

# INTRODUCTION

## ▲ THE NIGERIAN CONDITION

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*For some reasons perhaps deeply rooted in patriotism (however misplaced), hope or faith in the black man's ability to rule himself, youthful exuberance and a great deal of ignorance, Macaulay, Zik, Imoudu, Awolowo, Sardauna, Enahoro, etc., went to town demanding that the British must go. Nigerians sang for joy. We should have wept in self-pity....*

With these tragic words Dele Sobowale greeted fellow Nigerians on February 19, 1995, on the front page of *Sunday Vanguard*. Sobowale shares this sense of desperation with millions of compatriots who wonder whether there is any light at the end of the tunnel that is today's Nigeria.

Many other Nigerian and non-Nigerian spokesmen embrace such despair over Nigeria's current plight. The cover of *Newswatch*, March 13, 1995, screams it out: "Corruption Inc.: Anatomy of Corrupt Practices in Nigeria." Another magazine, *Tell*, tempts potential customers with its cover which howls "Now, Nigeria Is

Finished” and “Secret Accounts: How Aso Rock Looted the Nation.”<sup>1</sup> Karl Maier, a foreign journalist well acquainted with Nigeria, gave this title to his book: *This House Has Fallen*. The cries are legitimate, but the judgements are too hasty.

When the nation’s top-ranking leaders need to assure the population that Nigeria will not fall apart, as did former Vice-President Augustus Aikhomo,<sup>2</sup> then you know something is desperately amiss. However, Nigeria has shown remarkable tenacity throughout all of its crises. Its continued existence can legitimately be called a miracle that defies all known categories and theories.

The late prominent Christian politician Jolly Tanko Yusuf affirmed Nigeria’s “struggles against corrupt government and the determination of Nigeria’s fundamentalist Muslims to make our country an Islamic state.”

He even spoke of “the madness that has overtaken our country.” The country’s “gargantuan problem,” he affirmed, “is corruption in government.”<sup>3</sup>

Two former military Heads of State, General O. Obasanjo (at the time of writing once again President, but now in civilian garb), and Major General M. Buhari, have identified corruption as the country’s enemy number one.<sup>4</sup> A good three years later, Buhari is still voicing similar complaints about “clear lack of accountability in the conduct of public affairs.” In 1998, we read reports that the economy is being destroyed by an “astounding degree of embezzlement and perennial failure...to turn policies into projects.”<sup>5</sup> In 2002, well into the third year of his civilian presidency, Obasanjo is still struggling against this demon that is proving almost impossible to exorcise.

When my wife and I first arrived in April 1966, after the first coup, we had good reason to wonder whether we would last a week. Our stay stretched out to thirty years, but the possibility of a sudden emergency departure never left us. We went through a

civil war, many coups and innumerable bloody riots. We experienced the shift from subsistence to an oil economy subsequently ruined by outrageous corruption, extreme devaluation and an external debt burden that the people had clearly rejected. It left them in dire straits as they first saw their living standard improving significantly, only to see it plummeting. For the north, it was from tea, coffee and coke back to *kunu*. In spite of all the uncertainties, anomalies and suffering, we returned in 2001 to a Nigeria that, after a five-year absence, still had more than a residue of hope for its future.

It was not all negative—at least, not from a missionary point of view. During those thirty years, we witnessed unprecedented church growth<sup>6</sup> in the north, so that the Christian community caught up with Islam in terms of adherents and, according to some, surpassed it. The state structure had been re-organized so that the mammoth power of the Muslim government of the former Northern Region was divided over many new and smaller states with a view to giving the indigenous peoples greater self-determination. We arrived in 1966 to find a weak, uncertain northern Christian community that had little influence in the political arena. The Federal Military Government dared to rob the church of many of its schools and hospitals without fear of serious political repercussions. After thirty years, we left a numerically and politically strong church<sup>7</sup> that could no longer be pushed around by either government or Islam.

Neither was it all positive. Christian spirituality is faced with two major problems. One is the demon of corruption, with which I began this introduction, and in which Christians and Muslims alike participate—one of the two major reasons for Nigeria's woes. Efforts within the church to stem it have so far failed miserably and even been resisted, for it has penetrated the church at every level, even national.<sup>8</sup> The other is the subject of this study.

**▲ CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS** 

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That other major national and Christian problem is that of Christian-Muslim relations. If corruption has demonized the country, these relations have bedeviled it.

I have decided to tackle this problem because I believe I have something to contribute. I have both the experiential and academic qualifications for such a study, but more, I have a deep concern and love for Nigeria and its people. As a missionary, I am naturally concerned about the health and vitality of the Christian church specifically, and that of the nation as a whole as well as of its Muslim people. As a theologian, I have high regard for Islam and deep respect for its adherents. I am intensely concerned that the adherents of both these religions should not cooperate in their mutual demise in favour of either a mass return to African traditional religion by some or an embrace of secularism by others.

I believe I have a significant if not unique message for the adherents of both religions. Both religions need to make certain commitments towards each other if Nigeria is not to fall apart or both religions fall into disrepute. **The essence of my message to Christians is “wholism,” while for Muslims it is “pluralism.”** In the case of Christians, they have inherited a dualistic secular approach from missionaries that is not only despised and hated by Muslims, but goes against the deepest intent of the Bible as well. I want Muslims to sit in and listen to this discussion. I want them to understand that they have been misled into identifying Christianity with secularism. Christians need to repent of their flirtation with the language and concepts of secularism, in an environment shared with Muslims, and move away from it by developing a more comprehensive, biblical world view.

At the same time, Muslims need to update their sense of pluralism. It is true that in the past, they have been more tolerant of other religions than have Christians. However, they have not kept

up with contemporary developments, at least, not in Nigeria. The situation that developed a *dhimmi* class of second-rate citizens has now been overtaken, never to return. Nigeria is now marked by a pluralistic situation that no longer allows the domination of one religion over all the people. Conversions from both traditional religions and Islam to Christianity have produced a Christian community that is at least numerically equal to that of Islam and may well have surpassed it.<sup>9</sup> Such a situation calls for new inter-religious relationships; the old ideas simply do not cut it anymore.

In addition to changes in the religious makeup of the country, contemporary concepts of human rights and religious liberty clash with and undermine traditional relationships. Though the nature of both Christianity and Islam is to test the spirit of new ideas, rather than embrace them simply because they are there, neither can afford to ignore major sociological and religious population shifts as if they have not happened. Islam in Nigeria is in danger of doing the latter, while Christians fall short of the former.

Both religions have to affect changes in attitude towards each other. They need to move from hostility to respect. They need to develop willingness to listen to each other and to practice empathy. A sense of fairness and equality is badly needed. Both need to commit themselves unequivocally to the indivisibility of Nigeria and to the cooperation needed to make it a viable country again. They need to cooperate on basis of the justice to which both aspire in order to cleanse the country of almost total corruption. At the moment, there is a great risk that Nigerians will grow tired of all this religious ruckus and either return to a sanitized form of traditional religion or to an African version of secularism. This same world view, embraced by Europeans when they grew tired of religious wars, now threatens to overcome them. Today, especially in the USA and Canada, Christians are fighting the very secularism Western Christians themselves produced through their infighting. They are fighting what some con-

sider a “cultural war” against secularism, the fruit of their own intolerance, for their very survival. I submit that Christians and Muslims are both potentially better off with each other than with secularism. Secularism tends to suck the lifeblood out of spirituality and has too many restrictive blindfolds to be viable in the long run. “September 11” was at least partially an explosive “No!” to secularism.

### ▲ A KUYPERIAN PERSPECTIVE<sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

Most of my previous books have been written for and published in Nigeria. My readers, mostly Nigerians, will have noticed a certain perspective common to all of my writings. It is the perspective of a wholistic way of thinking that I have initially learned from the late Prof. H. Evan Runner, formerly a philosophy professor at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. The perspective is often referred to as Neo-Calvinism or Kuyparianism. This is a school of thought and social action that originated in the Netherlands, but that is now increasingly sought after by Christians from every continent, including countries like Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Australia, South Africa, Hungary, United Kingdom, various Latin American countries, Canada and the USA.<sup>11</sup> In all of these countries, this perspective is seen by a growing group of scholars and social activists as offering a viable arsenal of tools in the Christian struggle to develop and survive. Joel Carpenter, for example, has outlined the way this school of thought is influencing Christian higher education throughout North America and producing leading scholars.<sup>12</sup>

It is this perspective that underlies this book. It is a perspective as wide as life itself and world affirming.

As Carpenter put it, Kuypers’s solution to the problem of competing world views—and that *is* Nigeria’s problem—in his native Netherlands was:

*to embrace pluralism and to emphasize the value-laden, commitment-driven nature of knowledge. He reasoned that people quite naturally formed communities of the like-minded that shared a singular view of reality, a distinctive pattern for living and a socio-political agenda. A just society would recognize this social, intellectual and religious pluralism and encourage the various communities to negotiate the common good. Likewise, Kuyper insisted, one's knowledge of the world was inevitably coloured and shaped by one's prior commitments—most fundamentally, religious commitments—concerning the nature of reality. Knowing was never value-free; science could not be completely objective. Scientific naturalism thus had no claim to a privileged position over against other world views.*

*Kuyper was not calling for the fragmentation of public life, however. Given God's common grace, he argued, there would be much overlap in human efforts to understand nature and humanity, and thus opportunities for conversation, debate and negotiation, both in learning and politics. Yet the social-intellectual and religious differences that drove outlooks and agendas were real, and they should not be forced into unitary national establishments, whether religious, intellectual or political. Various communities of faith and values could play public roles, yet not feel compelled to choose between domination, accommodation or withdrawal. They would have the social and intellectual space to work out their particular convictions, but would retain the right to put their ideas into play on an equal basis.*

In addition to Carpenter's summary, I here add eight further items of clarification of some basic points of the Kuyperian movement that developed over time. They are selected on basis of their relevance to the Nigerian situation as per my judgement.

First, Kuyper developed his perspective in response to nineteenth-century secular liberalism in the Netherlands that had become oppressive and intolerant. Kuyper countered it with a type of *thorough-going pluralism* that would allow full scope to all groupings in society to blossom on their own terms, even the secularism that he considered demonic. This was starkly different from secularism that denied others the freedom to define themselves and sought to force them to live by its definition. Specifically, secularism invariably seeks to force religion into a straitjacket of private spirituality and individualism that restricts its expression to a so-called sphere of religion, that is, church or mosque. It seeks to reduce the scope of religion to the sphere of the subjective, while it regards secular knowledge as objective, neutral and exclusively suitable for the public square. Secularism has proved incapable of understanding the basic nature of religion because of what Paul Marshall refers to as “secular myopia.”<sup>13</sup> Kuyper’s form of pluralism would allow for the unfettered development of all religions or world views—note the plural—on their own terms, not as defined by secularism, though including secularism.

Second, Kuyper posited the *primacy of the religious impulse in human life*. The human race is, first of all, a religious race, a race of believers. This is in contrast to Rationalism, which emphasizes the rational as the centrepiece of human life. According to Rationalism, everything is based on an alleged objective, neutral reason. Reason is the neutral platform on which all people can meet and converse with each other. It is not a matter of “religion within the bounds of reason,” as Kant would have it, but, rather, of “reason within the bounds of religion,” as Wolterstorff of Yale put it so aptly in the title of his book.<sup>14</sup>

Marxism, another strong contender for human loyalty, emphasizes the economic aspect as foundational and sees all culture evolving on basis of economic interests. Empirically, Marxism is probably closer to the facts than is Rationalism. There is a close



affinity between the influence of economic and religious factors, a strong mutual influence on each other. One can argue that there is even a kind of confluence of Kuyper and Marx here, for when people give priority to their economic interests, that interest has in fact become the centre of their religion and life—a new idol. Their religious life imperceptibly changes to accommodate their economic status. I have seen it happen in my own denomination with devastating results.

Kuyperianism focuses on religion as the basis of all human life, with religion seen as the point of ultimate loyalty and value in the lives of individuals and communities. All the other aspects are shaped by the basic categories of the dominant religion, faith, beliefs or world view in a given society. Of course, religion and the other aspects mutually influence each other, but when all is said and done, the foundation of it all is the religious or, if you prefer, faith or world view.

Among other things, this means that there is *no neutral zone* in life like politics, economic or science,<sup>15</sup> where we can all meet as neutral, rational people. Though Nigerian Christians sometimes seek a solution to the Christian-Muslim controversy in that direction, it is a lost cause, for all these cultural areas rest on that often-hidden foundation of world view, faith or religion.

Kuyperian Christians share this insight with both postmodernists and Muslims. They have, apparently, come to it independent from each other, though undoubtedly especially Kuyper and postmodernism are co-heirs of Western philosophical developments. One can even argue that both of them are co-heirs with Islam of Greek philosophy. Unfortunately, many Christians have been misguided into a dualistic scheme that separates religion from these other areas. The fatal implications of this dualism will become clear as we proceed.

Third, religion is not only the basis of a life, but it is also *comprehensive or wholistic* in nature. Again, this is an insight that

Kuyperians share with Muslims. Both traditions emphasize that religion is a way of life, not merely a slice of life or a sector that belongs to the realm of church and mosque. Both Kuyperians and Muslims produce books and articles exploring the relationship between economics, politics, and other cultural aspects to their religion and regard the latter as basic to it all. Both reject secularism, because it compartmentalizes religion and restricts it to a small area of life, to the personal and private. It squeezes religion into a narrow mold that does not fit its genius. Again, unfortunately, Nigerian Christians have by and large inherited a secular definition of their religion—an inheritance that has deprived them of more relevant tools in their relationship with Muslims.

Fourth, bare facts are inaccessible to us. *We all see facts through the grid of our world view or faith*, never as they are in themselves. We always observe through the colour of our lens. This explains why people with different lenses often interpret the same events in opposite ways, as if they are looking at different realities.<sup>16</sup> During colonialism, ecumenical missionaries on the one hand and evangelical missionaries on the other interpreted colonialism in opposite ways, though all were confronted with the same facts.<sup>17</sup> In this series, too, it will become very plain that Christians and Muslims interpret the religious situation in Nigeria in opposite ways. Though the objective reality may be the same for all, their world views drive them into opposite interpretations of the “facts.” It is an objective of this book to aid both parties to look through the other’s lens; if not to come to full agreement, at least to reach some degree of mutual understanding.

Fifth, the human race is appointed as God’s *vice-gerent* or, as Muslims tend to call it, God’s *khalifat*. Humanity represents God in this world and is expected to develop it. Christians know this command as the “*cultural mandate*.” Most varieties of Christianity have unfortunately downplayed this biblical teaching and separated this cultural mandate from the great commission—a separation

that has also encouraged the trivialization of their religion. It is no wonder that R. Paul Stevens bemoans this “tragic separation of the Great Commission from the Creation Mandate,” precisely because it has caused so much havoc in the Christian community. In fact, though almost all Christians know about the commission, few are aware of the mandate. In Kuyperian thought, this mandate is as crucial as it is in Islam.<sup>18</sup>

Sixth, Kuyperianism, along with Islam, recognizes an *antithesis* between the Christian or Muslim religion and all other world views. There is a basic foundational difference between these religions and competing world views that drive them into different directions and are major reasons for the different national and regional cultures of this world. This is an antithesis between the Spirit of God and all other spirits. Both Kuyperianism and Islam are keenly aware of this antithesis. Both are also aware of the fact that this antithesis can run right through the heart of so-called true believers, for all experience this battle of the spirits in their own lives when, for example, serious inconsistencies occur between one's official religion and her *actual* world view. Where such dichotomies exist, a person's behaviour will invariably follow her world view and usually go contrary to her official religion.

However, Kuyperianism also recognizes *common grace*, a term referring to the Spirit of God working in and shaping truth even in philosophies and religions that reject Christianity. The basic antithesis between them remains active deep down in the foundation, but it is relativized due to the fact that the Spirit of God reveals important truths to all religions and cultures. Because of this common grace, Kuyperianism gratefully recognizes many aspects of truths in other world views or faiths and is thus ready to cooperate with them. That is also the reason I appreciate so much of Islam.

The current mood in Islam, certainly among fundamentalists, is to emphasize the antithesis at the expense of common grace

considerations. The result is a strong rejection of any truth in other religions and a militant affirmation of “Islam alone.” It has led to a high degree of intolerance. No doubt, this current rejection on the part of Islam is because they have woken up from their colonial and secular slumber and are angry that they have been subjected to such humiliation. In the current atmosphere of anger and reassertion, there is little room for anything but antithesis.

Seventh, evangelicals and charismatics are very much steeped in individualism and concentrate on individuals, while their liberal and ecumenical counterparts have tended to be more concerned with communities and structures. The Kuyperian tradition will have none of these one-sided perspectives *and gives all their due—individuals and communities, people and structures*. The tradition has created structures in various cultural sectors that were to be guided by basic Christian perspectives. Christian newspapers, universities and colleges, labour unions, housing co-operatives and political parties have all been part of the history. The reason for these was the insight that all of these organizations are expressions of different world views, faiths, sets of beliefs and values. When the underlying world view is secular, this does not render them neutral but makes them pursue their goals along secular lines that exclude many Christian principles. Today, Muslims—especially the fundamentalist variety—are deeply aware of the difference between Islam and secular world views as they undergird the various social structures. Hence, like Kuyperians, they are in the process of establishing all kinds of alternative Muslim structures and write extensively about the differences they expect these to make for them.

Eighth, a major motivation for much of the above was Kuyper’s *concern for the poor*.<sup>19</sup> His was not merely an abstract philosophical or academic concern. The vision surely included such marks, but underneath it all lay his passion for the poor and the oppressed. This is one aspect that has largely gotten lost in the subsequent Kuyperian movement. As the constituency moved up

the economic and political ladder, the passion for the poor largely gave way for more middle-class concerns. In North America most adherents of Kuyperianism are found in academic and ecclesiastical institutions, where the philosophical and theological aspects claim the major attention.

Though Kuyper formed, among other institutions, a Christian labour union in order to empower the poor, today labour unions—whether secular or Christian—have rough sledding among most North American Kuyperians. I personally took up the challenge of empowering nurses' aides and other hands-on caregivers to Michigan's elderly by attempting to organize them under the umbrella of the Christian Labour Association. This was met, however, with a solid front of stonewalling in the Christian Reformed Church, the major heir to Kuyperianism in North America. Concern for the poor is expressed in typical evangelical fashion: charity rather than structural, as per Kuyperian tradition. After all, the homes for the aged are owned by members of this constituency and organizing their employees is seen as a threat to their economic interest and structures.

Every ideology, even the best, is subject to tinkering and emasculation when the economic status of its adherents has changed upward. Not only is Carpenter's quote above useful as an intellectual summary of major Kuyperian concepts, it is also illustrative of a changed focus in that it avoids any reference to Kuyper's passion for the poor. Kuyper was definitely ahead of most Christian leaders in providing structures that were effective in overcoming poverty in the long run. His was not the individualistic ameliorative soup-kitchen approach; he dealt with the structures needed to overcome the problem itself. The Kuyperian concern for the poor and related concerns for justice are very relevant for the Nigerian situation, and are an important point of contact with Islam with a similar concern for structures of justice and peace.

I introduce Kuyperianism into the Nigerian discussion because it gives Christians an alternative to the secular perspective they have

inherited from missionaries who were not always aware of the issues or their implications. It is a perspective that is increasingly recognized internationally as pregnant with positive potentials for a Christian approach to the world and other religions. This perspective is hereby offered to both Christians and Muslims as a more legitimate interpretation of the Christian gospel that simultaneously is one that should make it easier for Muslims to live and work with. It could become the basis for more fruitful relations between the two faiths. It would enable Christians to withdraw the red flag of secularism they are constantly waving before Islam and that evokes so much negative passion in the Muslim heart.<sup>20</sup> Its contours will become clearer as we move along, especially towards the end of this series of studies.<sup>21</sup>

### ▲ PARAMETERS AND SPIRIT OF DISCUSSION ———

As to parameters for this discussion, Nigeria-wise, I will be hovering mainly between the 1980s and the initial birth pangs of the new millennium, though the post-colonial era of the Ahmadu Bello days will also come into view. The 1980s in Nigeria were marked by horrendous religious riots that continued throughout the 90s and have already taken us into the new millennium. With the adoption of the shari'a in a number of northern states in Nigeria, new tensions and even riots have already flared up—a process to which at this moment no one can foresee an end.

Though this project has been in the making for some years, this Introduction is being written during the aftermath of September 11, 2001. We have entered a new and uncertain phase in the relationship between the Muslim and Western worlds. At this very time, Afghanistan is being bombed daily. This book will not deal with those new developments. One has to place his parameters somewhere. However, these most recent horrible developments do indicate that Nigeria is a true microcosm, in the

sense that it demonstrates the fatality of secularism in Christian-Muslim relations.

In contrast to what obtains in Nigeria, I promise to be polite and respectful not only *vis à vis* Christians, but also with respect to Muslims. I have some basic disagreements with both groupings, but I pledge my very best to remain courteous to all. That may not be easy for me, since I am an aggressive person by nature. However, I recently read relevant sections of John Bolt's *A Free Church...*, where Bolt writes about the American cultural war and indicates the importance of civility in such situations. Nigeria is in a similar war, not between Christians and secularism, but Christians and Muslims and between Muslims and secularism.<sup>22</sup> Such wars get very ugly unless the combatants remember the basic rules of humanity. In Nigeria, not to speak of the post-September 11 world as a whole, it has become ugly, very ugly, at least partially because civility has been thrown to the wind and the combatants are no longer listening to each other. In this discussion, I regard myself not as a combatant but as a self-appointed consultant to both sides, respectful, critical, civil and courteous. May I be forgiven for occasional signs of impatience or for remarks that may hover on the line between the humorous and the sarcastic. After all, I cannot deny myself completely!

I am an expatriate missionary holding both Dutch and Canadian citizenship. Some would say that this status disqualifies me from contributing to a solution to Nigeria's religious crisis. Being both a Westerner and a missionary, I am a member of groups that have contributed to Nigeria's problems. I will not deny those contributions,<sup>23</sup> but Nigerians themselves have contributed more during the past decades. I have not heard that for this reason all Nigerians are disqualified and have nothing to offer! Neither does my expatriate status disqualify me any more than other expatriates invited to Nigeria to participate in conferences dealing with the religious question.<sup>24</sup> I believe that with thirty years of deep involve-

ment in Nigerian life, both as a missionary and a scholar, I have some useful ideas to contribute towards the parameters within which we must find a solution to our religious problem.

Now, I am definitely a Christian, not a Muslim. However, I have decided that I must allow Muslims to speak for themselves in these pages just as well as Christians. All along the way, I quote extensively and even attach appendices in which we will hear the Muslim voice. This is not going to be a one-sided tirade against Muslims. I will try to understand the Muslim community with empathy and not unceasingly criticize them—except where they deserve it! Where they are right, I will give them the credit. Where Christians are wrong, I will say so as well. My affirmations and critiques will cut both ways.

I am aware that such an approach will not be appreciated by some of my fellow Christians. Some will consider it a sellout. But this is what the Lord has put in my heart and I can do no other. I also realize that many Muslims will not believe my intentions and may regard this work as yet another ploy to undermine them. A Western missionary writing empathetically about Islam? That can hardly be fathomed, even though I am by no means the first.<sup>25</sup> I am out to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I judge that this task needs a certain degree of objectivity and empathy for both sides if that gospel is going to get a chance to contribute to harmony, healing and nation building—and if Nigeria is to survive.

Note carefully that I offer some ideas about parameters within which a solution must be found. I do not delude myself into thinking that I have the solution itself. As Falola writes, “No widely held theories for curtailing the devastation of violence and aggression has been formulated.”<sup>26</sup> When experienced, wise and gentle Christian leaders like Ishaya Audu throw up their hands in despair and confess that in this particular situation all solutions elude them, then it would be presumptuous of me to pretend to have ready-made solutions. But it could turn out that I have discovered



certain perspectives on the Christian faith with which Nigerians are not familiar, that could help break the current impasse by providing a new vista of a more wholistic version of Christianity. That, at least, is my hope and a major reason for this study.

So, I humbly offer at least certain parameters that belong mostly to the aspects of the spiritual and world view. These are, after all, among the basic building blocks of both religion and society. The continued existence of Nigeria as one nation under almost impossible conditions is a testimony to her people's tenacity and vibrancy. It also confirms my faith in miracles! With apologies to Karl Maier, this house has *not* fallen—and does not need to fall. It is not inevitable.

## ▲ **FORMAT DETAILS**

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This book tells only a part of the story. Plans are to produce a companion CD with greater details. In addition to more stories, this disk will include newspaper articles, conference reports, communiqués and government submissions from Christian, Muslim and academic sources that will not only provide a wider landscape but can also serve as valuable research materials for related studies.

Though eventually this study may appear within one set of covers, for now it will be published in the form of individual monographs, each unit dealing with a separate aspect of the subject. The title of the entire series of monographs is *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations*. Each monograph will have its own title as well.

This Volume One of the monograph series, in addition to this Introduction, presents a detailed coverage of the religious riots that have dotted the Nigerian landscape ever since the early 80s. I try to give descriptions that are representative of the “facts,” as the two religions see them in their own ways. Volumes Two and Three will examine Muslim and Christian analyses of the riots respectively.

So, an analysis of an analysis! Subsequent volumes will discuss various issues that cause friction between Christians and Muslims. Major ones are shari'a, secularism, wholism and pluralism. If time allows, there will also be discussions of gender and fashion issues, public preaching and mission, conversion and human rights.

So, a full plate and a well-rounded menu. All the way through, both parties will be given ample opportunities to express themselves through numerous quotes, some so long they will be attached as an appendix. It is common in quotations to indicate omitted sections by ellipsis points (...). For reasons of readability and esthetics, I have in some cases omitted these when they were too numerous. I assure you, however, that no meaning will be lost or distorted.

Though these studies are based on extensive and academically responsible research, they do not always follow current trends of academia. My aim is not primarily academic or theoretical. However, I have borrowed one leaf from that realm—namely, the abundance of endnotes. Some of the information may be unbelievable to some readers. It may be helpful and reassuring to see the source. The promised companion CD should especially help such readers.

They are endnotes with a difference. No traditional jargon is used and the notes often contain no more than is necessary to identify the publication in the Bibliography. For full information about any publication, you have to turn to the Bibliography.

Another non-academic feature is that I freely use the pronouns “I” and “you” to encourage a less formal relationship between you, the reader, and myself. It lends a more personal tone to the book. And personal it is: straight from my heart to yours.

May Allah, the Creator, the Ruler, the Compassionate, the Just and Merciful, known in English as God, bless us on this journey. I am not so unrealistic as to expect an environment without religious friction between these two faiths in Nigeria. I do, however, believe that both religions have the wherewithal to replace their current

dangerous standoff with a more cooperative mode that will take Nigeria away from the brink. Failure to work towards this with the greatest urgency could not only lead to the fulfillment of the Maier prophecy, but also seriously undermine the credibility of the world's two largest religions. Neither stands to gain from either of these prospects. And so we pray....

## ▲ NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Tell*, 6 Dec/93; 30 Jan/95. Aso Rock is the Nigerian equivalent to the White House, located in the capital, Abuja.

<sup>2</sup> *New Nigerian*, 28 Feb/2000, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> J. T. Yusuf, 1995, pp. xvi, 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> *NN*, 3 Feb/95.

<sup>5</sup> A. Madugba, Report from Association of Nigerians Abroad, 2 May/98.

<sup>6</sup> For a recent (2001) update on this subject see K. Woodward, "The Changing Face of the Church."

<sup>7</sup> In view of the church's extreme anger with Islam and its widespread participation in corruption, I am not sure I can legitimately add the category of spiritual strength to this evaluation.

<sup>8</sup> J.T. Yusuf, 1995, p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> Unlike previous censuses, the latest census did not include questions about religion. It has been suggested that the reason for this exclusion is that the government either was afraid or did not want to have it publicly acknowledged that Christians may now well outnumber Muslims. Both religions are claiming majority status and the rights that come along with it.

<sup>10</sup> This section, though important for understanding these studies, assumes advanced education. You can skip it if you find it too difficult. Do not let it discourage you from reading the rest of this and subsequent volumes.

<sup>11</sup> The most recent major publications on this subject in English are by the following authors, all listed in the Bibliography. John Bolt (2001), Luis Lugo (2000), James E. McGoldrick (2000), Peter Heslam (1998), James Bratt (1998). And then there is the standard work by Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (1931) and his monograph, *The Problem of Poverty* (1991). Kuyper, the father of this movement, wrote voluminously, but most of it in his native, not widely understood, Dutch language.

<sup>12</sup> Joel Carpenter, "Neo-Calvinism and the Future of Religious Colleges." Insert in *Contact*, Newsletter of the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education, Mar. 2001, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Marshall, *Their Blood Cries Out: The Worldwide Tragedy of Modern Christians Who Are Dying for Their Faith*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Of course, it is not only Kuyperians that hold this view. See e.g. Patrick Glynn, who recently argued similarly for the priority of faith over reason on a postsecular basis. See Bibliography for both authors.

<sup>15</sup> Jan H. Boer, *Science Without Faith Is Dead*. Jos: Institute of Church & Society, 1991. Here I demonstrate the dependence of science on faith and world view.

<sup>16</sup> I realize that this insight is not unique to Kuyperian thought. It is shared with Postmodernism. However, the latter is a newcomer. Philosophers can probably show a common ancestry.

<sup>17</sup> Jan H. Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Sudan United Mission*. Amsterdam Series of Theology, Vol. I. Amsterdam: Rodopi Editions, 1979, pp. 49, 218; *Missions: Heralds of Capitalism or Christ?* Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1984, pp. 23, 56.

<sup>18</sup> For further explanation, see Boer, 1979, pp. 491-492; 1984, pp. 150-152, 159-160; *Caught in the Middle: Christians in Transnational Corporations*. Jos: Institute of Church & Society, 1992, p. 2, Chapter 15; For a more recent evangelical expression, see R. Paul Stevens, "The Marketplace: Mission Field or Mission?" *Crux: Quarterly Journal of Christian Thought and Opinion*. Vancouver: Regent College, Sep/2001, pp. 7-16.

<sup>19</sup> A prime example of this Kuyperian passion is his *Het sociale vraagstuk en de Christelijke religie* of 1891. See Bibliography for an English translation.

<sup>20</sup> A few of my publications utilizing the Kuyperian perspective are listed in the Bibliography. The reader is also encouraged to check my Web site: [www.SocialTheology.com](http://www.SocialTheology.com).

<sup>21</sup> For a comprehensive systematic presentation of Kuyperian perspectives focused on Africa, I refer you to the body of literature created by B.J. (Bennie) Van Der Walt, retired Professor of Philosophy at Potchefstroom, South Africa. He has published an endless list of books and articles, but the most comprehensive is his *The Liberating Message* of 1994.

<sup>22</sup> I realize that I have just described the struggle in unilateral Christian terms. Muslims would characterize it as a struggle between

Islam vs. Christians *cum* secularism, since for good reasons they tend to identify the two.

<sup>23</sup> I have indicated the problems created by missionaries and other Westerners in my books as listed on my Web site.

<sup>24</sup> Olupona, p. ix.

<sup>25</sup> The writings of T. W. Arnold and of Kenneth Cragg especially come to mind here.

<sup>26</sup> Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998, p. 8.