to punish the Company with the hope that our action will serve as deterrent to others.

Subsequently, Yahaya went to the mosque to appeal to fellow Muslims to join him in a further protest against the paper's blasphemy. He reminded them that though a *muzahara* is to be "peaceful and orderly.... We will not hesitate to remove any unruly person from our midst."

Then the police accosted the procession and fired teargas. Confusion set in and people ran helter skelter. Several government buildings and cars were set afire. 161 people were arrested. Many were imprisoned. When the first ones completed their sentences and were released, members of the Islamic Movement from other places came to rejoice with them. Again, the police fired teargas and arrested over 250 of them! Two people died.

⁹ *Tell*, 28 Oct/91, p. 3; *African Concord*, 28 Oct/91, p. 30

¹⁰ *Newswatch*, 6 May/91, p. 16.

¹¹ Yahaya and his immediate followers deny his being leader of this sect or even its existence, since Islam officially knows of no sectionalism. These reports are described by his aides as mere journalistic inventions (*TSM*, 27 Sep/92, p. 19).

¹² *Newswatch*, 29 Apr/91, p. 16. *TSM*, 27 Sep/92. M. D. Sulaiman, p. 10.

And then there was the case of Jos in 1994. Jos has generally been a peaceful city with indigenes living together with large groups of non-indigenous Muslim northerners. That situation was put in jeopardy in April, 1994, when a peaceful demonstration of indigenous people, a combination of largely Christians and Traditionalists, was followed a few days later by a violent riot on the part of so-called "*Jasawa*," Hausa-Fulani Muslim settlers from Bauchi to the north who had been moved to Jos by the colonial government early in the century.

It appears that Jos was at one time under the rule of the Muslim Emir of Bauchi. That Emir appointed a Hausa man Chief of Jos. In 1926, the Jos area was separated from Bauchi and the chieftaincy returned into the hands of the indigenous people. In 1987, a Hausa Muslim politician, Alhaji Saleh Hassan, reportedly called upon *Jasawa* youths to recover the chieftaincy of Jos as their right. This call set into motion a set of dynamics that reached its climax in 1994 with the appointment of a *Jasawa* member as Chairman of the Jos North Local Government by the Muslim military administrator of Plateau State. Strong, though non-violent, protests on the part of the indigenes prompted the suspension of the appointment. A few days later the suspension order led to a violent riot on the part of the *Jasawa*. They made havoc of the town and caused significant burning, looting and killing. "Peace" was restored only by police and the military, but the tension remained. Neither group gave up its claim.¹³

3. *Anti-Christian Riots*

As to Muslim riots either directed against Christians or in which Christians have been among the special targets, there have been several. In October, 1982, the Muslim Student Society (MSS)¹⁴ protested against the location of an Anglican church in Kano on the grounds that it was too close to a mosque. Now the church had been there since around 1930, while the mosque was built between 1968 and 1970! However, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury had visited the place earlier in the year to lay the foundation stone for a new church building on the same site. The police successfully protected that church, but many others were destroyed and 44 people were killed.¹⁵

Bauchi state was the scene of a 1991 riot when a Christian butcher, a member of the Sayawa tribe in the Tafawa Balewa Local Government area, sold pork to a Muslim. The pork was not the only provocation. Part of the problem was the Christian challenge to the Muslim monopoly of the butcher's trade and of the northern abattoirs. Another long-time simmering problem in the area was alleged Muslim suppression of Christians and the desire of the indigenes to have an indigenous chief replace Muslim chiefs imposed on them. Four days of riots produced hundreds of dead and even more injured.

¹³ NS, 20 Apr/94.

¹⁴ The MSS has been described as the youth wing of JNII. The late Abubakar Gumi was at one time its "inspirer and guide," according to Mohammed Dahiru Sulaiman, p. 5.

¹⁵ *Today's Challenge*, Mar-Apr/83, pp. 16-19. Kukah, pp. 158-159.

Thousands took refuge in neighbouring states, especially Plateau State. Houses, hotels, shops and some 20 churches were burnt.¹⁶

Three years later, nothing had yet been done to implement the recommendations of the committee assigned to study the causes of this riot. The promised Sayawa Chiefdom to be cut out of the Muslim Bauchi emirate was still no reality. The state administrator in 1994, bearing a Christian name, described the issue as very delicate. No doubt! Neither had the N25 million compensation package been distributed amongst the victims.¹⁷

Kano has been particularly vulnerable to riots. The October 29, 1991 issue of *Tell* screams out once again, "Bloodbath in Kano: Religious Fanatics Strike Again." Christians had invited Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke from Germany for an evangelistic campaign scheduled for October, 1991, and had dubbed it a "crusade," a word that will immediately rankle Muslim ears and remind them of the crusades of past centuries. Previously, two Muslim evangelists had been denied visas and a third had been deported. In addition, Muslims were denied the use of the Race Course for one of their celebrations, while Bonnke's crusade was originally scheduled to be held there. It would indeed appear that for some strange reason the Kano authorities had favoured Christians in this issue and discriminated against Muslims. The riot that ensued killed hundreds of people. Over 60 Ibo and Christian businesses and more than ten churches were destroyed.

The difference between this riot and most others is that Christians and non-indigenes, mostly Ibos, retaliated. They burnt some buildings and killed some Muslim fundamentalists. CAN denied that it had organized this retaliation and insisted it was a spontaneous response from the threatened people.

This riot was interpreted in two ways. Many journalists and the Kano State Government saw it as basically religious in nature. Other journalists sought the cause in economic conditions--the unemployed vs successful Ibo traders.¹⁸

In all of these riots CAN emphasizes that the culprits are various groups of Muslims, including the Maitatsine sect and the MSS. And in all of them, except one in May, 1980, CAN reports destruction of properties, including, churches and, frequently, lives.

¹⁶ *Newswatch*, 6 May/91, pp. 10-17.

¹⁷ *NS*, 20 Apr/94.

¹⁸ *Citizen*, 21 Oct/91, pp. 7, 12-18. *Tell*, 28 Oct/91, pp. 13-16. *Nigeria's Christian Digest*, 3:20/91, pp. 11-15. *Newswatch*, 28 Oct/91, pp. 14-18. *African Concord*, 28 Oct/91, p. 33. Dare Babarinsa's report in *Tell* is highly recommended reading for anyone wishing to get a feeling for the unbelievable atrocities that were committed under the familiar Muslim battle cry "Allahu Akbar!" But one also gets the impression that Christians were hell-bent to pursue their course regardless of the likely consequences. Though there is no excuse for the intransigence of Muslim intolerance, I question the wisdom of Christian leaders to proceed with their plans under such circumstances. But I also understand their their constitutional rights. I am indebted to Bishop Josiah Fearon for having provided much of the material for this summary of riots.

The tenth riot in the CAN list of 1987 is the main subject of that release. The immediate cause(s) started in Kafanchan in March, 1987, but soon covered much of Kaduna State. I am treating it more extensively because many of the issues involved are illustrative of almost all the problems dividing the two religious communities. It was also so serious that then President Ibrahim Babangida described it as an attempted civilian coup.

CAN published this news release because it feels "the truth of the matter must be told, for in knowing the truth and standing by it, lies our national salvation." It believes that, once they know the truth, "all Nigerians of good will and the government should take concerted action to stem the tide of Muslim religious intolerance." It is in this spirit that I summarize the Kafanchan riot and its aftermath that covered most of Kaduna State.

CAN interprets this and most of the other disturbances as Muslim attacks against the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The Kafanchan riot was preceded by the Muslim publication of such provocative documents as "Jesus Is Not the Son of God" and "The Holy Bible Is Not the Word of God." The Christian community of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in Zaria reports that the distribution of videos produced by one Ahmed Deedat of South Africa dwelling on similar anti-Christian themes, was aided by government agencies such as various state branches of the national television network and the Kaduna International Trade Fair.¹⁹ Only six weeks prior to this eruption, documents traced to Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI), the Muslim equivalent to the Christians' CAN, and to an Indian student dismissed from the Jos ECWA²⁰ Theological Seminary, were circulating that were so inflammatory and provocative that the Plateau State Governor and security organizations had to step in. Furthermore, the Muslim Circle at Sokoto University wrote a letter to the Director of National Security Services in which the documents were described as "dangerously provocative to Muslims" and that Muslims "normally react to such mischievous plans,... sometimes violently."²¹

The Kafanchan riot itself started with a Christian preacher quoting from the Qur'an before a Christian student gathering at Kafanchan College of Education. A film was also shown about the historic jihad or crusade of Usman Danfodio in the 19th century. It was especially the quotations from the Qur'an that provoked Muslim students who overheard the presentation. Their anger was heightened by the fact that the preacher was an ex-Muslim, the lowest of all beings in the Muslim scheme of things, one deserving of death. Muslim students, led by a female member of the fundamentalist sect the Izala, started fighting. The fracas soon spilled over into the town. Over the next few days, Muslims attacked Christians in churches with sticks, knives and clubs. By the end, nine people were killed.

¹⁹ CAN, 1987, Appendix E.

²⁰ "ECWA" is the acronym for "Evangelical Churches of West Africa," the largest Evangelical denomination in the country.

²¹ J. Tsado & Y. Ari. "Who Is Trying to Destabilise Islam?" *TD*, No. 4, 1987.

Further details are provided in an appendix submitted by the local chapter of CAN. It deals more with the aftermath in the town. It reports how Muslims, mostly aggressive fundamentalist sect Izala, were conducting a reign of terror with their weapons and with petrol meant for burning churches. They held up innocent citizens and destroyed their belongings if they were either Christian or belonged to other Muslim sects. The role of a high police officer, a Muslim, in blocking all attempts at peace and even preventing the State Governor from seeing the damage inflicted on churches is highlighted.²²

News of the Kafanchan riot was quickly picked up by the Kaduna federal radio, which published exaggerated reports about killing of Muslims and destruction of mosques. The people of Katsina, the Muslim capital city of Katsina State to the far north, "unleashed violent attacks on Christians," their churches and businesses. One church was heavily damaged; five were burnt. In Funtua, "systematic and well orchestrated destruction" led to the destruction of eight churches and other Christian properties. In the state capital, Kaduna city, 14 churches were destroyed. Soldiers prevented a group of 17 Muslims with petrol containers from burning a church and its worshippers.

Zaria was worse hit than any other town. It is a town with many tertiary educational institutions, including the premier ABU. CAN warned the police of a Muslim plot against them, but the police assured them there was no danger. After the violence had come and gone, 73 churches were burnt, including campus chapels.

CAN insists that, since government and local authorities did little to prevent or stop the on-goings, these agencies were in support of the riots. Several times they met with authorities who said they had to consult with their superiors--a delaying tactic. The same is reported by the Christian community at ABU.²³ In addition, they noticed that some vehicles belonging to the Kaduna State Government and to an Emir were used by the Muslim rioters. And, of course, the role of the Federal radio was considerable in spreading the riot throughout the state. This, CAN declared firmly, is a Muslim jihad, a crusade against Christians.

So far, the CAN report may seem partial, but CAN was fair enough to append a report by L. Garba, a Muslim college official. According to him, the preacher misinterpreted the Qur'an and referred to Mohammed as a false prophet. In addition, Christians welcomed students from other schools with a banner at the school gate with the words, "Welcome to the Jesus Campus." Remember, it is a government college, not Christian. Christian students burnt the college mosque in response to the Muslim attack.

In the Nigerian context of extreme Muslim intolerance, it should be well understood, such behaviour amounts to an invitation to war. It may be debatable whether anyone should have the freedom to behave like that in such an already volatile context. The lack of wisdom and restraint among these Christian students is not debatable.

²² Appendix B in the CAN Release. See also Kukah, chapter 6.

²³ Appendix E in the CAN Release.

Garba's report also clearly indicates the same lack among the Muslim attackers. He ends up giving Christian students the higher marks.²⁴

Again, in case the CAN release seems one sided and propagandistic to some, I call attention to the press statement by a group of 22 ABU lecturers, equally representing both Christians and Muslims. That release is appended to the CAN statement as *Appendix F* and is another indication of CAN's efforts to report as objectively as possible. While the main CAN release interprets these events as expressions of Muslim expansionism, these lecturers, having imbibed the general Marxist tone of Nigeria's academic climate, see these events as manipulation of religion for political purposes. Though the interpretations may differ, the facts of these riots are described in even stronger terms by this bi-religious "neutral" group and thus made more believable to skeptics. Hence, *Appendix F* of the CAN release is attached to this paper as *Appendix 1*.

Just outside of Zaria is a small village called Wusasa. It has a unique history in that it is the site of the first Christian mission, the British Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS), among the Muslim people of northern Nigeria. The village is now largely Christian. It is the home of the former Head of State, Yakubu Gowon. The Chief of Wusasa and brother to Yakubu, Daniel Danlami Gowon, submitted a report to Kaduna State Commission of Enquiry into the Recent Disturbances. Parts of Gowon's submission are reproduced in this paper as *Appendix 2*. The reason is, again, to show that CAN's stories of Muslim attacks on Christians are not mere fictitious fabrications. Others tell similar stories.

TEKAN²⁵ submitted a memorandum to the panel to investigate the Kaduna State riots of 1987 that is largely reproduced in *Appendix 3*. It, too, emphasizes specially the apparent connivance of government authorities with the culprits and their failure to restore order promptly.

The CAN list of riots reproduced above is not exhaustive. Since its publication, other serious skirmishes took place that received less media attention. An example is that of Potiskum on September 4, 1994, as summarized in the TEKAN/ECWA Press Release,²⁶ part of which reads as follows:

²⁴ Appendix B in the CAN Release.

²⁵ TEKAN is the acronym of the Hausa name of the Fellowship of the Churches of Christ in Nigeria, a fellowship of some 10 denominations, most of which were the result of the efforts of the Sudan United Mission (SUM).

²⁶ *Weekend Guardian*, 31 Dec/94. "ECWA" is an evangelical denomination that has an ambivalent relationship to TEKAN, alternating between competing and cooperating with the latter. Its less than spontaneous relationship to TEKAN is often attributed to the influence of the mission that sprouted this church, popularly known as "SIM," which until recently stood for "Sudan Interior Mission." The SIM and its fundamentalistic constituency tends to regards the ecumenical makeup of TEKAN and its founding missions with considerable suspicion. It is an example of the far-reaching power and profound influence of donors.

RELIGIOUS CRISIS IN POTISKUM YOBE STATE

Our constitution allows religious freedom of worship, but why are Christians, killed, maenad, and deprived of their rights? The recently killing of Christians, destruction of church buildings and burning of Christian properties in Potiskum... (on September 4, 1994) mark the peak and open oppression of government's unwillingness to protect her citizens. The security was absent. The government owned dailies refuse to report such happening. The government describes such perpetrators of instability as "misguided elements" or "touts" and not Muslims. But such religious vandals do not kill Muslims nor destroy mosques, except the churches and Christians. Is the government really sincere? How shall unity be maintained with such open hypocrisy? Why are these religious riots so rampant only in the far North? Christians and Muslims in the South and Middle Belt build churches and mosques side by side and live together in peace. Why are the far North Muslims so harsh?

Then follows a paragraph that by strict logic does not belong in this context, but it is part of the general situation that has led these church leaders to adopt the attitude displayed in this release.

We read at recent an Islamic weekly that..."The wife of Jesus Christ went to Katsina." This is an outright provocation to Christians. While since we understand that the government is lopsided in her dealing with her citizens along religious lines, Christians should be awake to their responsibility of self-defence. These Islamic extremists even told the Katsina State military administrator in their weekly paper that he should know that "Katsina is not his village." And the federal government read the paper but is silent about it. While silence means consent. With such an Islamic extremism and government open hypocrisy, there shall never be peace... in this country....

The release closes with recommendations that experience has shown Christians will not be accepted:

WE STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT:

- Both federal government and Yobe state should arrest and deal decisively with the Potiskum rioters.
- All properties destroyed at the riot should be adequately compensated by the government.

The last recommendation addresses Christians:

- Because of the nonchalant attitude of our government towards religious crises and victims, we call our members to be tight, vigilant and alert to protect their

lives and property from the lawless far north Muslims whose brotherhood is limited only to the caliphate. Enough is indeed ENOUGH.

4. *Christians and Tradionalists vs Muslims*

In February, 1992, a violent riot took place in Zangon Kataf, once again in Kaduna State. This one was different from the others in that it was started by the mostly rural Kataf people, a mixture of Christians and Traditionalists, though mostly Christian. The target was the Hausa-Fulani Muslim community, the town people.

The spark was provided by an order by the Christian Chairman of the local government to relocate the local market for purposes of breaking the monopoly the Hausa settlers had long enjoyed. The exercise was badly planned and provoked resistance on the part of the Hausa traders. One Alhaji Danbala over the Kaduna radio urged his fellow traders not to move to the new site. He also used legal means to stop the move. The tension was further heightened by clumsy police maneuvers.

The violence that erupted cannot be explained merely by reference to this market incident. This incident was merely the spark that set an already volatile situation ablaze, an issue that will receive fuller attention in later papers. There is some evidence that it was not a purely spontaneous outburst. Some people, including the local government Chairman, seemed to have foreknowledge of trouble brewing some days earlier.

The damage was considerable, especially considering it was a small rural community. Millions of nairas of vehicles, farms and equipment were destroyed, including 133 houses and 26 farms. 95 people were killed, while 252 went to the hospital for treatment of wounds. No statistics are available about the wounded who were treated at home. In distinction from other riots, most of the victims were Hausa Muslims.

The assailants were the Kataf, according to Mohammed Haruna and Mahmud Jega, authors of a report in *Citizen*, a Muslim-oriented monthly, while the Hausa-Fulani were the victims. Most press reports about such riots seldom mention specific names, but the *Citizen* report gives the names of specific killers, victims and witnesses.

As if not enough blood had been shed, this first riot was followed up by a more violent one in May, 1992. The May riot spilled over into other parts of the state and was far worse than the first. In fact, Mohammed Haruna judges it to be the most violent of the entire series of riots, an indication that violence has kept escalating.²⁷

Six years later, the matter appears not yet to have been settled. During mid-1998 renewed rioting is reported over land in the area between the locals and some Hausa Muslims. It was serious enough to warrant the sending of anti-riot police, no doubt to ensure it would not escalate into yet another major riot.²⁸

²⁷ *Citizen*, 15 Jun/92.

²⁸ , Nigerian News Du Jour, a news service report that regularly comes to me via e-mail, 15 May/98.

CONCLUSION

Not everything has been told. It is enough. The picture is clear. As we peruse the Nigerian situation, one can only sadly concur with the unknown writer that riots are "the most dominant feature" of the Nigerian religious situation. They are no longer news. Dele Omotunde writes, "Religious riots have become a routine event in Nigeria. Burning houses, destroying property, maiming and killing innocent people have become a 'normal' way of religious life. The question is no longer 'if' but 'when'." "Religious violence," Omotunde continues, "has now become one of Allah's or God's unwritten commandment that must be obeyed, at least in Nigeria."²⁹ No wonder Chris Anyanwu refers to religion as the "quick sands of Nigerian journalism"³⁰—and, I would add, of Nigerian politics.

This story represents the serious tragedy of a wasted opportunity. Here is an African country whose people are blessed with almost boundless energy and creativity, a people with unprecedented wealth from oil to finance the development they all crave—and all of it come to nothing so far. A fatal interplay of corruption and religion has totally derailed a golden opportunity. Religion, potentially the most noble of human inclinations, threatens in its corrupted form to become a tragic curse for an entire people.

In subsequent papers, I intend to show that underneath all this violence lies a basic difference in worldviews. The Christian worldview operative in Nigeria is a curious, tragic, contradictory and unique blend of Christian and secular elements. The Muslim variant is fiercely wholistic, strongly anti-secular and decidedly intolerant. Both advocate a pluralistic solution to these problems, but both define pluralism in terms that violate central tenets of the other.

Subsequent papers will also explain that these developments, though they have their immediate causes, have among their more remote causes larger historical, international struggles, including the crusades and imperialism, between Christians and the West on the one hand and Islam on the other.

Finally, an attempt will be made to demonstrate that the solution to these Nigerian problems does not lie solely in Nigeria but in the world as a whole. Neither can they be solved simply by churches or by individualistic evangelism to Muslims. Christians, Muslims and others of goodwill must bend the forces of international politics and economics so as to turn them into more positive tools that respond to the basic religious impulses of these religions if the latter are ever to improve the present dynamics. Both need to draw on a concept basic to both the Reformed Christian tradition and Islam: the

²⁹ *Tell*, 28 Oct/91.

³⁰ *TSM*, 27 Sep/92, p. 4.

Christian “Cultural Mandate” or the Muslim “Khilafa,” with both regarding the human race as God’s Vicegerent. The traditional Christian bifurcation of Cultural Mandate and Great Commission has led to a tragic separation of mission from economics and politics that Muslims decry and continues to cause them to despise Christianity as a mere spiritual religion without relevance to society and nation building. Similarly, the traditional Muslim Pelagianism has led to a high degree of self-righteousness and to a refusal to recognize their own share of guilt in this ongoing violence, while their view of tolerance is tragically inadequate and inconsistent. Whether Christians or Muslims will ever ascend to the prerequisite heights is a question deeper than I dare to delve.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I:

THE VIOLENT POLITICS OF RELIGION AND THE SURVIVAL OF NIGERIA³¹

Since last Friday, 6th March, 1987, violent attacks have been launched against life, property and places of worship in most of the major cities and towns of Kaduna State. Churches and mosques; hotels and cinemas; businesses and vehicles; private homes and persons have been attacked, smashed up and systematically set on fire, in an unprecedented campaign of violent religious politics clearly aimed against the survival of our country.

In these seven days many people have been killed and wounded. Many more have been harassed, molested, completely frightened and made totally insecure. Over a hundred churches and a few mosques have been burnt down completely. Right now in Zaria, almost all economic, educational and other activities have stopped. Hundreds of people are on the roads and motor parks and railway stations looking for transport to travel back to their hometowns for safety and security. The basis of normal life has been severely shaken. In spite of reports and warnings from concerned individuals and organizations, three days after the start of the violence, police and security forces were completely absent from the scene. Citizens were left completely at the mercy of the violent mobs. This apparent abdication of responsibility by Government must be taken very seriously.

This type of violent campaign of Muslims against Christians is unprecedented in the history of our country. It directly threatens her continued survival as a single entity.

We, the undersigned citizens of... Nigeria, who have no other country... but this one, have witnessed and personally experienced this violent attack against one of the foundations on which our country exists, namely the *secular nature of the Nigerian State*

³¹ A press statement by some lecturers of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Friday, 13th March, 1987. This document has been appended to the CAN news release, “The 1987 Kaduna State Religious Disturbances: A Modern Day Jihad Being Inflicted on Nigeria,” (1987?)

and its duty to protect the rights of everyone to practice his/her own religion without any hindrance....

In January, 1986, some of us were forced to issue a signed statement warning over the handling of Nigeria's relations with the Organization of Islamic Conferences, and the way Israel and the Vatican were being used by sinister and reactionary forces to undermine the unity of our people and the sovereignty and integrity of our nation. In that statement, entitled *Nigerian Foreign Policy Should Actively foster Nigerian Unity based on Our African Identity and Destiny*. It was pointed out that this campaign of systematic manipulation of religious sentiments is being conducted for the sinister and reactionary purpose of diverting the attention of the people of this country from the urgent tasks of economic reconstruction and the working out of...[Next few words illegible.]

In the long term, the purpose of this campaign of political manipulation of religious sentiments is to intrench religious conflicts in all facets of our national life, so that the Nigerian agents of imperialism, working under the cover of Christianity and Islam, financed by Zionism and Arab reaction, can always hold the unity of this country to ransom, build up the forces for its destruction, and ultimately break it up so as to give a serious blow to the movements for democracy, social and national liberation, which are now making great advances all over Africa. The individuals, groups and organizations waging this campaign against the unity of the people of this country, are particularly afraid of, and very hostile to popular mobilization and debate at the grassroots level over who, and what is responsible for what has gone wrong with this country in the last 25 years, and how these retrograde and backward forces and elements can be overcome for genuine economic, social and political progress. They therefore wear the cloak of religion in order to confuse and divert the attention of our people from their harsh conditions of existence, and how to positively transform these conditions in a permanent and systematic fashion.

Our experience of the current events and all evidence available to us, have convinced us that the violence and arson of the last seven days was not the brain work of hooligans. It is... believed to be the latest stage of a campaign which started about ten years ago in the so-called "Shari'a Debate"³²... in 1976/77.

At that time it was aimed at creating political constituencies for political leadership, whose records showed that they had nothing to offer our people. This strategy failed and therefore they now turn again to the manipulation of religious sentiments and religious symbolism to cover up their complete bankruptcy and failures.

Right now we can see behind the killing, maiming and arson a return to the 1976-77 scenario. Only this time the level of violence and the threat to national security and survival is much higher. But just as 1976/77 was only two to three years away from a return to civilian democracy, so 1986/87 is also only two to three years away from a return to civilian democracy in 1990. The basic difference, however, is that progressive development among the people of Nigeria and the rest of Africa over the last ten years

³² For information about this debate, see J. Boer, 1979, pp. 478ff and 1984, pp. 142ff.

have made these backward and reactionary forces more determined to entrench religious conflict in Nigeria... and to ultimately wreck it...

- This campaign has reached this totally unacceptable and very dangerous level because successive Federal Governments have toyed with one of the foundations on which Nigerian unity exists, namely the secular nature of the Nigerian State and its sacred... [not legible]. A strong impression has been created that some organizations and individuals can, with arrogance and impunity, incite and threaten people of other religious beliefs and will get away with, at most, only verbal reprimands or appeals to be tolerant.
- ... this campaign of violent religious politics has reached the very dangerous levels it has because several powerful media organs, particularly the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kaduna, have been allowed to be used by a tiny backward oligarchy which survives on inciting one section of Nigeria against another. Anybody who listens ... since January 1986 and particularly since Monday, March 9, 1987, knows that something sinister and violent was being systematically planned against the unity of... Nigeria and against the peace and stability of the country.

We, the undersigned, therefore want to warn, in a very solemn way, all our brothers and sisters... that we are fast coming to the brink of catastrophe. The events of the last seven days are very serious and very dangerous for our individual and collective survival. All those citizens committed to the unity of this country, for which so much blood has been shed, have to stand up and make a choice between fear, timidity and inertia in the face of systematic destruction of the foundation of our nation, and a determined struggle to crush these forces of destruction and save our country and our future.

- We call on the Federal Military Government (FMG) to shed all ambiguities and hesitation, and to declare and reaffirm that the Nigerian State is SECULAR and one of its most fundamental responsibilities is to *protect the right of every citizen and resident to practice the religion of their choice*. We call on the FMG to implement this decisively and clearly in practice by identifying publicly, and punishing according to the law all the rich and powerful individuals who are known to be behind this campaign of violent religious politics aimed at destroying our country.
- We call on the FMG to ensure, in all parts of the country, the security of life and property and places and of freedom of belief and worship of everyone.
- We call on the FMG to affirm and promote the exercise of the fundamental human rights of individuals and the collective self-defense of all the people against any form of aggression, be it external or internal.
- We call on the FMG to make, as a matter of utmost urgency, full reparations to all those who have suffered damages. In particular, we ask... [not legible] that the right of facilities for worship by all religious groups is restored and guaranteed in all places where they have been destroyed.

We are convinced that the sinister and utterly reactionary forces behind this campaign of violent religious politics with the aim of destroying our country are made up of a tiny oligarchy determined to maintain its power, wealth and privileges at all costs,

including violent and well-organized mobs in the name of religion. We are also convinced that the majority of the people of this country and the popular organizations are capable of being mobilized to overcome them and defend the unity of our people and the integrity of our country. We therefore call upon the Nigerian Labour Congress to mobilize all the workers of this country around a campaign against religious and all sectional politics.

LONG LIVE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA³³

³³ This document is signed by 22 lecturers, both Christians and Muslims.

APPENDIX 2**CHIEF D. D. GOWON'S SUBMISSION TO THE
KADUNA STATE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE
RECENT DISTURBANCES IN KADUNA STATE³⁴****WAVES OF VANDALISTIC CAMPAIGNS:**

There were *FOUR* waves in all. The first wave of the campaign of terror comprised of multiple of hundreds of "JIHAD/ALLAHU AKBAR" chanting individuals whose job from what they did was pulling down the fence, destruction and setting the old Church and first Hausa church to be put up in the North, which was built in 1929, ablaze and some private homes. Every moveable item in the Church was taken out of the Church and burnt. Initially they thought the carpet in the Church donated by Brigadier S. Ogbemudia on behalf of Bendel State Government in 1973, would easily catch fire. Despite dousing with petrol, it burnt little, but the Church became full of soot. All windows and doors were deformed, burnt or smashed and crosses stolen or broken. An attempt to collapse the Church proved abortive. Other waves (3) performed similar acts of banditry and vandalism. In all, about 21 homes were burnt in Wusasa. Most of the Christian selected occupants of Wusasa... were chased out and ejected from their homes by the vandals.

HOW THE FAMILY HOUSE³⁵ WAS SET ABLAZE

The vandals forced the gate.... they started their business by breaking all the glasses to the doors and windows and that gave them the opportunity of pouring petrol on all the curtains and setting the house on fire.... Most of those... are boys under the age of 15 years with their guides.... They used all sorts of dangerous weapons such as daggers, cutlasses, broken bottles, stones, sticks, etc. I was wounded while trying to escape....

MOLESTATION AND PROVOCATION OF PEOPLE:

Almost every one in Wusasa was molested, especially the Christians. They were asked to recite the Muslim creed. Some were beaten... and left for dead, naked on the street. Some were ruffled and cut.

Molestation and provocation were definite incendiaries towards a total collapse of law and order. These were that fueled and heightened the one-sided sectarian conflict inflicted on Wusasa. I thank God that my people turned the other cheek because their reaction been any different, only God knows where it would have led.

I want this honourable body to note that although Christians were the target, some Muslims suffered just as much, for example Alhaji Aiyelero and Deputy Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Isa Inusa had their property burnt. Justice Bello was ruffled and several others. These events occurred within the area of my jurisdiction.

³⁴ Only the relevant sections are reproduced. I have left most of the non-standard English in tact.

³⁵ This was the Gowon family house. Yakubu Gowon is a former Head of State. Pa and Ma Gowon lay buried in the front yard.

ATTEMPTS TO GET PROTECTION

Several well-meaning citizens tried to get help from His Royal Highness the Emir of Zazzau by either telephoning or going there personally. The Police Command was invited to do its duty by protecting life, limb and property, but we were told there was no instruction from above. The commandant, Zaria Army Depot, was willing to act, but said he had not received clearance. With all having one reason or another not to perform a common basic civic duty, Wusasa for a few dreadful hours was an “independent entity” without protection, support or sympathy whatsoever from those assigned to protect them. If it wasn't for God's protection, worse could have befallen Wusasa.

The unprovoked violence on Wusasa raises a number of very serious questions which are fundamental to the survival of our nation. In a multi-religious society is the right of communities to follow their religious faith no longer guaranteed by the state. Are Christians in the north no longer entitled to places of worship? Are Christian communities in the north no longer legitimate? These and numerous other questions are raised by the attack on Wusasa by religious extremists.

As a nation it is important that we address these questions now and reaffirm what we believe is correct and proper for our national survival. It is important for this panel to properly look into the various undercurrents that have generated this crisis and is pushing this country further and further into a very uncertain future.

There is this strong and general impression that northern Nigeria as a stronghold of Islam is overwhelmingly Muslim. This observation is generally taken for granted and features clearly in the political calculations that go on in this country. Even in the southern parts of this country the impression seems to be very strong. The point here is not to argue that the “North” is Christian but to note that Christian communities in this area have grown significantly since the turn of the century. “The North” is not a solid homogeneous solid Muslim block. It is diverse in culture and traditions and... religion. The pagan element within this area is still quite large.

WUSASA THOUGH A MISSION BASE IS A SECULAR TOWN

Though a Christian establishment, Wusasa is thoroughly secular. There was and there is no force in making Muslim students turn Christian....Wusasa has taught, reared and trained some of the most prominent Muslims and Christians of contemporary Nigeria.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

... some at the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Kaduna, have played a role that was clearly unrelated to promoting peace. To me it was a clear case of misuse of Government instrument of mass communication. ... FRCN had fallen short of its peace-making role, and I am here saying Wusasa is one of the victims of that misguided and unguarded despicable deed.

OBSERVATIONS

1. The emergence of extremist Muslim groups seems to be questioning the fundamental basis on which this country is founded. It seems as if these groups now believe that Christianity has no place in Nigeria and Christian communities in a “Muslim North” should no longer be tolerated.
2. This extreme fundamental group is denying our history. Even in the Zaria Emirate they are attempting to deny the history of a people. The fact is that Hausa-Fulanies became Christians and have a community of their own. By all standards they have equal rights for living in this area. The drumming up of the fact that the Hausa people are all Muslims is often confronted with the reality of the existence of communities like ours. It seems that we now pose a problem for the concept of the “one solid Muslim North.”
3. It seems that our lives and properties are not being protected by Government. Police in Zaria did not act promptly to protect lives and property even after the signs were becoming clear of the crisis. It would be unimaginable for them to claim that they are ignorant of the apparent plan to eliminate Wusasa community being a stronghold of Hausa Christian community....³⁶

³⁶ The rest of this document contains recommendations and suggested solutions that are so typical of similar documents produced by churches and their umbrellas that there is no need to reproduce them here.

APPENDIX 3

**RECENT HAPPENINGS AND EVENTS IN THE COUNTRY:
A SUBMISSION BY THE TEKAN STUDY GROUP
TO THE PANEL OF INVESTIGATION³⁷**

We of the TEKAN Study Group... abhor and condemn in no uncertain terms the mayhem, violence, arson and unprovoked wanton destruction of churches and personal houses and property of Christians, and the unjustifiable infliction of injuries and heartless manhandling of Christians. We heartily condole and sympathize with the victims of this savage behaviour and destruction.

We also want to thank the government for the appointment of a panel to look into the matter. However, we wish to make it known that we object to the composition of the panel. In the interests of impartiality, and to inspire confidence in the panel, the Federal Government should include three members from the CAN on this panel. The behaviour of the Kaduna State Government and its agencies has left much to be desired. There seems to have been tacit support for the riots through deliberate non-intervention in them. Because the state government's impartiality is questionable, a neutral body should have been appointed.

Religious War

The dangers that would result from a religious war erupting in the country cannot be overemphasized. It is a war that nobody wins. Examples abound—Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Sudan, Chad, etc.... We must therefore do everything in our power to prevent a religious war in this country. We must show, by the just trial and punishment of the instigators of these riots, that we will not sanction such a war.

Provocation

We totally disagree with the contention that the events in Kafanchan were provoked by Rev. Abubakar Bako by his quoting from the Qur'an. Knowledge of the Qur'an is not the exclusive preserve of Muslims. Just as Muslims use the Holy Bible to attempt to prove that Muhammed is the last Prophet, so Christians quote the Qur'an to prove that Jesus is the Word of God and that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Books written by Muslims quote the Holy Bible profusely; so, too, books written by Christians frequently refer to the Qur'an. There are books written comparing the Holy Bible and the Qur'an. Indeed, universities and colleges offer courses on the comparative study of religions.

Nor are we aware of any quoting of the Qur'an in order to disparage Islam or show disrespect for Muhammed, the Prophet of Islam. Rev. Bako quoted the Qur'an to demonstrate the superiority of Jesus Christ as testified to even in the Qur'an, not to cast aspersions on Muhammed or Islam.

³⁷ This appendix constitutes most of Chapter V in TEKAN's *Towards the Right Path for Nigeria*, pp. 56-64.

The claim of provocation is therefore hollow and empty. Moreover, Islamic preachers (e.g. Sheikh Gumi and many others) quote from the Holy Bible. Does this give Christians the right to go and assault such Muslim preachers? Of course not! The MSS must not be allowed to escape with such a hollow argument. The governor himself, in an appeal for peace, quoted from both the Bible and the Qur'an. There is no exclusive ownership of religious books; if they are truly from God, and not merely a production of the opinions of human beings, they are for all people.

The Security Forces

It is very important and pertinent that the non-intervention of the security forces and the state government be investigated. For the rioters to have had a free hand to ravage and destroy for at least 18 hours, unrestrained by the presence of any of the armed forces, is utterly baffling. It is an absolute indictment of the Governor, the Commissioner of Police, the Army Commander and the Director of the State Secret Service, and is sufficient justification for their removal from office. We call for the removal of these... authorities, for as long as they hold their positions, the investigation will not be able to come out with the truth of their behaviour, to expose their role in the events, and to determine how far the non-interference by the security forces encouraged the rioters. For a section of the citizenry to have been exposed, without protection, to destruction, violence and arson for 18-24 hours is very serious. It is therefore very important that the mystery surrounding the inaction of the authorities be unraveled. The truth cannot be found out with the authorities remaining in office. It will give them the opportunity to cover up. What is more suspicious is that even the traditional rulers who are the fathers of the nation also failed to act. All these inactions point, we feel, to a hidden conspiracy.

Students' Society

It is becoming more and more obvious that students at the institutions of higher learning are being used by certain groups of powerful individuals for personal ends. We call on the government to examine carefully the involvement of students with the Society while at these institutions. Our institutions of higher learning should not become a military reserve camp to recruit rioters to perpetrate violence against society by the enemies of society. We cannot build a stable and peaceful egalitarian society if our institutions of higher learning are converted to centres for breeding riots and violence to be used by people whose sole aim is to get the country to serve their evil designs.

Rumours

It is very necessary that we carefully check some false pronouncements, capable of encouraging violence, which have been made by certain religious leaders. For example, we are not surprised that these riots came at a time when certain powerful religious leaders were showing great interest in the religious composition of the country. Only last year, a respected Muslim religious leader claimed that 85% of Nigerians are Muslims. He later changed that claim to 80% and finally this year reduced it to 70%. Evidently, Islam is losing ground fast and therefore is in need of a jihad to reverse the

trend. Christians naturally become the victims of such a jihad, for the Islamic losses are considered to be the result of conversions to Christianity.

The Soul That Sins, It Shall Die

It is a deliberately false and misleading excuse to claim that the riot at Kafanchan caused the riots at Kaduna and Kano. What has the quarrel at Kafanchan to do with an innocent soul in Kaduna or Kano? If we are to adopt a system of vicarious guilt, Nigeria will cease to be a nation. Any person using the riot at Kafanchan as an excuse for his violence elsewhere must be punished severely. The government must come out clearly on this issue. Innocent people should not be made to suffer because of violence unconnected with them. If we say that a crime by a Muslim in Sokoto or Maiduguri is a crime by all Muslims in Nigeria, or that a crime committed by a Christian in Gongola or Abeokuta is a crime by all Christians, then where are we heading as a nation? Surely to self-destruction and total chaos! How can an innocent person be declared a criminal for crimes to which he was not privy? We are becoming a haven for religious fanatics and a gilded cage for innocent and law-abiding citizens. We urge the government to check this dangerous trend before it is too late.

Injustice Is License for Criminals

Systematic injustice towards Christians has become a license for Islamic religious fanatics to constantly commit arson and violence against Christians. They have also found out that no matter what they do against Christians, Christians do not retaliate and the government and law enforcement agencies do not punish them, contrary to... the Penal Code Law....

How many times have churches been set ablaze and how many times has an object like a cross, which is sacred to Christians, been destroyed or damaged? How many times have Christian places of worship been defiled? How many times have Christians and their religion been insulted? Who among the perpetrators of such crimes has been imprisoned or fined? Thus, through acts of commission and omission, action and inaction, has the government not only encouraged but aided and abetted such actions against Christians.

....

How many times have Christian religious processions been stoned? How many times have Christians assembled for religious worship been stoned and Christian beaten up? How many among the perpetrators of such acts have been jailed? To the best of our knowledge, none have been punished. The government and law enforcement agencies are thus accomplices in these crimes against Christians. They have in effect declared Christians persona non grata in the land and thereby have exposed them to all manner of evil treatment. Religious fanatics have taken this as a license to become lawless and to consider their religion the religion of the government.

Other injustices also contribute to the impression that Islam is the religion of the government. Appointments and promotions seem to have religious undertones. Through discriminatory appointments and promotions the impression is created that we are an

Islamic state and that the land belongs to Muslims. For example, the army has thrown out the seniority principle to bring about religious bias among its leadership. Senior officers who are Christians have either been retired or made to serve in the government under their juniors who were given leadership positions because they are Muslims.

Thus, today we have leadership as follows:³⁸

In addition, most policy-making positions are reserved for Muslims. Such biased appointments therefore are a psychological booster for crimes against Christians.

Citizens Rights

The Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights of every citizen. However, the following rights are denied to Christians:

1. The right to plots to build places of worship in some states.
2. The right to religious education for their children in states like Kano, Sokoto, Borno and others.
4. The right to freedom of religion. Schools which the government took over from the churches have been given Islamic names and now operate as Islamiya schools.

Ban on Public Preaching

The ban placed on public preaching is meant to cater to the wishes of the Islamic fanatics. With the possible exception of the events at Kafanchan, we are not aware of any riot which resulted from public preaching. There were none. The ban placed on public preaching and procession is therefore meant to prevent Christians from performing the duties required by their religion, and to curtail Christian growth. It is strictly against Christians because through such preaching Christianity has been growing by leaps and bounds. Moreover, while the ban is placed on Christian activity, Muslims continue to block major streets, roads and highways every Friday to perform public worship. Every Friday, Christians tolerate the curtailing of their freedom of movement, but Muslims refuse to tolerate a Palm Sunday procession or an Easter Monday public worship assembly, which occurs only once a year. The government, to protect the feelings of the Muslims, bans such acts and becomes insensitive to the feelings of Christians.

All these acts by the government have created the impression that Christians are aliens in the country. Christians are clearly treated as being inferior to the Muslims. Muslims do not even need a certificate of occupancy to build a mosque. Mosques... have proliferated in government ministries and parastatals. Schools and government institutions of learning have mosques but no chapels. Laws which are made to be obeyed are flagrantly violated. We are becoming a lawless nation to accommodate Islamic religious fanaticism.

The Current Crisis

While we agree with President Babangida that the present rampage was meant to lead to the overthrow of his government, it is nevertheless based on religion. According

³⁸ Then follows a list of 18 of the highest positions in the Federal Government that are all held by Muslims.

to an investigation of those arrested in Gongola, the Commissioner of Police of Gongola State found that

These young men... would appear to belong to an organization whose objective 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. This and the act of the young men are not capable of causing a breach of the peace, but constitute a threat to the security of the nation.

Since the revolution “has already been set in motion” and particularly since it is “a larger organization existing in all parts of the country,” we have clearly not yet seen the end of the matter. It is very necessary that the security forces perform the duties which are expected of them. It is our prayer that the government will fully implement the provisions of the Constitution. The government that fails to implement the Constitution and to enforce obedience to the law of the land is calling for disaster and chaos.

We of the TEKAN churches and indeed all Christians pray that the day will never come when our turning the other cheek reaches 70 times seven. If the government allows the provocation of Christians to reach 70 times seven, she will have only herself to blame.

Mr. Chairman and members of the panel, we are praying for you earnestly. We pray that God will guide and give you wisdom to get to the root of the problem and to be able to discover the true causes of the riots. We hope that those involved, no matter how powerful, will be brought to justice. Let us save our country from never-ending bloodshed.

May God bless.

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QUESTIONS FOR BOER PAPER

ON RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

1. In view of the questions (objections?) that have been raised about the factual, alleged non-theological nature of this paper, we may need to review the relationship between theology and the world around us.
 - Is theology only drawn from the Bible?
 - If a description of past events in church history is a proper focus for theology, why not current events? If there is a principial difference, where does one draw the line between the two? How does one start theological enquiry if he begins by ignoring the facts? What is the relevance of the Sitz im Leben? What is the source of our theological fascination with abstract ideas divorced from the facts of life?
 - What has been the effect on CRC's brand of Reformed theology and her practice of a tendency to de-emphasize or ignore inconvenient facts of life?

1. What aspects of Muslim worldviews do you recognize in this paper that
 - militate against reconciliation?
 - Provide a basis for reconciliation?

2. What positive and/or negative aspects of a Nigerian Christian worldview do you recognize in this paper? What might be the sources of that worldview?

4. What might be the contributions of CRC missions and/or Reformed theology to reconciliation?

5. Is the Nigerian situation unique and irrelevant to Christian-Muslim relations in the West?