

## THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Governments in Nigeria are omnipresent. Hence, both Christians and Muslims consider them to be major forces as problems as well as solutions. In 1987, CAN commented on the inability of governments to manage Nigeria's religious volatility: "It is either that Nigeria's appreciation of the problem is still weak and faulty, or that governmental actions on the problem are grossly inadequate or *insincere*." It added, "It is becoming increasingly obvious that the government either actively or passively supports the Muslim *jihad* being inflicted on Nigeria."<sup>1</sup>

The NIPSS report has alerted us that we are dealing with an important and sensitive problem and that a lot of serious thinking remains to be done. It presents a classic list of Christian complaints regarding government actions, which it interprets as "surreptitious attempts to implement" Muslim plans:

1. Refusal to grant certificate of occupancy to churches, or the revocation of some where already granted.
2. Refusal of autonomy to Christian schools.

3. Blackout of Christian messages over the media.
4. Protection of deviant Muslim students in educational institutions.
5. Condoning of the provocative use of loudspeakers in mosques and near church locations.
6. Denial of expatriate quotas to Christian institutions.
7. Use of government resources to subsidise annual holy pilgrimages to Mecca, and the token attention given to Christian pilgrimages.
8. Granting foreign exchange concessions to Muslims in a situation when even businessmen are denied foreign exchange to travel on business.
9. The importation of 50,000 rams for Muslims during the *Eid-El-Kabir* festival.<sup>2</sup>

There is little to suggest at the moment that this situation has improved since. The complaints and explanations of today differ little from those of the earlier years of our period. And so NIPSS' warning to governments still stands: "It will not do any good to pretend that the religious problem does not exist in Nigeria and it will amount to both intellectual dishonesty and political irresponsibility not to confront the problem frankly and realistically."<sup>3</sup>

The main purpose of this chapter is to review how Nigerian Christians regard their governments, federal as well as state.

### ▲ GOVERNMENT IMPOSITION OF MUSLIM AUTHORITIES

A major colonial policy with long-term repercussions was the practice of subjecting previously independent nations to the rule of Muslim emirs. These nations, most of them in Nigeria's Middle Belt, adhered to the Traditional Religion. The majority of the citizens of

many of them later became Christian. That was the situation that obtained in much of Southern Zaria as well as in Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi State. This colonial policy became a major cause of some riots, if not *the* major cause. Yusufu Turaki devoted a large part of his doctoral dissertation to the subject as it affected Southern Zaria. In my dissertation, I give the matter attention in so far as it affected the Sudan United Mission. It was a source of grave missionary concern, for it sometimes would lead to a process of Islamisation.

It happened in Bukuru, a mining town just south of Jos. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Jos hardly existed and was part of the Bukuru administrative area, the area was placed under the Emir of Bauchi and assigned a Muslim judge. A Hausa market sprang up, followed by Hausa teachers. Soon the Muslim call to prayer was heard. Though the area was later released from Zaria control, the Jos riot at the end of the century was partially due to the claims of the *Jasawa* to the chieftaincy of Jos based on that earlier Bauchi regime. Captain Ruxton was one of very few early British colonial officers who were sympathetic to Christian missions.<sup>4</sup> He affirmed—and complained—that the government wanted to put the adherents of Traditional Religion everywhere under Muslim emirs. He tried to resist it.<sup>5</sup>

Though the first people to object to the above policies were missionaries,<sup>6</sup> during the period of this study, the Nigerian victims themselves began to demand the dismantling of such emirates. They became increasingly aware of this arrangement and resentful. Chiwo Avre, probably an indigene of Southern Zaria, described the situation of the Bajju nation as typical of the other nationalities in the area. It is a “sad story of contempt and oppression,” he wrote. The Hausa corrupted most of these peoples’ original native names and called them by derisive names, full of contempt.

Christians were denied the freedom to choose and appoint their leaders.

*They were denied freedom to manage their own affairs without interference. They were viewed as second-class citizens who had no equal rights with the people of Zaria [Muslims] to select their district heads, let alone participate in the management of social and economic affairs of their areas. They were turned into a people whose cultures and customs were so supremely suppressed that nothing about their cultural heritage could be heard on the state radio or television. In short, they were forcibly made a people without cultural independence, self-determination and were completely without any hope of self-actualisation, owing to slanted political and administrative arrangements put in place by the Emirate system to perpetually hold them subjects.*

However, the situation was not hopeless, for “there was no holding the people down for eternity.” Everything in life is “transitory”—and that includes the “powers of the Emirate Council.” The wedge was provided by the various Kaduna riots and a young Muslim military governor who recognised the sign of the times.<sup>7</sup> But that part of the story is for the next chapter.

## ▲ PARTIALITY

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A major problem Christians have with the federal government and various state governments is their partiality towards Islam. According to Ishaya Audu, “The question of religion in Nigeria” can be solved only “if the government... decides to be totally neutral.” The “government should only be interested in religion in protecting the right of the individual to practise whatever religion he wants freely... But as to the issue of promoting one religion over another, government should be very careful and keep out of that. They must in all circumstances show that strict neutrality.” “Heads of government must show this absolute impartiality.” This would mean, among other things, that government should stop supporting religious pilgrimages, whether Christian or Muslim.

Audu presented himself as an example. When he was Vice Chancellor of ABU, Christians sometimes expected him to “show them some partiality.” He resisted that temptation very forcefully, saying,

*I believed it was in the best interest of peace of the whole community that I be absolutely impartial and that everybody sees that I am impartial. And I am happy to say that I think it's true that that had a lot to do with the relative peace at ABU during my time. If government can really heed this kind of role, then one could hope that the problem that religion can create... would be curtailed. I don't believe that Muslims or Christians operating single-handedly without the assurance that they may get the backing or connivance of government will really go and attack the other.<sup>8</sup>*

What the professor seems to say between the lines is that the government is not neutral and that heads of departments have not been impartial. Governments have, in fact, promoted one religion at the expense of another, that is, Islam at the expense of Christianity. He also suggested that riots are caused by secret government assurances of support. These are powerful accusations even when couched in the soft language of “the Prof.”

Audu *can* drop his normal shield of understatement occasionally. The Muslim push for theocracy, he insisted, will destroy the nation and must therefore be stopped. The danger of this approach is clear from nations such as Iran, Iraq, Algeria and Egypt. He is often surprised to see how “responsible Muslim leaders” advocate this approach, for it is the most effective way of destroying the nation. Over against theocracy, Audu advocated the give-unto-Cesar approach—“no union between any religion and government. The two should go their separate ways.”<sup>9</sup>

I emphasise once again that these are not the words of a suspicious fundamentalist church leader and outsider as far as govern-

ment goes. These are the statements of one who has seen first hand what is cooking at the highest levels and who was raised in a Muslim environment. His words thus carry special weight, also because of his high moral stature.

Abashiya similarly took issue with the government at this front. For the country to survive in the face of its various religions, the government should act as the “father of all citizens.” In other words, the government must be neutral with respect to religion. Along with Audu, he emphasised that the government must be *seen* to be impartial and not lean one way or another. For Abashiya that also implies it should basically take its hands off religion and get out of the pilgrimage business. The government’s involvement in religious pilgrimage was a “great blunder.” It should provide only skeletal pilgrimage services such as issuing visas. He expressed his appreciation for the call of a “prominent Muslim in Kano” who similarly demanded a hands-off policy for the pilgrimage. The same would hold true for joining “any organization based on religion,” a thinly veiled reference to the OIC issue.<sup>10</sup>

And then there is engineer S.L.S. Salifu, who has for years served as a courageous spokesman for CAN.<sup>11</sup> In his opinion, governments in Nigeria have not faced the problem of multiple religions properly. The government is to serve as referee between them. “You blow the whistle when somebody commits a foul. Finish. So, if the government does not lean towards any particular religion, we will not have all these religious problems.” For Salifu, as for most of the other Christian voices and, it should be noted clearly, in stark distinction from the Muslim call for neutrality or impartiality, such a stance would mean that the government

*should wash its hands neatly from anything religious. All the pilgrimages, building of mosques, churches, schools, etc., should be left to Christians and Muslims. If the government is to build a school, it must be a neutral school and it must have*

*its own neutral character. Also the situation in which government takes over a Christian mission school and renames it by an Islamic identity is wrong. In Kaduna State some people are talking about wearing some identities to school to show their religion. This does not make sense. So the government should steer clear of religion. No government that has steered the path of religion in the world has succeeded.*<sup>12</sup>

As always, Ibrahim Yaro put it very bluntly. Everyone “in Nigeria knows the type of government operative in this nation has a very big bias in favour of Islam and thus tends to make itself government of the Muslims, by the Muslims and for the Muslims.” “Today in Nigeria, Islam is subtly being groomed as a state religion and is being maintained and propagated by the state from the funds belonging to all. The recent OIC event is still green in our memory and is not yet put to rest.” Quoting from a poorly identified source, Yaro continued, “One could here rightly ask: Is the task of the Nigerian government the advancement of Islamic religion or the interest of the nation? Judging from events, one might rightly conclude in favour of the former.”<sup>13</sup>

Yaro singled out the situation in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, by listing eleven examples of pro-Muslim and/or anti-Christian situations as follows:

1. Uncomfortable situation of Christians in government offices, general harassment and insecurity because of their religion;
2. Refusal to grant Certificate of Occupancy to Christian churches;
3. Granting of Certification of Occupancy to an individual Muslim to build a mosque rather than a corporate body as required by law;

4. Refusal to approve primary school proprietorship for Christians but easily granted to Islamic bodies;
5. Ejection of Christian worshippers from classrooms when schools are not in session and yet even government offices are used for Islamic worship during official hours;
6. Arbitrary demolition of batches [of churches?] where some Christians gather to worship;
7. Plans are on to establish Islamic radio stations which is against the law that prohibits private radio stations. Land already acquired covers about thirty-nine hectares. Churches already occupying a portion of the area and vicinity were driven out and are to be resettled.
8. National Mosque land area covers about eleven hectares as against CAN's 6.25 hectares.
9. Government schools are headed mostly by Muslims even when a Christian is better qualified.
10. A [federal government] minister is said to have bragged that he could do at Abuja what he did to Christians in Kano.
11. Recent interviews...to fill up vacancies of the Directors in various departments were done by a panel of Muslim officials.<sup>14</sup>

As the struggle about (im)partiality moved into the era of sharia revival at the turn of the millennium, at one of the many conferences organised at the time, Professor Nwabuezer interpreted the constitution as guaranteeing the equality of all religions before the government. Government must not only refuse to adopt a particular religion, but it "must also treat all religions equally, showing no favouritism or preference of any kind for one by way of special

promotion of, or protection for its institutions, doctrines and observances or any kind of state sponsorship.” He further explained that “favouritism or preference exists if a state action is intended to or does in its practical effect, advance, foster, encourage or inhibit any religion.” Such unwanted situations do not always have to represent force, such as the teaching of any religion in public schools. He then referred to the American Supreme Court that “prevents the state from being involved in any religious matters such as providing aid, even if all religions are treated equally.”<sup>15</sup>

Quoting from a court document, the professor approved the notion that “complete separation is best for the state and best for religion.”<sup>16</sup>

These leaders of Christian thought, throughout the period covered by this study, identify government impartiality at least partially with government withdrawal from the world of religion. If it is to be impartial, it is argued, then government must leave the realm of religion to its adherents and not be involved except in routine matters such as supplying passports and visas as well as ensuring justice in the relations between faiths. Religion is personal and private and hence has no place in government. These issues will come up for assessment in a later volume.

A basic Christian complaint is that when a government does get involved in religious affairs, it loses its impartiality and almost invariably comes down on the side of Islam. It is claimed that the government does so at several blatantly Muslim fronts such as the OIC and pilgrimage.

### ▲ ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)<sup>17</sup>

The OIC issue became an emotional matter of national proportions in January 1986, when a French newspaper reported that Nigeria had joined the organization. The issue has already been introduced in Volume 2, so that there is no need for further details.

The government caught Nigeria by surprise. It did not take long for the matter to bring the nation to a boil.

This government decision to join the OIC was and remains shrouded in mystery till this time of writing in 2003. President Babangida claimed it had been discussed by military leaders, something the Chief of Staff denied.<sup>18</sup> Even the editor of the *New Nigerian* agreed that the government handled the matter in a clumsy style. “The federal government has yet to confirm or deny the story of our admission. It would appear as if discussions were not held on a matter as sensitive as this and that is worrying.” If it is true that Nigeria is a member, “the government should not fight shy of saying so.”<sup>19</sup>

Though this membership created a highly emotional climate of anger and acrimony, a year later the government had done nothing to clear up the uncertainty. A *TC* correspondent tells the story of the game and the uncertainties it created. There was a question as to whether Nigeria was present at an OIC summit in Kuwait in 1987. The magazine *West Africa* reported that it was, but our *TC* correspondent learned “from other highly reliable sources” that Nigeria was not represented there. Muslims scurried about to ensure representation, but they did not succeed. Apparently, the government hoped to attend in the future but only as an observer in order “to appease both Christians and Muslims.” The correspondent commented that “the apparent indecision of government and the continued secrecy in which the issue is shrouded, has remained a source of concern to Christians.”

I remember vividly the surprise and the anger of Christians when government involvement with the OIC became public knowledge. Joseph Obemeata, a columnist in *Independence*, the weekly of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ibadan, strongly warned that this move would be firmly resisted by Christians, for they understand this as a step towards having Nigeria recognised as a Muslim country.<sup>20</sup>

The move was, as Falola put it, “a costly miscalculation.” He asserted that Nigeria’s joining the OIC secretly “polarised the country more than had any other issue in Nigeria’s history.”<sup>21</sup> According to a *TC* correspondent, the issue was “burning on the lips of many Nigerians.”<sup>22</sup>

A national crisis arose overnight, and leaders of the two religions reacted predictably. Christians demanded the immediate withdrawal; most Muslims were thrilled and demanded continued membership. Falola’s history of the controversy is well worth reading.<sup>23</sup> “Christians immediately mobilised.... Their... objections were widely publicised in the newspapers and were the subject of sermons and church publications.... Churches issued statements and called for special prayers, rallies and fasts....”<sup>24</sup>

The major Christian concerns were the alleged Islamizing programme of the government, the nature of the OIC itself and the secularism issue.

To C. O. Williams the issue proved that the government intended Islamizing the country. It proceeded “despite the advice of an overwhelming majority—including some top Muslim leaders.” The issue “completely polarised the country,” he wrote a decade later. One of the “more terrible” consequences was “the confident feeling of the fanatical or fundamentalist group of Muslims that the membership has automatically turned Nigeria into a totally Muslim country,” where Christians “have no right to exist.” Membership would give the government the right to declare other religions “null, void and of no effect.” It would make it easy for a “Muslim despot” to “blatantly declare Nigeria a Muslim country and attempt to convert all places for Christian worship to mosques.”

This government move led on the one hand to “more ruthless activities” on the part of “fanatical Muslims” during 1986 and 1987, including the destruction of church buildings. On the other hand, it led to much greater unity of purpose and, thus, strength among Christians. When the government established a

committee to look into the implications of OIC membership, Babangida assured the nation that his government “[had] no plans of any kind to promote, canvass or impose any religion on this country.” To do so would have been unconstitutional and have invited chaos. Williams expressed positive appreciation for that promise.

The northern branch of CAN discussed the matter during a press conference a couple of years later. The relevant part reads:

*We have times without number cautioned on the deliberate but precarious silence of the Babangida Administration over the surreptitious involvement and continued membership of our beloved country in the OIC. The Administration in prescribing silence as a solution to an obvious problem can only succeed in self-deception.*

CAN indicated it was not oblivious of the recent meeting of the OIC in Abuja under a deceptive and pretentious designation of “Islam in Africa Conference” (IAC).<sup>25</sup> It stated that “by the recent Abuja conference of the OIC, it has completely dawned on us that Nigeria is not only a member of the OIC but its permanent headquarters.” It went on to say,

*The Usman Dan Fodio jihad flag was moved from Sokoto to Abuja during the conference. We have noted the movement of the flag along with all that it stands for. The Administration is in the last phase of its sponsored forceful Islamisation of our country. We are carefully watching the situation. We have come to the conclusion that the assurances of the Administration that no religion will be imposed on this country is at best a deceit on Christians. This Administration’s overt and covert patronage and biased posture towards the advancement of Islam to the detriment of other religions is clear enough for all Christians to see.<sup>26</sup>*

Our mysterious “J. O.,” promoted to archbishop in 2002, pointed to Nigeria’s joining the OIC as the flash point when

*the seed of religious discord was formally sown. This marked the beginning of a new dimension to religious strife in Nigeria. Since then, we have experienced the repeated well-planned large-scale destruction of Christians and their properties. Muslim countries like Iran and Libya seized the opportunity and intensified their campaigns in Nigeria. Inciting Islamic pamphlets and photographs streamed into the country. One particular letter was sent to Muslims in northern Nigeria, promising handsome financial rewards for any Muslim sect or organization that would ensure a quick violent Islamisation of Nigeria. The targets were to be the Christians, their properties and their churches.<sup>27</sup>*

Christians were prepared to believe the very worst. If it had to do with the OIC, nothing was deemed improbable and the most fantastic alleged Muslim schemes were considered almost certain to be true. Secret correspondence and documents were circulated that allegedly came from the highest Muslim echelons and that, if genuine, would have been enough to cause international upheavals, especially in the financial world. They certainly would not have been designed for public consumption. I include two of them as Appendix 5A and 5B<sup>28</sup> to show how some (unknown?) parties sought to raise the level of tension and suspicion in the country. The atmosphere was most fertile for such attempts. One Townsend, supposedly based in Switzerland, was to have sent several documents alleged to have been produced by Muslims. Appendix 5B speaks of transfers into the private accounts of Babangida, Abacha, Alhaji and Lukman of unbelievable amounts of dollars totalling almost \$124 billion! In addition, over \$24 billion was allegedly transferred into OIC accounts. When some church leaders whisper in conspiratory tones that they have docu-

mentary “proof” of Muslim intrigue, these seem to be among the type of documents to which they refer.

An additional reason for this strong Christian reaction was that this is an organization dedicated to the defence of Islamic interests. Indeed, in the preamble to the OIC’s charter, one finds the following statement of purpose, namely “to preserve Islamic spiritual, ethical, social and economic values... and to consolidate the bonds of... brotherly and spiritual friendship among their people.” In other words, among its purposes is the promotion of Islamic solidarity. Membership in such an organization would compromise the Christians and could force them into wars against fellow Christians in countries such as Sudan. Nigerian funds would be used to promote Islam. Membership would increase the religious polarization of the country. The move was also seen as a threat to the secular nature of the Nigerian government and thus a “subversion of fundamental freedoms.” Catholic leaders called on their members to boycott the *National Concord*, a national daily, because of its support for OIC membership.<sup>29</sup> Muslim arguments, reproduced in Volume 2, against its largely religious character are hardly convincing in the light of the OIC’s charter. The editor of *NN* was more honest in his acknowledgement that “obviously the OIC has its roots in a particular religion.”<sup>30</sup>

When the sharia issue heated up again at the close of the millennium, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Anthony O. Okogie, former National President of CAN, reminded the people that the sharia “is one of the demands in the constitution of OIC for membership.” In fact, “the OIC constitution demands among other things that the Muslims must be in charge of education and petroleum. All the good, good things. Even finance of the nation. It is all there in the OIC demands. You will remember that I was one of those who shouted against OIC and then Sharia.”<sup>31</sup> He was saying, in other words, that the OIC agenda had not yet died. Muslims were still working on

more fully qualifying Nigeria. One can reasonably suspect that the reason they withdrew was only a matter of strategy. Nigeria did not meet some major conditions but is working towards them, with sharia being one point on that agenda.

Various Christian conferences were held that all insisted on withdrawal on basis of their prevailing secular perspective. J.A. Adegbite, at the time National Chairman of CAN, talked of “our relentless unequivocal and categorical opposition to the OIC.” He pointed out that Nigerian Christians belong to various international organisations as well, such as the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches, but they had not dragged the Nigerian nation into them, not even as observer. Similarly, Nigerian Muslims are free to join OIC but without the involvement of the nation. It is a private affair. Christians have such a strong sense of the privacy of their religion that the Christian Minister of External Affairs at the time, Bolaje Akinyemi, refused to answer any questions about the future of the issue or that his religion may have played a role in taking some of the sting out of the issue. “My religion,” he commented, “is private to me and is not a matter of public policy.”<sup>32</sup>

That other secular theme, the separation of the functions of state and religion, was the main reason Minchakpu gave for demanding Nigeria’s withdrawal from the OIC. This position was “diametrically opposed to the Muslim position that underlies their support for retaining membership, namely the rejection of such a separation.... This is where the problem comes in,” he asserted. The Muslim insistence on this principle and their refusal to give in at this point was what caused Nigeria’s problems. Minchakpu continued,

*I want to state without ambiguity that, as a result of the conflicting position of the Muslims as against those of the other Nigerians, today we are witnessing glaring evidence of manipulation of religion and its attendant... destruction of lives and property. That is the truth of the matter.*

If Nigerians want unity and peace, they must be willing to address and solve these issues. “We must be prepared to shed off our religious prejudices.”<sup>33</sup>

Another related issue was that membership was seen as contrary to the secularism that informed the constitution. A threat to that secularism endangers the very existence of the country. Under the title “A Threat to Our Survival,” Professor Aluko wrote that joining the OIC went contrary to the secular nature of the country that was supposed to keep Nigeria from dissolution through a religious war.<sup>34</sup> Peter Y. Jatau, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna, warned that “if it will alter the secular status of the country, then I am against it.”<sup>35</sup> In a similar vein, one Simpson Aji darkly warned that joining the OIC “is bound to provoke a religious disaffection among a cross-section of the Nigerian citizenry,” for it runs counter to Nigeria’s secular status as well as to “aspects of our fundamental freedoms.”<sup>36</sup>

Tanko Yusuf published a statement on the subject of OIC in Kaduna in which he covered all the problems. He “described Nigeria’s alleged membership...as unconstitutional and undiplomatic” and explained that it would be “morally fatal for a secular country like Nigeria to be a member...just because the country was going through economic crisis.” He added that we could not afford to be involved in “religious counter trade.” The alleged move must be condemned by all peace-loving citizens of the country, he said, pointing out that such a move would not only be costly but disastrous. “The peculiar reality of our nation must be clearly understood by influential Nigerians who seem to forget the multi-ethnic nature of our society.” The OIC could not be non-religious as was being claimed, he said, adding that nothing pertaining to Islam could be separated from religion. Nobody objected to Muslims attending the OIC meeting as observers, but not as representatives of the Nigerian government.

The impression was being created that some Nigerians wanted to change the status of the country during the military regime, a

move which Yusuf said failed during the civilian rule. He called on the present military administration to come out openly and assure the nation that they were not in power to change the secular status of Nigeria but to correct the misdeeds of the former politicians.<sup>37</sup>

The United Christian Association of Oyo State, an affiliate of CAN, produced a lengthy document to warn Christians about the sinister plans involving OIC membership. See Appendix 6 for further commentary.

The issue may temporarily fade away, but it refuses to die. As the beginning of the saga was shrouded in mystery and uncertainty as to who had done what, so was its continuation. Did Nigeria withdraw? Half a decade since the issue reared its head, *Punch* considered it significant news that the Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Lateef Adegbite, confirmed Nigeria's full membership.<sup>38</sup> An *REC News Exchange* item reported that Nigeria had withdrawn.<sup>39</sup> But in 1995, C. O. Williams complained that the government had still not withdrawn! James Kantiok reports that at one point the government agreed to take that step, but this "was just on paper to pacify the Christians." The government of Sani Abacha announced in April 1998 that Nigeria was a full member.<sup>40</sup> No wonder that as late as 1999 the Chairman of CAN in Oyo State was demanding that Nigeria's membership be "revisited."<sup>41</sup> In March 2003, the time of writing this paragraph, the matter is still simmering. It has never really been resolved clearly and finally.

## ▲ GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

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Muslims are not the only ones to complain that Nigerian government appointments are partial. While Muslims complain that the balance is often heavily in favour of Christians, Christians argue the opposite. Tanko Yusuf claimed that Christian graduates

roam about aimlessly “mainly because Muslims have been handed the jobs that...exist.”<sup>42</sup>

His English may have left something to be desired, but Ibrahim Yaro’s point was clear. He wrote about the “privileges” Muslims enjoy “in terms of appointments to executive posts in almost all the ten northern states.” This trend included “federal appointments from northern states.” Christians, on the other hand, are bypassed when it comes to appointments.<sup>43</sup> It is not only that Muslims hold more posts, but they “are in control of those posts which make up the backbone of any government.”<sup>44</sup>

There are several variations of the discrimination theme. People with current appointments can be sacked if they are Muslims who convert to Christ. Binta Jalingo, for example, lost her job with the government-owned television station for that reason.<sup>45</sup> Some Christian students applying to certain schools, especially in Kaduna, adopt Muslim names in order to improve their chances. Still another variation was people changing religion from Christianity to Islam for the very purpose of obtaining an appointment or promotion. CAN reported that Ahmadu Bello, the famous *Sardauna* of Sokoto, used to try to convert traditional rulers by making them various promises and then announce to the world that the people of this chieftaincy had all moved over to Islam. One chief was promised a governorship. He became a Muslim but never was appointed to the promised position. “Trading religion for political position is not new in northern Nigeria,”<sup>46</sup> commented CAN. In fact, it became a major thrust for the *Sardauna* during the honeymoon of Nigeria’s independence. The *Sardauna*’s mission has received extensive coverage in Volume 2 and so I restrict myself here only to what Christians have said about it.

Dean Gilliland correctly commented that the first six years of Nigeria’s independence were marked by “a political situation that was so integrated with Islam that a separation would be impossi-

ble.” Politics, government and *da’wah* or mission were one for the Sardauna.<sup>47</sup> It was natural for him.

It is no wonder then that Wilson Sabiya frequently railed against this allegedly established Muslim tradition. He singled out three Muslim practices that, in effect, declared northern states Muslim. First, Muslims were appointed to “executive posts in almost all the ten northern states, including federal appointments from the northern states compared to the Christians who are bypassed in terms of appointments.” Secondly, government provided Muslims with “amenities to enable them to fulfill their religious obligations”—in other words, subsidised pilgrimage. Thirdly, the governments confiscated “Christian institutions established to serve everybody regardless of their religious beliefs,” that is, schools and hospitals. These, Sabiya concluded, meant that “Christianity is completely regarded a *persona non grata* religion in the northern states.” As to appointments, he complained that in his day “only Muslims were appointed as military governors” of the ten northern states. Subsequently almost all “executive appointments”—and he lists them—went to Muslims as well.<sup>48</sup>

In his capacity as Chairman of CAN, Gongola State Branch, Sabiya and his secretary, Kenneth Eze, wrote a letter to Babangida complaining about the same trends in the police force. “After a careful study of the recruitment and appointment in the Police Force,” they wrote, “we discovered that there is a gradual and concentrated effort to convert the country into an Islamic State.” This was happening in order to prepare the police “to convert the transition programme to a transition into [an] Islamic State.” Christians were prevented from improving themselves, while Muslims were chosen to take courses for training for Assistant Superintendents of Police. Out of the twenty-five recruited for these courses in three northern states, only one was Christian! This clearly indicated there was a plan to Islamise the force. Similar tendencies were found throughout the North. Out of fourteen state police forces, only

two were headed by Christians. These Muslim police chiefs “systematically deny Christians promotions, refuse them their rights and victimise them....” Their official complaints went unheeded. “We are fed up and cannot continue to fold our hands and see the nation perishing.”<sup>49</sup>

Wilson Sabiya never tired of challenging the president. In 1990, he wrote another letter, co-signed by Ayuba Ndule, the Assistant Secretary of CAN, Gongola Branch. He reminded the president of how the people had first welcomed him as the country’s saviour, but that he soon began to show signs of partiality and dictatorship. A cabinet reshuffle, according to Sabiya, made it “clear that your moves were to turn the country into an Islamic State. It is clear that you are against the secular state.” Then he listed fifteen important government positions that were all occupied by Muslims, a method that has almost become a tradition in Christian protest literature. It is not clear which of these were new appointments. But it was clear to Wilson Sabiya that Babangida was turning into a dictator and that he had “completed the machinery to meet membership of OIC as an Islamic state. We have therefore seen that Christians have no place in the scheme of things. We are left with no alternative but to register our protest. No Islamisation for Nigeria! We cannot be made aliens in the land of our birth.”<sup>50</sup>

It is interesting that a few months later the Action Committee of TEKAN considered the same lopsided police situation. Sabiya was chairman of that committee as well, but absent from this particular meeting. The committee asked “whether that action was a design or an accident.” It concluded, “Most likely, it was the grand design of the Muslims for a future strategy in the northern states.” This committee also thought to recognise a similar process at work in recent postings of military state governors in the North.<sup>51</sup>

This concern about one-sided promotions and appointments has long been on the Christian agenda. The TEKAN Study Group submission of 1987 complained that

*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...under their juniors...because they [the juniors] are Muslims.*

This was then followed by the familiar list of high positions that were allegedly occupied by Muslims.

CAN, Northern States and Abuja branch, also drew attention to police issues, this time to transfers of officers to their states of origin. "We suspect," CAN stated, "that the transfer was motivated by two prominent emirs in the North with very clear political and religious motives." The purpose was said to be "to give room for Christian officers to be quietly retired, make room for the rigging of elections and to enable Muslims to finalise their preparation for a *jihad*." CAN also claimed to be "aware of the mass importation of mercenaries of other nations into Nigeria with the ultimate motive of waging a *jihad*. We wish the jihadists luck!" Then CAN threatened that its enemies might be surprised about "the extent of our readiness to protect our rights and those of our children with our blood."<sup>52</sup>

Kaduna CAN's letter to Babangida devoted much space to the same issue. The letter referred to a "gradual but constant phasing out of Christians." Admiral Ukiwe was replaced "single-handedly" by the president for no other offence than that he ventured to reveal that the OIC was never discussed at administration meetings. Professor David West was "unceremoniously removed from the petroleum ministry" because he dared to speak about "the Arab/Islamic monopoly of OPEC and also in compliance with the dictates of Nigeria's membership of the OIC." He was replaced by Lukman, a man who was to become Chairman of OPEC. Professor Bolaji Akinyemi "was removed from the External Affairs

Ministry for refusing to be messed up in defending the membership in OIC and for meeting with the Israeli foreign minister,” even though the president himself later met with the Israeli head of state. Though internationally recognised for his competence, Joel Garba was removed as Nigeria’s representative at the United Nations. These were only a few of the examples that could be cited. Then CAN presented a list of twenty-nine highly placed appointees by name, position and religion, a list that featured a mere three Christians.

CAN commented, “Mr. President, your recent restructuring of your administration seems to be the last phase of the carefully implemented design for the ultimate promulgation of Nigeria as an Islamic state.” The letter highlighted two concerns of CAN. One, the president had “preserved for the Muslims and the establishment political, economic and military power and domination. Your avowed but deceptive claim is to clean the stable, reject the status quo and establish a new political order. We now know better what the new...order is all about.”

Secondly, the president had “a clear mission of Islamising this country and that this is of priority before the middle of this year.” The political part of the document ended with these words:

*We seriously suspect that the only reason for restructuring the armed forces, which is predominantly Christian population but...Muslim in leadership and command, is to gradually phase out Christians from the armed forces and use the control so secured for the declaration of Nigeria as an Islamic state.*

The signatories included not only three bishops, but also Tanko Yusuf.

The National Executive Committee of CAN addressed the same problem in a communiqué around the same time as the Kaduna CAN letter to Babangida. It accused the government of not living up to the constitution by favouring Muslims. This time

it counted thirty-nine “top functionaries recently announced” of which twenty-six (two-thirds) were Muslims, while a total of twenty-eight—two Christians and twenty-six Muslims—hailed from the North. This was a strong imbalance clearly favouring Islam over against Christianity and the north over against the south. CAN noted that “the powerful ministries” went to Muslims, “while emasculated ministries are assigned to Christians.” It also observed that “all service chiefs are Muslims.” While CAN encouraged Christians to take peaceful action, it also stated, “we expect the government to take appropriate steps to redress the imbalance ...at the earliest possible date.”<sup>53</sup>

## ▲ DISCRIMINATION IN AMENITIES

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Another major complaint of Christians is that the various governments provide more amenities, licences or permits for Muslims than they do for Christians. They spend public funds for the benefit of Muslims on a grand scale while Christians go begging. This issue covers a wide range of concerns. It is, according to Christians, a blatant case of government partiality.

### 1. CHURCH BUILDINGS AND MOSQUES

The issue of church buildings provoked much heat over the years and continues to do so even into the new century. Among the more prominent problems are getting land and building permits, government-sponsored vandalism, proximity to mosques, mosques built at government expense on public properties, and Christian insistence on church buildings where government has constructed mosques.

Minchakpu alleged that

*most state governments in northern Nigeria do not allow the acquisition of land for the building of churches. You can never be allowed to get a certificate-of-occupancy for a parcel of land*

*for the building of a church. And this is because most of these governments are controlled by Muslims.*

These governments “use public funds belonging to all the adherents of all religions in the country in favour of Islam to the detriment of Christianity and others.”<sup>54</sup>

The NIPSS list of classic Christian complaints about government anti-Christian actions provides some examples of the denial of permission to build churches. These examples are also reported in the 1982 Memo of CAN to the Kano State Government, a state that generates more Christian complaints than any other. The Kano government took eight years to give approval for rebuilding St. George’s Church! This, of course, led to the 1982 rampage. CAN complained that even though Christians were the majority in Kano’s *sabon gari*, there were many more mosques and Muslim praying grounds than churches—sixty-three versus thirty-five, to be exact.

The CAN Memo also reported that three church buildings were pulled down by Kano authorities, while one had to delay completion since the case went to court. The Memo reported that eight churches were burnt during the rampage of 1982, along with a Christian bookshop and “other Christian properties.”<sup>55</sup>

Kano State has produced many tales. Christians in the LGA of Sumaila requested permission to build. They were told to produce 300 signatures of people in the area who were in favour of such a building. The letter was to be routed through the local village head.<sup>56</sup> The Kano State Ministry of Land and Survey instructed the Roman Catholic Church “to stop further developments” on their Kundila Housing Estate building project, even though they had received permission earlier. The stated reason was “a protest by the local people residing around the area.” The church was consoled with the promise that “you will be communicated with further on the issue in due course.”<sup>57</sup> The next year, the church received notice that permission had been withdrawn

altogether, for the Ministry had received “several petitions and letters of protests.” “The situation has now reached an alarming position that the Commissioner...has no alternative than to revoke the Right of Occupancy for the interest of peace and fair play.” However, as before, the Ministry posed as the personification of encouragement: “You are advised to select any suitable site within or near any predominantly Christian community and submit for our immediate consideration, please.”<sup>58</sup> No further comment needed! The people, it must be understood, are overwhelmingly Muslim.

The NIPSS report continued,

*The Christians regard such demands as delaying tactics. They say that even when they submit such signatures, their authenticity is usually questioned by the authorities, who sometimes put up other conditions such as the demand that the signatories should be indigenes of Kano State.*

The members of these churches are mostly Southern immigrants often without a single indigene amongst them! So it will never happen. Even the noblest features of grassroots democracy can be distorted into oppressive instruments.

The Kano shenanigans against Christian churches have no end. Christians accuse authorities of limiting “their constitutional freedom of worship by attempting to decide how many churches they ought to have.” For example, the request for a church in Wudil was turned down because “the one in Garko is sufficient to serve your purposes.” Garko is thirty to thirty-five kilometres away!<sup>59</sup>

Then there is the practice of Muslims building a mosque next to a church. They will mount loudspeakers on them and leave them blaring during church services.

At the end of the millennium these Muslim shenanigans in Kano were still going on. Minchakpu tells us that in 1999 the Kano government had marked 150 churches for demolition. The govern-

ment had written a letter to the churches that charged “the premise is being used as an illegal place of worship, because the authorities never granted permission for such use.” Muslims in Kano were saying “that the spread of the churches is obviously unregulated and even unwelcome.” Efforts to have the decision rescinded were not successful at the time the report was published.<sup>60</sup>

Muslims also attempted occasionally to destroy existing churches. Reports from the news service Compass Direct that most likely originate from Minchakpu and which I will treat as such, tell of various Muslim attempts to get rid of existing churches. The Muslim Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu Gambari, allegedly called on the government to “relocate all Christian churches out of Ilorin and to ban the sale of land for buildings to all Christians”! No explanations were given for the call, but it heightened tensions in the city. Pastor Sunday Omabamu referred to it as “an irresponsible act” that goes against the constitution, a favourite Christian refrain.<sup>61</sup> A similar story is told of Abuja, but for this you have to turn to a later paragraph.

A bizarre incident took place in Zaria; only a few weeks prior to the Kafanchan ruckus, the Zaria local government was preparing to build a mosque on the grounds of the Anglican St. Michel’s Church! Not only did this involve the government in building a place of worship, but it also was a blatant attempt to take over a Christian compound for Muslim purposes! They withdrew from this hostile and unbelievable act only “after a clear and certain message” from the Christian community was sent to them about the implications of such an action.<sup>62</sup> Sometimes one just gets stuck for lack of words or comprehension....

Wilson Sabiya was an aggressive champion of Christians over against an aggressive Muslim governor, who was building mosques with government funds on public properties throughout Gongola state. Sabiya, together with his CAN secretary, Kenneth Eze, wrote a strong letter of protest to the governor. The letter dealt with two issues, namely, that of the mosque on public grounds

and the governor's demand to erase a Christian notice on a private bus. The issues themselves and the strong feelings they aroused are so well put that I can serve you no better than to include the document as Appendix 7A.

In 1989, they wrote a follow-up letter that is attached as Appendix 7B. It dealt with the same unfinished issue of the building of mosques and churches and some additional ones. The governor did not respond to either of these letters, except with harassment—the illegal arrest of Sabiya in a futile attempt to silence him.

Reasons for the government's displeasure were not only the letters but also Sabiya's being in possession of confidential government documents. Sabiya explained that civil servants are oath-bound to support the government to do justice. This implies that they are obligated to prevent her from injustice. If they can do this by leaking confidential documents, then they are doing their duty. Sabiya was released quickly due to the hordes of youth and women who trooped to the Government House to demand his release. They ignored the pleadings of their Bishop David Windibiziri to practise patience and proceeded with their march. It became very clear to the government that if they did not release him forthwith, they would have serious disruptions on their hands. And so Sabiya was soon reunited with his family.

Sabiya and CAN began to sue the government at various fronts, including one to force the government to either build a chapel at the Yola Government House or to demolish the mosque there. In at least one of the cases, the court ruled in favour of CAN by declaring the government action a "flagrant violation" of the rights of Christians. On September 3, 1993, Chief Judge B.S. Bansi of the Yola High Court of Justice made the following ruling:

*The act of constructing a mosque at the Government House out of the public fund of Gongola State without the corresponding construction of the church for the applicant and those he represented who are equally citizens of*

*Nigeria–Gongola State and the co-owners of the said public fund, is in my judgement a flagrant violation of their right under the 1979 Constitution.*

The ruling included the provisions that the church should be similar to the mosque in quality and funded by the state government. It also included a caution against “further promulgation of discriminatory policies by the state government.”

This ruling, Minchakpu commented, “marks the watershed of the long battle waged by CAN against the discriminatory policies promulgated and implemented by successive administrations.” He jubilated, “the glaring evidence of discrimination against Christians has now been brought to light.” He invited the federal government to stop the discrimination against Christians practised throughout the North.<sup>63</sup>

Sabiya vowed that wherever CAN saw a mosque built in a public place, they would build a church there. He cited the example of Takum town, where Muslims were building a mosque in the motor park. When Christians also started to build a church, the government stopped both projects. The same thing happened in Mubi and in Jos. Paul Gindiri, a wealthy businessman, popular evangelist and activist in Jos, built a church in the Bauchi Motor Park in Jos without seeking a permit, when Muslims built a mosque on the premise. The building of a mosque on the Jos Polo Ground was stopped when Gindiri started sending his tippers with supplies for the foundation of a church there.

In spite of his unpleasant experiences with Muslims, Sabiya denied having a quarrel with them. It was not a question of religion versus religion, he commented, but “between government and religion. Every religion will try to influence government, but it is up to government to be fair to all sides.”<sup>64</sup>

Sabiya was one of the more activistic clergy who did not hesitate to take the government bull by the horns. As evidenced by his

ecumenical positions in both CAN and TEKAN, he had the approval, if not admiration, of his colleagues in other denominations. Victor Musa of ECWA described the reaction of the Gongola Christians as “excellent.” He pointed out that if it had been a Christian governor arresting a Muslim of Sabiya’s standing, the federal government “would have pounded down heavily on such a governor.” The Gongola Christians did not take up arms, but “they took up their Bibles, which is the greatest arm. That is a good demonstration of the Christian spirit.”<sup>65</sup>

A prominent Christian lecturer who had been a member of the 1977 Constituent Assembly, Ayuba J. Wudiri similarly gave kudos to Gongola State branch of CAN. With respect to mosques, in the course of arguing against the government’s erecting them, he waded across a wide range of issues and arguments that should be very familiar to readers of this series by now. Allow me to quote:

*Government has no business at all building mosques or churches. It is the responsibility of the various religious groups and therefore government is wrong in taking over the affairs of a religious body. Nigeria is a secular state, whether you like it or not. Call it multi-religious, but it is a secular state and the Constitution spells this out that government should not engage in religious affairs. The question of religious crises...has always been with the government. It is the government that has been precipitating religious crises. It is government officials, the police, the military and such other agencies who have been using their position to advance the cause of Islam in this country. We have documents to show this. It is governments—military or civilian—that have been deliberately waging jihad against the people.*

Wudiri continued his comments,

*The action which CAN took is normal. What else do you do when you see that the government, which is supposed to be neutral is favouring a particular religion and the governor*

*acting as if he were a governor of Muslims? CAN's position is in order and it is legitimate. CAN should go the full length to see that justice is done, and that is to see that a chapel is built in the Government House to show that the Christians are human beings, to show that the Christians have a right to government money and whatever government is going to use it for should be fair.<sup>66</sup>*

Leaders move on and, in Nigeria at least, states are re-arranged or renamed. Sabiya's place as chairman was taken over by Dennis Gereng; Gongola State was disassembled; Yola became the capital of a new state, Adamawa, with deep historical roots in Muslim slavery. Five years after Sabiya began his crusade the issue was still brewing, with Gereng in charge of the state CAN. Though a court had ordered the government to build a church in the same compound, with the contract to be awarded within eight weeks, the order had not yet been carried out by early 1994. CAN was now suing the government for contempt of court. In the meantime, CAN was waiting to complete this case before it would introduce the next one about another mosque.

The problem in Adamawa, insisted Gereng, was a deliberate one. When that additional mosque was built and CAN complained to the new governor, Salihu Abubakar, the latter responded that Christians should wait till they get a Christian governor, who could then build them a church. Thus, Gereng continued, "you can see the type of discrimination that Christians face in this state, despite the fact that they constitute the majority."

Throughout all of this, Gereng emphasized the motive and concern of Christians. The issue was that the constitution provides for fundamental human rights and equality for all. It does not allow for discrimination or preferred treatment. The government is supposed to treat all people, ethnic groups and religions equally. Government house belongs to all and so, if Muslims need a place

to worship there, Christians have an equal right to it. “We want to make sure,” he further explained, “that, whatever the government does to the Muslims in this state, is done to the Christians. This is because we believe that we are in the majority. So we will not allow that treatment meted to us. We want to make sure that our rights are given to us.”<sup>67</sup>

We move over to Plateau State’s LGA of Wase, where the LG built a mosque within the premises of the local government administration. The situation in Plateau State being different from that of Yola, the local CAN chapter took an approach directly opposite to that taken by Sabiya. It is more efficient to simply reproduce the letter from CAN to the Wase authorities than to retell the story.

ERECTION OF RELIGIOUS BUILDING  
IN THE LGC SECRETARIAT

*Sequel to our meeting with you on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1989, on the above subject, as the body charged with articulating, projecting and protecting the interest of Christians, we observe as follows: That there has been a ban by [the] Government of Plateau State on the erection of religious buildings in public places, which has not been lifted.*

- 1. That given the volatile nature of religious issues in this country, the erection of a religious building (mosque) in a public establishment like the secretariat does not augur well for this time in which government...is trying to douse the fire of religious imbroglio.*
- 2. That the erection of a mosque in the secretariat is a deliberate act of provocation.*
- 3. That CAN does not find amusing the suggestion that Christians should ask for a place of worship of their own, because this makes nonsense of the gravity of the issue.*

*Government cannot pretend to be unaware of the problem this portends for peaceful existence. What happens where Traditional Religionists, Animists, Atheists, etc. demand for a place of worship of their own?*

4. *That the circumstances surrounding the approval of the said site and subsequent building were obnoxious, nebulous and, therefore, unacceptable. For instance, the site plan and what-ever else was done and approved without the knowledge of the Councillor for Works, Land and Survey.*
5. *That Wase has had an administration spanning 13 years and all this while the Muslims who work in the LGC Secretariat have always worshipped. Why must they now have a building/mosque which by its very existence imposes itself on non-Muslims and indeed, intimidates and harasses them?*

*From the foregoing, we are convinced that the mosque being erected...is part of the grand design to harass and intimidate non-Muslims. What does look like part of the scheme to enhance the perpetration of this evil is demonstrated in the composition of the Local Government Traditional Council<sup>68</sup> which does not have a single Christian, in spite of numerous non-Muslim chiefs in the area. Consequently, we have resolved as follows:*

1. *That the mosque presently being erected be demolished forthwith. And we like to make it unequivocally clear that this is non-negotiable.*
2. *That as a matter of priority, the composition of the Traditional Council provide for a Christian member, as we do not believe that issues affecting us Christians would receive favourable consideration [otherwise].*

3. *That we are strongly committed to the principles of justice and fair play and, if need be, are ready to stake our very lives in the pursuit of same.*

*We do trust that you and your council members would see the wisdom that had been applied elsewhere in avoiding the aiding and abetting of any situation that would lead to unnecessary confrontation.*

*God bless and thank you.*

The letter was addressed to the Chairman and copied to all political and ecclesiastical leaders in the state and local government.<sup>69</sup>

Though NIPSS is quite capable of defending itself, I have not found any evidence that it fought against the building of a mosque on its premises. The response of the Jos Christian community was basically to take it in stride and to gather the resources to build a church on the campus as well. Nevertheless, three people took it upon themselves to complain to CAN, Kaduna State Branch, about the “misuse of public funds to build a mosque at NIPSS.” They wanted CAN “to ascertain the legality of building a mosque at NIPSS at the cost of public money.”<sup>70</sup>

Along with a cover letter, CAN Kaduna forwarded the letter to Jabanni Mambula, in his capacity as Secretary of CAN Plateau State, and asked the latter to check whether the mosque was built with public or private funds. If the latter, “we need not raise any eyebrow about it. If otherwise, CAN in Plateau should take the matter up with the appropriate authorities.” So, the issue was not so much the presence of a mosque on public ground as the source of the funds.<sup>71</sup>

Jos-based TEKAN with the same Mambula as general secretary, also recognised the problem. Christians, its Study Committee wrote in 1987, “are clearly treated as being inferior to the Muslims.” Muslims do not need certificates of occupancy for their

mosques and their mosques have “proliferated in government ministries and parastatals.” Similarly, public educational institutions have mosques but not chapels.

Nassarawa State is a break-off from Plateau that was engineered, I understand, by Muslims who were unhappy under Plateau’s Christian majority. Akwanga is the second largest town in the state and is largely Christian—99%, according to the local CAN chapter. The local government began building a mosque in its secretariat. However, Peter Maikasuwa, chairman of the local CAN chapter, wrote a letter of protest to the local government council, warning them of discriminating against the Christian majority. The letter said, “CAN does not oppose freedom of worship, but CAN is totally opposed to the building of a mosque within the secretariat. The secretariat is a public place, and so, no religious group can be allowed to construct a place of worship there.” The chairman of the local government claimed that the building had been approved by the Security and Peace Committee, a body comprised of both Christians and Muslims, but an unnamed member of that body denied that it had approved the mosque. When building proceeded, CAN decided to destroy the mosque and, apparently, assigned the job to Christian youth. The youths promptly destroyed the structure on December 6, 1997. The government detained six of them. The next day, more Christians took to the streets “to protest the Islamisation policies.” The report ended by stating further construction had been “suspended.”<sup>72</sup>

This incident took place in the middle of already escalating tension and violence between Christian and Muslim ethnic groups in Nassarawa State. Conflict between the Christian Bassas and the Muslim Igbirras, according to Minchakpu, began “as a result of government political policies that favoured Muslims over Christians.” There were the familiar issues of Christian versus Muslim chieftaincies with arrangements mostly in favour of Muslims, the appointment of Muslim leaders over Christian areas, use of public funds for

mosques on government property, prevention of the teaching of CRK while IRK was allowed and, finally, media domination by Muslims. The basic problem was “the government’s inability to encourage co-existence between religious and ethnic groups.” Victor Musa, at this time president of ECWA, a prominent denomination in the area, signed an ECWA statement that stated, “We have observed that the government has been promoting Islam over and above Christianity.” The terrible result of all this unrest and anger was the destruction of some seventy churches in the area by Igbirra Muslims and “5000 Christians displaced or killed.”<sup>73</sup>

The virus of discrimination even entered academia. Christians alleged that the authorities at Bayero University in Kano refused them permission to build a chapel by one of their favourite devices: dragging out the issue. The Chapel Building Committee expressed “genuine fear that the delay may be indefinite, in view of the known and undisguised opposition to...a chapel” as “expressed by certain sections of the Muslim community. The claim has even been heard that Bayero University is an Islamic University.” The Committee regarded the issue as a “test both of the right to religious worship enshrined in the constitution and of the true Federal character of Bayero University,” which happens to be located in the Muslim environment of Kano.<sup>74</sup>

The issue went to other quarters in academia. Kaduna CAN reminded President Babangida that there is a mosque at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka, a campus in the middle of Christian Ibos, while “a church at Bayero University and Usman Dan Fodio Universities are taboos,” both of them located in the far Muslim North. The Sokoto and Katsina state governments cancelled fund launchings for the building of churches on campuses within their jurisdictions because of Muslim threats of violence. CAN wrote,

*The conclusions to be drawn here are that Christians under your administration can enjoy their freedom of worship only*

*at the convenience of Muslims or that the lives and property of Christians can only be guaranteed by the negation of their right to freedom of worship.*

Southern universities were not spared friction and violence. According to C. O. Williams, the escalation of violence due to the OIC predicament led to violence centering on the Chapel of the Resurrection on the campus of the University of Ibadan, again in Oyo State. Muslims burnt the “Statue of Resurrected Christ” just outside the chapel. They also demanded that the cross on the same property be removed because it could be seen from within the mosque, which was built across the street long after all these Christian structures were put in place.

Christians are a varied lot and often give conflicting signals. One Mike Oko reported that the federal government provided land at the Lagos airport for a church building—a public property. When he announced this development to the congregation of Saint Augustine’s Catholic Church in Ikeja, Lagos, the Reverend John Iyere praised the government to the sky. He explained that the government intends “to maintain the status quo on the issue of religion in the country,” the very thing that CAN was denying. While showering his praises on the government, Iyere predicted that “the step would ensure unity, cooperation and understanding among the nation’s Muslims and Christians.” Not much evidence of that, unfortunately.

The country’s Muslim leadership showed its hand in unmistakable ways in its first religious steps in Abuja, when that city was still in the budding stage. With undue haste and without going through the established protocol, the government constructed Muslim praying grounds in the city and, soon afterwards, a mosque on a plot that had been earmarked for a school—all with government funds and labour. According to Matthew Kukah, no one had applied for these facilities, but there they were. Christians meanwhile “were busy going through...formalities and waiting to

be allocated lands that did not seem to be easily available.” Within another year cooperation between the government and the Muslim community led to the construction of a giant mosque that was destined to become the National Mosque. All these amenities were strategically located within a mile of the city centre. Consider, in addition, that the main entrances into the new city were designed according to Muslim style,<sup>75</sup> and you can understand the nervousness of Christians with respect to the future of their new capital. When President Shagari was asked whether or not this indicated a strong Muslim bias, he replied, “It is only fitting that I, as the president of this country, have a place of worship that befits my status. My vice president...is a Christian. If he also wishes to have a befitting place of worship, that is up to him.”<sup>76</sup>

That betrayed a seriously cavalier attitude towards religion and spending. Almost all Christian denominations have worked hard to get property in Abuja, the new capital city. The NKST<sup>77</sup> obtained a property and spent some millions on buildings before the Muslim World League grabbed it away from them. While the church was negotiating with the federal minister in charge of these developments, the League continued its manoeuvres, ostensibly without the minister’s knowledge. One day “a team of armed policemen,” along with government staff led by three highly placed Muslims, came and “bulldozed all the standing structures.” Muslims launched their \$43 million project that same week with a famous speaker from Saudi Arabia. The church wrote a strong protest to the government, accusing it of “injustice, religious and political favouritism.” It demanded a new plot and compensation. It received and accepted the new allocation, for it was “bigger and in a more strategic position.” The question was raised why Muslims did not take this better plot. The suggested answer was, “They are in power and want to display their naked powers. Investigation has proven that the government has allocated a high number of plots to the Muslims for mosques, and only few to Christians. The ratio is 4:1.”

A. T. Mbachirin, editor of NKST's newsletter, announced that NKST could not compete with the overseas funds of Muslims, but he did appeal to NKST's friends, especially those abroad, to come to her rescue.<sup>78</sup>

Some years later, according to Minchakpu, authorities in Abuja demolished twelve churches. As elsewhere, the government claimed they were illegal structures, built in the wrong places, and which did not fit the plan for the new city. Christians claimed that some of these churches had been in existence for fifteen years or more. Ola Makinde of the Abuja branch of CAN wondered why the government pulled them down just before they were to hand over power to a new civilian regime. He felt that it was because the city administrator was a Muslim who wanted to get rid of them. The government had been demolishing churches for two years already, he claimed.<sup>79</sup>

There is yet another aspect to this issue of buildings. Though the basic principal demand of the Christian community, as represented by the "fathers," is for governments to keep their hands off religion, pragmatism and competition with Muslims for government funds often drives Christians in a different direction. They demand funds for many Christian activities such as education, health care and even pilgrimage. So it is with the National Ecumenical Centre project. The government wanted to have a national cathedral and a national mosque in the new capital city Abuja that would befit the splendour of the Nigerian nation. Elsewhere in this volume there is reference to the way President Shagari, without going through the normal channels, and with great urgency, amassed resources to build the mosque that dominates the Abuja skyline. Christians could not agree on the cathedral idea and thus turned it instead into a National Ecumenical Centre. The government funds were not forthcoming as spontaneously for the Centre as they had for the mosque under Shagari.

Thus, the CAN National Executive Committee appealed to President Babangida: “We express our profound gratitude for the keen interest which Mr. President has shown in our project. Obviously, the very high costs of the materials as well as the devaluation of naira have rendered the ten million naira donation far less useful than it would have been if the Government had released it to us as soon as it was promised.” Then they went on to request an additional twenty million naira, for just the first phase of the project would cost some eighty million naira. At the end of the request, CAN added a little dig: “Incidentally, we sincerely trust that the government will make the new federal capital a full-fledged symbol of unity, genuinely welding together the kaleidoscopic variety of tribes, tongues and creeds in Nigeria.”<sup>80</sup>

The money has been granted, to my knowledge, up to forty million, but in 2003, the building still stood there uncompleted in the shadow of a majestic mosque as a shameful monument to Christian disunity and corruption *à la* Tanko Yusuf. In mid-2002, CAN planned yet another fund raiser for the project at which event President Obasanjo was present and promised to support it towards its completion. The next year, they launched the campaign for N2.5 billion!<sup>81</sup> Clearly, in spite of decades of fruitless and shameful internal politics that, according to Tanko Yusuf, included financial corruption, the zest for the project had not diminished! Let us pray that this time it is zest for the Centre itself, not for the money.

In the meantime, a new problem is rearing its ugly head in Lagos. The state government has outlawed the use of residential buildings as house churches, while any new church buildings require government approval. There are, as always, two sides to this story. Kola Animashaun, an official in the state’s city planning office, explained that the measures were taken to create a “peaceful environment.” He added that churches in residential areas could no longer “hold all-night programmes such as prayer vigils unless their worship halls installed soundproofing.” He threatened to

demolish “illegal church buildings being used as house churches,” since approval had never been given for them. Mike Okonkwo, president of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, explained this development as a “ploy by the Muslim government in the state to persecute Christians and deny them their right to worship God.”<sup>82</sup>

Part of this legislation seems, at first glance, reasonable. Of course, approval is needed for new buildings and, of course, noise pollution needs to be contained. All-night prayer meetings can become pretty rowdy in Nigeria. At the same time, Nigerian cities are full of illegal buildings. With religious volatility and noise pollution both at such high levels throughout Nigeria, it would not be wise for the government to start their clean up with church buildings. So, I cannot help wonder whether we are given the entire story. Both Christians and Muslims are prone to quick accusations these days. At the same time, I wonder how noise pollution laws can be applied to Christians, when Muslims throughout the country continue to broadcast their call to prayer at five in the morning with their loudspeakers that penetrate every bedroom in the neighbourhood, Christian and Muslim. Perhaps we are left with only Okonkwo’s explanation. But then, it would still be unwise on the part of the government as well as unjust. Such blatant partiality would be beyond comprehension—except when one is aware of the ease and blindness with which Nigerian Muslims in power sometimes impose their religion without any qualms or second thought. The question continues to plague me throughout this study: Is this Islam or just certain types of unfaithful Muslims? Akbar S. Ahmed, writer of *Los Angeles Times*’ “best non-fiction book of the year,” opts for the latter. If so, where is the moderate majority to stop such blatant discrimination?

## 2. PILGRIMAGE

The issue of government involvement in pilgrimages has been a constant irritant. In Volume 2 we saw that Muslims insist on deep

government involvement. They regard it as a government duty to support their religion, including this feature, and as a Muslim human right. On the other hand, we have seen earlier in this volume that all the Christian “fathers” oppose such government involvement and regard it as an expression of government partiality towards Islam. Correcting this impartiality demands government withdrawal from such religious affairs.

Around 1990, CAN threatened to sue President Babangida to challenge the legality of the 1989 decree which established the Nigerian Pilgrims Commission. In an unidentified newspaper clipping from that era, we are informed that it was Okogie and C. O. Williams, at the time national president and general secretary respectively, who filed the suit. The decree allegedly had several major problems. First, it was against the secular status of the country for the government to be involved in such private religious affairs. Secondly, since it was to serve only Muslims, it was a discriminatory measure, spending common funds for a section of the population. The measure further gave the impression that Islam is the state religion. Finally, the measure contradicted a recent pledge the president had made to the Roman Catholic bishops that he would not show favouritism to any religion.

One Ogueri wrote a pungent argument against such government involvement. The government, he reported, had decided to subsidise the 1992 pilgrimage by some fifty percent. For one thing, the decision included giving pilgrims a very large exchange rate advantage by pegging the naira to the dollar at about 11:1 instead of the going rate of 18.5:1. This meant that any nairas exchanged would yield many more dollars than normally—close to double. Some thirty thousand pilgrims were to benefit to the tune of \$1500 from the subsidy, which would cost the government a total of N380 million.

This largesse flew in the face of the ongoing economic recovery programme, which included removal of subsidies on various

social services. This exception to a much-touted policy “creates room for suspicion,” for it brought up the question of the government’s seriousness with respect to its general policies. The Nigerian economy, Ogueri argued, was in shambles, largely due to government policies. Industries cried out for subsidies to survive the economic chaos created by government, but the latter refused to heed them. And then such largesse to be spent on one social service, a hotly disputed one at that? If this amount were divided among all Nigerians, he proposed, each would get “something close to N4 million.” The subsidy is a “misplacement of priority” and “its religious implications cannot be ignored.” Please read the arguments that have by now become traditional on the part of Christians:

*Nigeria is a secular society by constitutional provision and should not accord any recognition to any religion. It is unfortunate that federal administrations have taken decisions and carried out actions which approximate to the elevation of other religious groups. Government’s role in matters of religion should stop at the level of ensuring a hitch-free hajj operation and not using taxpayers’ money to finance such a costly venture. Government has a duty to distinguish between its traditional and legitimate role as an institution for public peace and its illegitimate role as the custodian of the religions of a segment of the society.*<sup>83</sup>

Ibrahim Yaro blasted the government for its support of the Muslim pilgrimage: “By far the most blatant and defiant government act of favouritism on behalf of Muslims comes with government involvement in Muslim pilgrimage.” Then he gave statistics as to the number of Nigerian Muslim pilgrims from 1968 to 1985. The lowest number was twenty thousand in 1984, while the highest was one hundred twenty thousand in 1980, figures that probably reflect the rapid downturn of the Nigerian economy in the early 80s. Note, Yaro urged, how many “have poured out of the country largely at the

taxpayers expense.” As far as he was concerned, their numbers may triple, but at “non-Muslim taxpayers’ expense?” He estimated that in 1981, the government spent some 130 million naira at a time when the naira was still a strong currency, not far from the dollar. The amount did not include the charges for the huge piles of excess baggage with which these pilgrims return, often contraband, according to frequent insinuations in the press. In 1984, the low year, “despite the austerity,” Muslim pilgrims were given a special foreign exchange allotment of N800 each, while the mere 1300 Christian pilgrims were allowed only N100 each “by the same government.” Each Christian received one-eighth of what each Muslim received!

Yaro called this

*a callous abuse of power. It is difficult to see how such a government could even remotely claim to be working towards unity, peace, harmony and justice for all. Yet, despite all these unjust privileges granted to Muslims, they still have the audacity to demand even our blood. And the rest of us have been keeping mute for the sake of peace. Yet the Muslims would not leave us alone.<sup>84</sup>*

Now, I am giving you fair warning and urge you to brace yourself. After the threatened suit, the CAN National Executive Committee wrote the following to President Babangida:

*We warmly appeal to the federal government to promulgate, as a matter of utmost urgency, a decree which will establish a Pilgrims’ Commission that will cater for the welfare of pilgrims to all the “Holy Lands.” Such a decree will help to promote a peaceful atmosphere for the practice of the various religions in Nigeria. It may also help to create confidence in the federal government’s declared desire to foster religious tolerance and create no impression which can be interpreted as preference of one particular religion.<sup>85</sup>*

CAN did explain her reasoning. It preferred the government to “steer clear” of pilgrimage affairs, but if support is available to Muslims, then it must be for Christians as well. If the government insists on handling pilgrimages, “then, whatever facilities the government accords one religious group must be made available to another religious group. Otherwise a most unpleasant impression will be created that the government prefers Muslims.”

Already there were problems with the Christian pilgrimage. Some Christian pilgrims absconded in Israel, causing difficulties between the two governments. There were whispers that Christians would be barred from going on pilgrimages because of this. Another problem was that the Chairman of the National Task Force on Pilgrimage allegedly attached little importance to Christians. Whenever Christians came to see him, he was never around. CAN felt that the solution to the latter was to create two boards, one for each religion.<sup>86</sup>

The Christian pilgrimage programme was established in the late 1980s. Today, the federal government and many states have their Christian pilgrim boards, but since Christian pilgrims are far fewer than their Muslim counterparts, the government money spent on this project is still much less. Furthermore, the establishment of these boards can hardly be said to have promoted “a peaceful atmosphere.” If anything, tension has increased steadily since then. But the Christians did get their boards and some of their money, for what is indeed a private spiritual journey. I have a considerable number of friends and acquaintances among the pastors who went almost completely at government expense to serve as pilgrimage leaders. I also know at least one who has been appointed to a state level Christian pilgrim board position who unashamedly advocates *in church conventions* that Christians should press money from the government as much as they can. After all, do not Muslims do the same? From where, I cannot help asking, do Christians take their cues? Has Islam become their new source of revelation?

Matthew Kukah would have none of this. In a speech delivered to the Fourth Assembly of CAN in 1995 in Abeokuta<sup>87</sup> and published by *NS*, he spoke about the “embarrassment” caused by Christian involvement in the “pilgrimage business.” It has done “more harm than good” to our faith. We wait, he wrote, “until Muslims decide on what they want for their faith before we start saying: Well, the government has done it for Muslims; it must do it for us too.” He continued,

*This kind of reactionary policies only increases tension among us. Why have we been unable to articulate our own policies ourselves in keeping with the dictates of our faith? Since we have started these imitations, we have continued to fumble about from one policy to another.*

It is “purely political expediency” that has led to confusion among Christians. They should “show the difference between economic and political opportunism and faith. Suffice it to say that the time is now for Christians to wake up from their slumber and sincerely examine how they want to live their faith in a plural society like Nigeria.”<sup>88</sup>

### 3. PUBLIC UTTERANCES

C. O. Williams reported that by the mid-70s “attacks on Christians had gathered considerable momentum.” Muslim preachers began preaching sermons denouncing the Christian faith and ridiculing “cherished Christian beliefs.” They used all the government media for this purpose. He adduced an example from *NN*, which stated,

*The Islamic system of education is the best for the world, because the Western form in particular has not only failed to produce people of good character and sense of commitment, but has accelerated the development of corruption and aided the spread of vices.*<sup>89</sup>

Williams took this to be a serious provocation against Christianity, though I am not so sure it was far off the mark.

In the pre-CAN years, the CCN churches, located mostly in the South, would react mainly by drawing the government's attention to such "totally unprovoked and unnecessary" words and actions. As mentioned earlier, when the *Sunday Times* published an article entitled, "The Bible Is Not That Special,"<sup>90</sup> the government "could not help but publish its reaction." It wrote that it felt "very concerned about this and a series of articles of this nature, which have the effect of arousing strong religious sentiments." It warned that "these types of publications are strongly condemned and the FMG will continue to ensure that the religious harmony existing in this country is not disturbed." Muslims were infuriated, according to Williams. Instead of retreating, "they intensified their provocative operations against the Christians, especially in the northern part." In July and August of 1977, "several places of worship in Yola were destroyed by "some Muslim fanatics."

Haruna Dandaura complained about restrictions on Christian preaching. Kano's *sabon gari* is full of churches, he wrote, but Muslims come in and preach freely without anyone disturbing them. In fact, they can safely go and preach anywhere in Nigeria. However, Christians "dare not enter the city of Kano to preach: one is mobbed immediately."

The Kano CAN Memo provides some concrete examples of such incidents in 1982. In response to Christian preaching, a church in the Rogo area was burnt by the local people. The benches of a mission near the Kano-Municipal Brigade were allegedly confiscated by the district police officer named Mutari. That same officer also allegedly arrested, beat and locked up several people from the Assemblies of God church in *Sabon Gari*, Kano.<sup>91</sup>

"Muslims reserve their right to propagate their religion and convert more to Islam." So, Dandaura demands, "must the Christians."<sup>92</sup>

Oyeniran of UGCAN fame took a strong stand against a ban on public preaching that was instituted by some states in order to stop preachers from offending adherents of the other religion. There was a good reason at least to control open air preachers, if not ban them, for they often displayed a lack of wisdom, respect and tolerance. Nevertheless, Oyeniran would have nothing to do with it. He dubbed it “spiritually unconstitutional” and called on Christians to disobey the ban. He declared:

*There is no government that can ban or restrict God's means of saving sinners. You cannot because of counterfeits ban the service of God. Any government banning public preaching is in disobedience to the edict of God and true believers of Christ would not obey any government that disobeys God's law, for it is written, “we must obey God rather than men.” Government can be changed, the constitution could be amended. But there is no nation that can change or amend God's constitution and find rest. It is the decree against God's law which says, “Go ye.” The idea of banning public preaching is not the solution to religious crises.*

He urged that all states lift the ban “with immediate effect” so as to yield “to the wishes of the masses.”

The TEKAN Study Committee of 1987 also rejected any ban on public preaching. It “is meant to cater to the wishes of the Islamic fanatics,” it argued. “With the possible exception of Kafanchan, we are not aware of any riot which resulted from public preaching.” The ban, including that of holding processions, is “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.”

While it is enforced on Christians, “Muslims continue to block major streets 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.” All of this is the result of a government that protects Islam but is “insensitive to the feelings of Christians.”

Preaching is of course only one genre of public utterance. It has long been a Christian complaint that “certain categories of people of certain religious persuasions [read: Muslims] can make comments more than capable of causing civil strife and get away with it, but those who believe differently [read: Christians] and say so are incarcerated.” The complainant here is the Plateau State Youth Wing of CAN in a letter to the Commissioner of Police in Jos, but it could have been almost any Christian group. The letter, written during the tense days after the aborted Orkar coup, went on to say,

*We are in possession of a cassette...in which Muslims have come out to categorically state that they would train their youth in three days to wage war against Christians. We also recall the inflammatory comments of Gumi in a Quality Magazine interview to the effect that the country would have to be divided into two, should a Muslim fail to become head of state; and further that the only panacea for peace is for all the Christians to become Muslims. Recently too, Alhaji Sani Kontagora in a Newslink Magazine interview made similar comments. According to him, the presidency of this country is not for a southerner, except they come and kill all the people in the North. ...While the government was busy absolving religious leaders from the coup, Ibrahim Dasuki [the Sultan of Sokoto] said in a BBC and VCA<sup>93</sup> interview that he knows it was Christians who planned the coup and that he would deal with them accordingly.*

The writer commented that “Till this moment, there is no report of any of these people being questioned, not to talk of detaining

them. We object to this partial administration of justice.”<sup>94</sup> It is a sentiment heard frequently.

A related irritant is the freedom with which Muslims will deride the Christian view of Jesus, while they demand blood when a non-Muslim speaks about Islamic views, even if in a positive or neutral way. That was, after all, the Muslim excuse for beginning the Kafanchan riot. In a joint press release, TEKAN and ECWA complained bitterly about an Islamic weekly magazine that had an article in Hausa entitled, “*Matar Yesu Ta Je Katsina*,” which in English reads, “The Wife of Jesus Went to Katsina.” This write-up is described as “an outright provocation to Christians.” To make matters worse, in the same weekly, “these Islamic extremists” badmouthed the state’s military governor, a Christian, by telling him that he should realise that “Katsina is not his village.” Readers of Volume 1 will recognise the crowd of Yahaya in this incident. The signatories were especially offended that the federal government took no action and was silent. That meant “consent.” The release declared, “With such an Islamic extremism and government open hypocrisy, there shall never be peace, unity and progress in this country.”<sup>95</sup>

#### 4. EDUCATION

The educational sector is another battlefield. Major issues are the refusal to permit new schools, the taking over, Islamizing, renaming or closing existing Christian schools, the teaching of religion and the issue of uniforms. In previous pages we have already heard rumblings about these topics.

Professor Adamu Baikie, in a speech delivered at a CAN launching in 1987, aired the major complaint. “Our schools and colleges have been taken over by government and yet we see schools and colleges established under the umbrella of another religion being sponsored and entirely financed and administered by government.”<sup>96</sup> If Christian schools are not taken over, they may be closed down or denied permission to open.

In 1982, the Kano chapter of CAN accused the state government of taking over eight of their schools without paying compensation. Their names were all changed to obscure their Christian origins. Though the official syllabus provided for the teaching of CRK, it was in fact not taught in any of them, while between them these schools had twelve IRK teachers! Attempts to open new Christian primary and secondary schools “have been either frustrated or turned down for flimsy excuses.”<sup>97</sup>

Twenty years later the situation in Kano State remains ambiguous. On the one hand, however, there are many more Christian schools. Though in 1982, CAN complained about the difficulty of opening up new schools, by 2002, statistics in both Christian and secular press indicate that during the intervening years many Christian schools were opened. Adamu Muhammad Tahir, a government officer, reported the existence of 314 approved private schools with another 115 applications for additional ones. There were also 294 operating illegally. Those statistics show that much progress has been made, something that Christians would do well to acknowledge.

On the other hand, Christians report a wave of closures of schools and discrimination in Kano. In 2002, Minchakpu reported that the government had closed down 122 Christian schools on the grounds that they were operating illegally. Tahir claimed only twenty-four were closed and explained that the schools did not “fulfill the necessary requirements set by the government.” The government wanted to ensure that “only qualified teachers and standard educational materials were employed in educational institutions.” Some, according to him, had only one toilet for both genders, an issue to which especially Muslims would be very sensitive. Other schools were grossly overcrowded and terribly under-equipped: no desks or chairs. In addition, many such schools “had defaulted in the paying of levies and taxes payable by proprietors and their employees.” It was not, he

insisted, a matter of discrimination against Christians. In fact, he spoke of the government's "pre-occupation to ensure that all private schools" teach both CRK and IRK.<sup>98</sup>

That sounded more evenhanded than it really was. Anglican Bishop Zakka Nyam, for one, outrightly rejected these explanations. He responded that these closures "are part of the grand plan of Muslim politicians and their religious leaders to entrench Islam as state religion in Nigeria." It is part of the programme to implement the sharia. "They insist that Islamic religious knowledge must be made compulsory in Christians schools. How can this be?" he asked and continued,

*The government also says we must employ Islamic clerics to indoctrinate our children, and when we say no, they close down our schools and then claim that we have not met their educational standards. What kind of policies are these? Should we just embrace anti-Christian educational policies that are detrimental to our faith? No, this cannot happen.*<sup>99</sup>

A little over a month later, a Minchakpu report also indicated that the twenty-four school closures were due mainly because of their failure to teach IRK. Tahir stated that the law enforced the Islamic education policy and supported the closure of the schools. There would be more closures, he warned, unless "they adhere to the Islamic education policy, pay the required education taxes and employ Islamic clerics to teach Islam." The tax amounted to N16,000. In addition, there is the insistence on "enforcing the Islamic dress code."

Joseph Fadipe of CAN in Kano explained that these

*closures resulted from Christians resisting the government's discriminatory religious policies that favour Muslims over Christians. It is a plan to spread Islamic law—sharia—to Christian schools. They intend to foist Islam on our children*

*by all possible means. We refuse this manipulation of religion. We cannot accept the indoctrination of our children with a religion we do not ascribe to. We are determined to fight this injustice. We are considering legal action to seek for redress over this matter.*

In the meantime, the children no longer attend schools, we are told, while parents “fear for their future.”<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, Minchakpu does not tell us whether or not government schools and Muslim-sponsored schools have met all those requirements of tax, uniform, adequate equipment and CRK teachers. To ask the question is probably to answer it—for the uninitiated I should probably add: in the negative. Are they receiving the same treatment, closures and all? Let’s not ask too many questions! But, just in case Minchakpu lays his eyes on this page: please be a little more generous with your information—as you used to be in *TC*!

This latest Kano development is surprising in view of the repeated insistence and strong assurance of sharia advocates that sharia applies only to Muslims. Must we conclude that this assurance was a mere cover-up? It does not augur well for the future and only confirms what Christians have been warning about all along. This development is no surprise to them. In fact, it was expected; if not in this particular form then in some other, and if not in Kano, then in some other state—but eventually everywhere.

Ibrahim Yaro complained about the Kaduna government taking over a Catholic school and renaming it Queen Amina College. Matthew Hassan Kukah regarded this and other similar incidents as part of the campaign

*to undermine Christianity by its [Muslim government] attitude to Christian symbols. It is still remembered that in many institutions, after the government takeover, the chapels were turned either into dining halls or they were converted into recreation halls. Furthermore, the substitution of Christian*

*names with names that are of historical significance to the Muslims..., all these factors had created feelings of anger in the minds of many Christians.*

Christians resent this even more, according to Kukah, when they consider that Muslims themselves have contributed nothing to the educational scene in the country. Their only contribution has been Arabic schools that are of no consequence to non-Muslims. So they resort to stealing the Christian institutions and convert them for their own use.<sup>101</sup>

That is exactly what had happened in 1989 in Kwoi, a town in southern Kaduna State, not far from either Kafanchan or Zangon-Kataf—in other words, in an area marked by tense Christian–Muslim relations. The Government Girls’ Secondary School in the town, according to the local CAN chapter, was built on land for which the Christians hold the Certificate of Occupancy. Though my source does not indicate this, I suspect that the school itself was a victim of government takeover from the church. Now Muslim staff and students at the school want to launch an appeal fund to build a mosque on the premises. In a letter to the authorities, CAN threatened that such a launching would lead to “serious consequences.” Tensions rose in the community. Christians were alleged to have burnt some pages from the Qur’an and security forces moved in as a deterrent to violence. CAN continued its threats and warnings, but Muslims continued with their plans. It was argued that “chapels exist in all other similar institutions in the state” and that “every Nigerian has the right to practise her religion.” Denial of a mosque is denial of the Muslim religion.<sup>102</sup> Though I have not been able to follow this story to its conclusion, the incident is all too typical.

Few northern states were exempted from the educational struggle. On December 11, 1998, several hundreds of Muslims attacked three churches, burnt cars and looted shops belonging to

Christians in Maiduguri, Borno State. It was in protest against the government decision to allow the teaching of CRK in public schools, a decision it made in view of the fact that IRK was already a compulsory subject. This had been a controversial issue for years in this state. To avoid further violence, the measure was withdrawn. The governor, a Muslim, explained that he had approved this course because Nigeria is a secular country. However, he continued, “It appears some of our respected *ulamas* [Muslim leaders] have taken the matter out of proportion and have continued to orchestrate their clandestine campaign.” CAN reported that it had informed the government of this plan of the Muslims, but no precautions had been taken.<sup>103</sup> A spokesman declared, “There is no amount of intimidation, threat, or whatsoever that will stop the Christians in the state from requesting their constitutional and legitimate right of teaching CRK. We are all prepared to die for a better and truly peaceful tomorrow.”

Occasionally Muslims practise blatant violence with respect to Christian schools even in so-called “tolerant” Yoruba land. Kwara state has a large indigenous population of Yoruba, the only one in the North, and was at one time known as the North’s “Christian South,” according to Minchakpu’s story, “Jihad in Kwara.”<sup>104</sup>

He introduced the story as follows, “The Islamisation process which has been entrenched in most states in northern Nigeria, has now extended its tentacles to Kwara State.” The story was meant to expose “the manipulation which led to the closure of three Christian schools in Kwara and the battle by Christians in that state to free themselves from the firm grip of fanatical Muslims in the corridors of power.” The article itself began by pointing to various signs that Ilorin, the capital, has largely become a Muslim city.

There was a war raging between the state government and Christians over three Baptist schools. These and one community school were closed because they allegedly had not obtained written approval before starting. Christians immediately accused the gov-

ernment of discrimination against them. The fact was, according to Minchakpu, that they had received provisional approval. They met all the requirements and were recommended for full approval by the Inspectorate of Education. Final approval was long in waiting. In fact, the Ministry of Education took sixteen months before replying, but when it did, it was a rejection of the applications without reasons given. Before they were ordered closed, Hajia Halimat Yusuf, Commissioner of Education, had visited all three schools and remarked that they were “very impressive.” Subsequently, she informed the schools that they should be closed temporarily and later, after “the anomalies created by the ministry were resolved,” re-opened. They were closed. After further communication back and forth, the ministry demanded seven more “itemised particulars and documents” to reconsider. The Christians complained of double standards and religious intolerance, but they did submit the requested documents. Then a letter from the ministry came with the observation that, though CRK is taught, IRK is not. No teachers were qualified to teach IRK, either. And only twenty-one Muslim students were enrolled out of a total of 210. The demand was to “correct” these shortcomings. Christians then wanted to know why this demand should be made on them, when the schools funded by the state do not make the same provisions for CRK.

I cannot relate all the particulars of the story, but a court ordered their re-opening. When the schools acted upon that ruling, the police came and forced them to close. In the case of one school, students were “chased out by gun-toting mobile policemen.” It was only on the insistence of the same judge that the police were forced to withdraw. At the time this story appeared in *TC*, that one school was open, while the other two remained closed.

Dr. Olusola Ajolore, the local CAN secretary, charged that the Ministry of Education had “openly declared its determination to adopt, sponsor and promote Islam at the expense of and to the

frustration of other religions.” The government, he charged, was partial in its demand for IRK in Christian schools, while “purely Islamic schools were not compelled to teach CRK,” thus “threatening a religious war if the government remained adamant.”

Christians were convinced that the brain behind these developments was the Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Ibrahim Sule Gambari, who had already been making “deliberate efforts to curtail Christianity.” The state government felt pressured to “please the Islamic powers” in all departments, including education and police. In spite of this conviction, in typical Nigerian style, CAN called on the emir “as an enlightened and former judge of the Court of Appeal to prevail on the government to allow people to practise religions of their choice.”<sup>105</sup> Since this gentleman is also alleged to have advised the government to force all churches out of the city, chances for his cooperation at this front were slim indeed.

Such developments were taking place not only in the northern outpost of Yoruba land, but also deep within their southern homeland. The United Missionary College in Ibadan, a joint effort by Anglicans and Methodists established in 1928, was taken over by the government in 1975. After some years, the government phased out its teacher training programme there and returned the school to its former owners. Those owners received permission to re-open the school and scheduled an entrance examination for its applicants. As Oladipo Olanipekun tells the story, “Some Muslim fundamentalists had been scheming to thwart their effort.” They “did not want the school to come into being.” Compass Direct reports that a Muslim youth organization accused the Oyo state military administrator of being a “hypocrite and a stubborn Christian who has covertly supported an agenda of injustice against Muslims.” They threatened a “crisis of unprecedented dimension” if the decision to open the school was not rescinded. “On the day of the entrance examination, some unknown people wearing long garments and white caps stormed

the examination hall and forcefully seized the examination papers from the children, scaring them away.”

Muslims had previously taken the matter to court, but, not having received satisfaction, they “took the law into their hands and physically prevented the examination from being held.” Christians were asking too many questions to reproduce here, but some asked whether this was part of the Muslim *jihad* “which some people outside the country are sponsoring.” Some prominent Muslim leaders supported the action. Said one Alhaji Sanni, a leader among Muslim youths, “We hailed their extra-legal and extra constitutional step.” Olanipekun asked, “Does anybody need any further evidence about trouble-shooting tendencies of some Muslim leaders?”<sup>106</sup>

The issue of CRK teaching also cropped up in Oyo—and Christians are not always the victims there, nor Muslims always the perpetrators. In Volume 2, I presented the Muslim side of the struggle. *Compass Direct* reported that an unnamed Muslim professor accused Christians of intolerance and extremism and CAN of making it impossible for IRK teachers to teach their subject to Muslim students. After all, the educational policy is that all students “should have unrestricted access to their religious education in all post-primary institutions.” Furthermore, he claimed that CAN “intimidated Muslim students by preaching,” while it also prevented them from observing their prayers.<sup>107</sup>

The then Christian governor but now late Bola Ige, was at first reportedly hesitant about acting on the Muslim complaint that their children were denied their rights in Oyo schools. Muslim children did not receive instruction in IRK and were, instead, forced to take CRK. After due pressure was exerted by the Muslim community, the state government, dominated by Christians, agreed to distribute free copies of the Qur’an to all Muslim students and to incorporate IRK in the curriculum. In addition, they agreed that from then on all secondary schools established by Muslim organisations were to have Muslim principals.<sup>108</sup>

As the issues pile up, one begins to wonder whether the alleged peaceful relations between Christian and Muslim Yoruba in the South really do exist. If they do, they are surely stretched to their limits these years, when the issues appear to grow increasingly messy and very difficult to unravel. That was the situation with a case of school postings in Ibadan.

The Youth Wing of CAN, Oyo branch, wrote a letter to the Military Administrator, Colonel Ike Nwosu, under the title “Religious Intolerance.”<sup>109</sup> They alerted the colonel to Muslim attempts either to transfer or remove two high officials whom Muslims were accusing of favouring Christians. Two Muslim teachers at St. Patrick’s Grammar School objected to transfers on the basis of allegations that they were being punished for being Muslims. Muslim officials were able to convince them that the transfers were legitimate. Nevertheless, other Muslim leaders still wanted to get rid of two officials who had had a hand in this matter and who were accused of either being Christian or sympathetic to Christians. Actually, the letter stated, one, a lady, was thought of as a Muslim, but she had always been impartial. It is true that other Muslim government officials in the department had used “their official positions to promote Islam, and they have been partial in favour of teachers who are Muslims.” Yet, no one had requested their removal. It was hoped that the administrator would not create the impression that Muslims could dictate to him about posting matters. All of this is put in civil language, but behind it there is a great deal of mutual anger and mistrust.

Joseph Obeamata, in his column *Talking Point*, wrote an “Appeal to Col. Nwosu,” supporting the CAN youth letter and providing much more detailed information that is too complicated to summarise. However, it is worth a read and is therefore appended as Appendix 8. It demonstrates the intricacies and the secret plotting that goes on between the two religions. It is a veiled process but often vicious and could easily feed into a riot.

Moving up to tertiary education, we run into battles there as well. Adamawa State, formerly part of the now disbanded Gongola State, was the scene of a skirmish at this level. Gereng, chairman of the state CAN chapter, reports that the government wanted to establish Arabic Teachers Colleges—please note the plural. When Christians began to object, it was decided to establish one Christian Teachers College at Song. The idea of the latter barely got off the ground, when an attempt was made to turn this into an Arabic institution as well. Again Christians objected. The result was that the Shua Mission School was converted into a Christian Teachers College.<sup>110</sup>

During an interview with two staff members whose identities need to be protected, I heard various stories about how the Muslim-dominated Ministry of Education was constantly trying to smother this institution either by closing it down through devious means such as withholding funds or by sheer corruption. Few Nigerians would have withstood the pressure as did this principal and fight the good fight.

Muslims had more plans and privileges reserved for themselves. They sought to turn other public institutions into Muslim ones. At one time the Yola Teachers College was to become a Higher Islamic School. The Yola Vocational Training School was also picked for the same honour. As to privileges, this and other schools like it enjoyed special attention in that their teachers “seem to be better treated than the staff in regular schools.” In fact, everyone associated with them was privileged. Principals, teachers and students were all “sponsored” by the government. Students were “all taken care of.” They were mostly employees of various local governments on study leave, fully paid and fed by the government. These arrangements, said Gereng, were surprising in a state that is “not predominantly Muslim.”

CAN took the case of one school to court. The place belonged to all people, not just to Muslims, Gereng pointed out. He insisted that “whatever is done in this state must take into cognizance that

there are two major religions. We want them to show us that they are not preferring Islam to Christianity. After all, we are all equal citizens of this state. So we have the right to whatever is the resource.” Gereng spoke much about the rights of Christians in Adamawa. “There is a small group of people who are not interested in peace and are doing what they know will make us unhappy.” He warned, “They must know that we are human beings. We have our right to exist in this state, our right to determine our lives and everything. The right to possess, to participate and to hold important offices. We are part and parcel of this state.”<sup>111</sup>

As we move up to university level, we run into some interesting manoeuvres. When the federal government renamed the University of Sokoto “Uthman Dan Fodio University” after the famous Muslim crusader, Christians were inspired to rename the University of Lagos “Samuel Ajayi Crowther University,” after the first Black Nigerian bishop. The “Students Wing” of CAN published an open letter to Babangida that is almost humorous in its pretence of peace and appreciation for the renaming of the Sokoto university. It is a typical request of a Nigerian for a favour from a powerful person. It opens with the statement: “We applauded with all other Nigerians when last year the Government immortalised Uthman Dan Fodio, who was an outstanding Islamic Reformer, by renaming the university after him.” And then the clincher: “We solicit that such a gesture should be extended to the stature of Bishop Crowther (1809–1891) by renaming University of Lagos to immortalise him as Samuel Ajayi Crowther University.” They claimed to have collected ten million signatures to endorse the change. The letter then went into the details of Crowther’s accomplishments and then once more stroked the ego of the president with pretentious flattery: “We implore you, Sir, to use your good office and human rights disposition to grant this, our popular request.” It closes with one more completely uncharacteristic of CAN word of

praise for the president's "commitment to national unity, social justice and economic recovery."<sup>112</sup>

The educational system in Nigeria has taken a serious nosedive at every level. Lack of basic facilities, including furniture and books, lack of maintenance of buildings, lack of discipline among teachers—all these plague the sector from primary through to university level, not to speak of cheating and violence. In May 2002, an important secondary school examination was aborted because several students had hired thugs to beat up the invigilators! Pray, tell, how do you run an educational system with such novelties—or, for that matter, a country?

The unidentified editor of CAN's publication *Leadership* summed it up for the educational sector. "Who is responsible for the fact that our educational system is in shambles?" he asked. To him, "the answer is obvious—Muslims!"<sup>113</sup>

I have my own comments on this cheap shot in a later volume. However, in view of all the above, it is entirely understandable that, ever since the government takeover of schools by the regime of Christian General Yakubu Gowon, the church has been demanding their return. The National Executive of CAN reminded Babangida that CAN has repeatedly drawn the attention of the government "to the perilous effects of the takeover" such as "juvenile delinquencies and unprecedented acts of violence and destruction by students," all "predicted consequences." Thus, "once again, we hereby strongly recommend that the government should return those institutions to their owners, in order that the urgently needed moral and spiritual rehabilitation of our nation may start from within their walls."<sup>114</sup> Mambula, in his capacity as general secretary of TEKAN, circulated this document to the TEKAN churches "for their information," according to a hand-written note on the copy I have at hand. A few years later, TEKAN made its own call to "Federal and state governments to return schools that were taken over from churches and missions."<sup>115</sup>

## 5. FEMALE FASHIONS

You will remember from Volume 2 that the issue of female dress is a sensitive one. Though the discussion goes beyond that of schools, the school uniform issue is the one that receives the most attention. Muslims object to the Western styles used for female uniforms, whether in hospitals, police, schools or National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). We have noted that there were some raging controversies about the issue. Hannatu Monday, a Christian, was incensed about attempts to impose Muslim-style dress on non-Muslim children. In a lengthy complaint about Muslims reaping where Christians have sown, Salifu of CAN Kaduna bitterly stated the case as Nigerian Christians generally see it. “The Christian builds his school. They [Muslims] take it over and say the Christian children must wear Islamic dress.”<sup>116</sup> It has long been a standard complaint amongst Christians and they continue to resist.<sup>117</sup>

As all the other Christian–Muslim issues, this one also refuses to die. In March of 2003, secondary schools in Oyo State, the heart of the nation’s “tolerance” zone, were twice disrupted by “Muslim fundamentalists who invaded to enforce the use of the veil by female Muslim students.” Members of the National Association of Muslim Youth Organisations (NACOMYO) “had taken to the beating of teachers and principals, inflicting injuries on them, and causing pervasive mayhem in [Ibadan], all in an attempt to enforce the Islamic code of dressing for female students.”

The second time around, students “offered physical resistance to the veil enforcers, leading to bloody clashes.” Various factions in the society sprung into action. The union of teachers instructed its members to stay home to avoid further molestation. Students marched to the governor’s office demanding peaceful conditions in the schools. The editor of *TD* strongly chided NACOMYO for its “lawlessness and indiscipline.” They should have followed established channels for their grievances, it said, even though the editor realised that governments are “hard of hearing” and under-

stand the language of violence better than that of appeals. He was especially offended by NACOMYO's trying to enforce the veil on the campuses of church schools, thus "stoking the embers of inter-religious strife."

But what of the governor of Oyo, himself a Muslim? Muslim students and organisations had reportedly written him about the dress issue and the need for upholding the Muslim code. He apparently let the matter slide.<sup>118</sup> It was another classic case of government inaction which eventually led to violence.

## 6. MEDIA

Another point of contention is access to the electronic media. Adamu Baikie, in his address at the launching of CAN declared it: "We have been denied access to the use of the electronic media in certain parts of this country and yet another religion has the monopoly of rendering a near 24-hours religious broadcast in the same areas."<sup>119</sup> While we occupy ourselves with this charge, it is good to remember the parallel Muslim complaints registered in Volume 2.

Again, Kano especially was accused of discrimination in this sector. The CAN 1982 Memo held up various states, including some with strong Muslim leadership such as Kaduna, Bauchi and Sokoto, as examples of fair dealing in the assignment of airtime. These were all in contrast to Kano, where "the situation is entirely different. There are no programmes whatsoever to cater for the spiritual welfare of non-Muslims. Any NTA (Nigeria Television Authority) quarterly programme will substantiate this submission."

The next page of the CAN report featured a copy of a three-month scheduling cycle that indeed showed no recognizable Christian programme, while it did contain one and a half hours of overt Muslim weekly programming. Several other programmes were heavy on Kano culture, which is Islamic. There were some Western secular programmes which Muslims might just argue were

Christian, since Christians advocate secularism. CAN had submitted “repeated applications for the audition of Sunday programmes, yet our prayers fall on deaf ears.” Even their request “for as little as fifteen minutes” for a Sunday service was denied.

Radio Kano featured over thirteen hours of overt Muslim programmes per week, but Christians had to make do with a mere thirty minutes and then only in English, a language understood by very few Kano indigenes. Even that concession was of very recent origin.<sup>120</sup> In 1994, *Open Doors* reported that, while Christians were denied access to these facilities, Ahmed Deedat, a South African Muslim preacher, appeared regularly on TV.<sup>121</sup>

To buttress their case, CAN printed two letters in their Memo, one from the manager of Kano NTV to CAN and one from CAN to the manager. The one from the manager, dated July 9, 1979, “acknowledges receipt of the photostat copies of your letters dated 14th August and 13th November 1978 respectively and clarifies that we never had the original copies in our records. However, we shall invite you for further discussion as soon as we have fully examined your request and consulted our Programme Advisory Board.”

On February 4, 1981, CAN wrote that they had waited for the promised invitation, but it still had not arrived. By now two and a half years had passed without an inch of progress!<sup>122</sup>

Not only were the media airing Muslim programmes, but they were also sometimes accused of openly siding with Muslims and of fanning violence on the part of Muslims against Christians. It is one thing for privately-owned media to take sides, but now we are talking publicly-owned media.

Wilson Sabiya, in his capacity as chairman of CAN, Gongola State Branch, called a press conference after two Muslim-oriented newspapers, *GTFK* and *National Concord*, published false stories about a Western missionary’s alleged attempt to burn the Qur’an. The first is a government-owned paper; the second was owned by the now late Abiola. The missionary was said to have

failed, because “his two hands burnt and the Qur’an disappeared under mysterious circumstances.” Sabiya explained that these papers had published these stories because they were trying to demonstrate that Christian missionaries are violent and have disrespect for Islam. In other words, they were fanning hostility and increasing tension in the country. Sabiya laid into these two papers in a deservedly heavy-handed way. He demolished the identity of the source of their information in such a way as to totally discredit the papers. He strongly advised them to thoroughly check out their stories before rushing into print the next time and thus to protect the image of their religion.<sup>123</sup>

In the wake of Kafanchan, CAN accused the New Nigerian Newspapers and the Federal Radio Corporation in Kaduna, both government corporations, of favouring Islam in their news coverage. It even called for the proscription of the papers and asked CAN members to boycott them for a month. Benjamin Kwashi, later to become Anglican Bishop of Jos, demanded a probe into the radio and disciplinary action for Adamu, the editor of *NN*.<sup>124</sup> In its letter to Babangida, Kaduna CAN charged that the paper, a government institution, “sponsored a divisive and emotive debate for the entrenchment of sharia in our constitution with impunity and almost brought our fatherland to the brink of bloodshed.”

Ayuba Joji Wudiri, a member of the 1977 Constituent Assembly representing the Gombi constituency in Gongola State, wrote an eleven-page appeal to the federal government against the one-sidedness and destabilizing activities of the *New Nigerian*. He wrote, “All well-meaning progressive thinking Nigerians are aware of the destabilising role the *NN* and agents of disunity have embarked upon over the years and especially now during the crucial programme of transition to civil rule.” He made further claims and statements as follows: “The tradition of the *NN* has been an ignoble one. A tradition which is built on parochialism and sustained by intense religious bigotry.” The paper “thrives on journal-

ism based on sectional and religious interest of a minute and very backward but powerful and highly exploitative and ruthlessly aggressive class of Nigerians. Their modus operandi is manipulation of institutions, but [they] are basically afraid of democracy.” The paper “has not only been extremely pro the sharia issue, but highly selective and purposeful towards a particular tendency in terms of news gathering and dissemination.” Then Wudiri presented no less than eleven concrete examples, including dates and quotes. He threw in terms such as “threats, insults, intimidation, falsehood.” He included a quote from the Muslim historian Yusufu Bala’s *The Manipulation of Religion in Nigeria* who agreed that an *NN* article “was clearly intended to cause violent religious conflict.” He also quoted the Managing Director Mohammed Haruna as saying that “We are unabashedly pro-Sharia and [Haruna] therefore assures the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly that what you would be right to fight to death for is that sharia remains entrenched in the constitution.”<sup>125</sup>

Wudiri asked some obvious but hard questions. Why should this government-owned medium be allowed to play such a destabilising role for so many years? Did the government accept this role or was she working against herself? Was this meant to be a Muslim organ and an untouchable sacred cow? He answered his own questions partially by recalling the statement of a former managing director about the purposes of the paper. They were said to be: (a) “To get across the views of the government of the northern elite and mobilise them in order to achieve its goals” and (b) “To fight the Northern case in all disputes at the centre.” The “Northern case,” of course, includes Islam.

That all of these accusations were not mere imagination is borne out by the authorities of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, whose management felt the need to decide anew on “objectivity and fairness” in the face of the upcoming elections in 2003. It pledged to “rise above partisanship.”<sup>126</sup> Why the need for

such elementary and obvious decisions and what is so newsworthy here—unless, of course, the elementary and obvious have indeed been ignored in the past? A Muslim complaint against political discrimination by Muslims against fellow Muslims in Katsina unfortunately proves the point.<sup>127</sup>

### ▲ RESPONSE OF AUTHORITIES

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The issue under this heading is how governments, their agents and agencies have responded to threats of crises and to actual crises. “Agents” here refers to individual officers, emirs and chiefs, as well as the army, police, along with the judicial system and various government-appointed commissions. Governments are blamed for lack of action, untimely action, inept action, evil action and for partiality in favour of Muslims and/or elite interest groups. These issues are usually so intertwined with others that it becomes difficult to classify and treat them all in watertight compartments without trespassing on related issues discussed under other headings.

Lack of action itself, untimely or inadequate action are frequent charges. There are various explanations for these kinds of actions and reactions. For one, Christians often feel that governments have not accepted the secular status of the country. Because of their perceived Islamic orientation, the federal government, along with some state governments, allegedly chafe under the secular constitution Christians insist upon. Without officially objecting to it or denying it, governments are often seen to be playing with it or denying it *de facto* through wrong or no actions. The statement of the ABU group in Appendix 4 blamed authorities for the continuation of riots. The violence continued, the statement charged, because “successive federal governments have toyed with one of the foundations on which Nigerian unity exists, namely the secular nature of the state.” A dangerous impression exists that

those “organisations and individuals” who engage in such activities “get away with, at most, only verbal reprimands or appeals to be tolerant.” These are charges heard repeatedly.

The role of the police in these events is almost always reported negatively from the beginning of our period to the end. The NIPSS report repeatedly put heavy blame on the police. In the case of the Maitatsine riots, “it was action by the law enforcement agents which constituted the immediate causes of the disturbances,” the report asserted. The police did not seem to learn from the experience of earlier riots. Clashes with police escalated but the Maitatsine learned how to fortify themselves so that they became inaccessible to the police and it took the army to destroy their stronghold. The persistent failure of the police led to the Maitatsine belief that the police were impotent. But the police were not the only ones at fault, according to the report. All or most of the “law enforcement agencies were characterised by poor management and utilization of information, absence of coordination, inadequate strategy and weaponry.” In addition, the “discipline, loyalty and training of the policemen also left much to be desired.” All these led to “the chronic ineffective response of the police.” In Yola, the public became “so incensed and so disillusioned with the police that it was the army which prevented the police from being lynched” by the people.<sup>128</sup>

Complaints about police have been aired in connection with almost all riots by both Christians and Muslims. At best, the force simply does not act in time. At worst, it is seen as aiding one side while ignoring the needs of the other. Both parties feel the force is used against them, while it protects the interests of the other. The Kaduna branch of CAN wrote to the president that “since the law and government have been so incompetent to defend us, we will have to defend ourselves.” Why did the police and army units use delaying tactics? Why could the authorities of ABU not control their students but felt the need to first consult with the Emir of

Zaria? CAN Kafanchan called for the removal of both the state Governor and the Emir of Zaria, both officials in control of police, for failure to protect their subjects.<sup>129</sup>

Even in the Christian-dominated Plateau State, the police were accused of harassing Christians. Under the heading “Relationship between the Police Force and Christians in Plateau State,” the state CAN chapter wrote a letter to the military governor that was signed by Musa Gotom and J. J. La-Nibetle, vice-chairman and general secretary respectively. It stated,

*there is a concerted effort of a sinister move by certain interest groups to destabilise Plateau State, and also to create a state of crisis between the police and the Christian groups and a lack of understanding between Plateau State Government and Christian groups.*

The specific charges were as follows: (1) “Provocative use” of tear gas at a peaceful Christian gathering at the Polo Ground in March, 1986; (2) Arrest and detention of pastors and other “cases of harassments and arrests of Christians”; (3) Biased police reports to the government. Two specific letters are referred to; (4) “Excessive infiltration and monitoring” of Christian activities that create “a state of mistrust and lack of confidence in the police force and the government.” The letter further stated that, after “careful analysis, we strongly believe that the police force has always sought to exaggerate the gravity of the religious situation as an occasion for sinister intervention.” The writers then pledged loyalty, peaceful intentions and readiness to discuss any security problems that may exist.<sup>130</sup>

Similarly, after the 1991 Bauchi riots, the National Executive of CAN published a statement in which it accused the government of “failing in its constitutional responsibility” towards Christians in its “selective negligence.” CAN reminded the government that it is “entitled to the loyalty of its citizenry *only* if it can protect such citizenry. Neither federal nor the state government would appear to

qualify for this loyalty in view of the consistent, sad experiences of Christians in this country.”

CAN called upon the government to discharge its constitutional responsibility by ensuring the security of Christians.<sup>131</sup>

Even as late as the Kaduna 2000 riots, after the police had experienced so many riots, things had still not improved. Appendix 3 in Volume 1 of this series tells a similar story in connection with an attack on the Baptist Seminary in Kawo, Kaduna. As things became heated, the principal called the local police chief and told him that they were under attack. The police chief, a Muslim, said that there was trouble everywhere and there was not much he could do. The principal then called the Baptist Mission headquarters in Ibadan and explained their desperate condition. Through the staff there, they eventually reached Professor Abaje, at the time both president of the Baptist Seminary in Ogbomosho and personal chaplain to President Obasanjo. Abaje approached the president, who, in turn, called the police chief in Kaduna. The police chief told him that there had been some trouble but everything was under control. There has been extensive debate about this Muslim police chief’s handling of this crisis. Many Christians were convinced he knew about the plans for this riot in advance. It was generally thought that, at the very least, he did not handle this situation with the necessary neutrality.

## 1. TRIBUNALS AND THEIR FINDINGS

Cases of government inaction, half action or even deceitful action are often associated with closure to riots. The usual routine is for the state government and, sometimes, the federal government to appoint tribunals or panels which are assigned to report on the causes of the event and provide recommendations for future prevention. The assignment often is announced routinely along with a statement that ensures the public there will be no “sacred cows.” However, wrote Minchakpu, “at the end of the day, the findings of the tribunals are not made public. Nothing tangible comes out of

the finding of these tribunals.” So, the question is then raised about the involvement of the government or perhaps influential persons. What, or whom, is the government covering up?<sup>132</sup>

As everything else in this overheated religious climate, Christian responses and objections to the reports on the various riots were parallel to those of Muslims. There were two factors that prevented satisfactory reports. One has already been mentioned: government intentional interference. The other and related factor is the one-sided composition of most of the panels. These two factors basically paralyzed the “report industry.”

In 1982, Christians were already protesting the one-sided composition of these commissions. In 1987, both CAN and even the Kaduna government were most unhappy with the Kaduna Riots Committee report on Kafanchan. The government itself accused the committee of failure. Similarly, Governor Jega was unhappy with the report on Zangon-Kataf, for it avoided the root causes.

Matthew Kukah, always pungent, relaying interpretations as well as offering his own of the Maitatsine riots, asserted that the various reports were mostly designed to pass the buck. The Aniagolu Tribunal, Kukah reported, concluded there were many government parties involved, including “the state government and its agencies, individuals, organisations, the police and the National Security Organisation. The Kano governor, Abubakar Rimi, was indicted for writing to top Maitatsine [leaders] and [for] dining with his followers.”

Of course, the inevitable Marxist type of interpretation, not entirely wrong, that sees such events as a “by-product of [the] march into semi-industrial urban capitalism” is part of the chorus. Others regard the violent atmosphere as the result of “the collapse of the moral base on which traditional Islamic society had been founded.” Especially the Maitatsine riots can be viewed as attempts “to sweep away the accretions which had polluted Islam in the new materialistic Nigeria.”<sup>133</sup>

Kukah went into some detail about how these various entities, including the Kano State Administration, may have actually encouraged these riots for their own political advantage. Once again, the much beleaguered police were accused of cooperating with various political forces by refusing to apply timely force against the rioters.

The truth has always had a hard time surfacing in the context of these investigative panels. This is not only the complaint of churches and other non-governmental parties, but even from governments themselves. The Kaduna state government rejected much of the Donli report on Kafanchan. The restlessness in Plateau State prompted Governor Dariye to appoint the Dusu Commission to identify culprits. This, he hoped, would be the last commission ever to be appointed for this purpose, for “he was tired of inaugurating judicial commissions of inquiry.” Justice Felicia Dusu requested the government “to release the findings of previous commissions to the public.”<sup>134</sup> The Plateau crisis dragged on. About a year and a half later, no one less than retired Lieutenant General Jeremiah Useni, a former federal cabinet minister from Plateau State, also referred to “the inability and unwillingness of government to release the white papers on the earlier crises” and observed that this failure “had constituted a ban in the search for lasting peace.”<sup>135</sup>

I can only endorse these observations and wonder why it was not done. What is keeping the government from doing so? What is the game being played here? The fact that someone of Useni’s standing seemed powerless with respect to the release of government reports makes the issue more puzzling. This question became still more acute when Plateau Senator Davou Zang publicly stated that “the perpetrators of the crisis are known.”<sup>136</sup>

If the governor has the information, why not simply arrest the perpetrators instead of wasting time and money on panels? One answer is, because of manipulation and dishonesty. Probably both. With politics heating up again in Nigeria, charges of violence and

manipulation by politicians abound in the press during 2003. Dan Isaacs suggests that, with elections coming up, politicians are “extremely reluctant to speak out to condemn the perpetrators of violence on all sides, for fear of losing support.”<sup>137</sup>

True, but they have been reluctant all the way along. It is interesting that the Dusu Commission of six included only one Muslim, the reverse imbalance Christians frequently complain about in Muslim-dominated states.

## 2. WRONG ACTION

The NIPSS report contains a rather juicy story of very suspicious behaviour on the part of the federal government after the Kano 1982 riot. President Shagari had sent an emissary to the Kano chapter of CAN “with a gift of N75,000.” The report makes the following observations: (1) “We were surprised to find that the records at the executive office of the president do not reflect this gesture. Top officials did not seem to know of the gift. We were unable to ascertain the official status of the gift”; (2) “Since no further action was taken by the president, the churches began to feel that the money was given to them in order to buy their silence. They felt that this was unfair since the crux of the matter lay in the violation of their rights. They felt the president should have addressed that issue as a matter of urgency”; (3) “The Christians also found the amount hopelessly inadequate if it was intended to be a compensation, considering the amount of damage it was intended to compensate.”<sup>138</sup>

Just as Muslims frequently berate the government for one-sidedly blaming them for riots and thus arresting Muslims, so Christians fault the government. Some Christian leaders were arrested in the wake of Kaduna 2000. Among them were Peter Jatau, the Kaduna-based Roman Catholic archbishop and chairman of northern CAN; Saidu Dogo, northern CAN’s general secretary; Methodist Archbishop Benjamin Achigili and eleven more

leaders. A government statement published on November 21, 2001, claims that, in a letter they signed, these leaders had confessed they had instigated Christians to engage in violence to protest the implementation of the sharia. At least it was an action that would have pleased the Muslim community.

Poor governments! They can never do it right! Achigili rejected the accusation and said the accused had “at no time” ordered Christians to embark on violence. Instead, they had “asked Christians to embark on fasting and prayers over the decision to implement Islamic law.” Besides, he added, “Christianity is a religion of peace and has respect for other religions, so we could not have done what they are claiming.”<sup>139</sup> This sounds like a quotation from Muslims under similar circumstances! The logic, of course, is not entirely impeccable. The connection between religious doctrine and behaviour of adherents can be obscure occasionally, to say the least.

### ▲ CONCLUDING COMMENTS

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Nigerian Christians clearly are very suspicious of their governments. Parallel to the views of their Muslim compatriots, they are convinced that the government is controlled by Muslims and intends to destroy them. They see evidence of such intentions all around them. They contend that the panacea for all their problems is for the government to strictly adhere to impartiality and secularism as enshrined in the constitution.

The question is whether secularism is indeed demanded by the constitution. Muslims deny it. Those differing interpretations are not accidental: They are the direct result of their different definitions which are, in turn, related to their respective world views. While the next *chapter* will present Christian interpretations of some specific riots, the next *volumes* will deal with questions of secularism and related issues. You are invited to continue the journey with me.

## ▲ NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> CAN, "Release," 1987, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> NIPSS, p. 30. CAN, 1982, pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> NIPSS, pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> J Boer, 1979, pp.154-155, 528; 1984, pp. 43, 46, 53, 62, 77-79, 91.

<sup>5</sup> Boer, 1979, pp. 211-212.

<sup>6</sup> Boer, 1979, pp. 211-212.

<sup>7</sup> Avre, 17 Nov/95.

<sup>8</sup> Tsado, *TC*, 5/87, pp. 10-11. See Appendix in forthcoming Volume 5. It is common in Nigeria to expect that people in government positions will dole out government contracts to their friends, relatives or co-religionists, even among the best of people. Haruna Dandaura tells how his daughters expected him to "flood them with contracts" during his tenure as Chief Commissioner of Public Complaints and as Chairman of the Code of Conduct Bureau. He refused and "this beat their imagination." M. Gaiya, 2003, p.106. These daughters are indeed among the best of people and they considered it normal, not immoral. It is that embedded in Nigerian culture. Officers who want to uphold government neutrality have indeed an uphill battle, not only against the much maligned elite, but even against the moral members of society.

<sup>9</sup> Tsado, *TC*, 5/87, pp. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup> Tsado, *TC*, 5/87, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> For further information about Salihu see Kantiok, pp. 202-205.

<sup>12</sup> Tsado, *TC*, 5/87, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> I. Yaro, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> I. Yaro, pp. 45-46.

<sup>15</sup> During the current American administration of Bush Jr., there is a much-advertised switch to aiding "faith-based" social improvement efforts.

<sup>16</sup> B. O. Nwabueze, pp. 17-18

<sup>17</sup> There is some confusion in the literature as to the official name. Some documents, even within the same newspaper, refer to it as "Islamic

Conference Organisation” or “ICO.” Regardless of the name used in the documents, I will use “OIC,” even in quotes. For a discussion on the weaknesses of OIC see *The Economist*, 21 Dec/91, p. 76.

<sup>18</sup> Kantiok, pp. 260-261.

<sup>19</sup> Editorial: “The OIC Affair.” *NN*, 27 Jan/86, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Independent*, 24 Dec/95, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> T. Falola, pp. 94-95.

<sup>22</sup> “OIC: Return to Status Quo?” *TC*, 2/87, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> T. Falola, pp.93-102.

<sup>24</sup> T. Falola, p.96.

<sup>25</sup> Appendix 1.

<sup>26</sup> CAN, 11 Dec/89.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from “O. J.’s *Hidden Massacres*, pp. 89-90 in undated circular from Josiah Publishing.

<sup>28</sup> Though Appendix 5B purports to be of Muslim origin, I include it in this chapter on Christian opinion rather than in Volume 2 that deals with Muslim opinions. It is Christians who have turned it into public documents by distributing it. I am most skeptical about the veracity of most of these documents. At the same time, Nigeria is known for some amazing and outrageous feats. At any rate, they will surely have served the purpose of some people, Christians or otherwise, who wanted to raise the level of tension and suspicion in the country.

<sup>29</sup> Falola, pp. 93-100. Kantiok, pp. 292-296.

<sup>30</sup> Editorial: “The OIC Affair,” *NN*, 27 Jan/86.

<sup>31</sup> F. Adekeye, 6 Mar/2000, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> “OIC: Return to Status Quo?” *TC*, 2/87, p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Minchakpu, *TC* 1/95, pp. 6-9.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in K. A. Balogun, pp. 58-59.

<sup>35</sup> *NN*, 26 Jan/86, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> S. Aji, 10 Feb/86, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> “Jolly Tanko Condemns Nigeria’s OIC Membership.” *NN*, 28 Jan/86.

- <sup>38</sup> *Punch*, 5 May/91.
- <sup>39</sup> *REC News Exchange*, Oct/91.
- <sup>40</sup> Kantiok, p. 261.
- <sup>41</sup> *NN*, 3 Dec/99.
- <sup>42</sup> Grissen, p. 2.
- <sup>43</sup> I. Yaro, p. 30.
- <sup>44</sup> I. Yaro, p. 30.
- <sup>45</sup> Jalingo, p. 22.
- <sup>46</sup> CAN, *Leadership*, pp. 6-7.
- <sup>47</sup> Gilliland, p. 158.
- <sup>48</sup> Sabiya, "The Draft Constitution," pp. 1, 12.
- <sup>49</sup> Sabiya and Eze, 20 Apr/88.
- <sup>50</sup> CAN, 11 Jan/90.
- <sup>51</sup> TEKAN Action Committee, 17 Aug/88.
- <sup>52</sup> CAN, 11 Dec/89.
- <sup>53</sup> CAN, 24 Jan/90.
- <sup>54</sup> Minchakpu, *TC*, 1/95, p. 9.
- <sup>55</sup> NIPSS, p. 30. CAN, 1982, pp. 19, 27-33.
- <sup>56</sup> Letter from Sumaila Local Government of 1 Nov/82, and signed by L. B. Abdullahi. Reproduced in CAN, 1982, p. 23.
- <sup>57</sup> Letter dated 27 Dec/79 and signed by Abubakar S. Mohammad. Reproduced in CAN, 1982, p. 24.
- <sup>58</sup> Letter from Ministry of Land and Survey, Kano State, 20 Feb/80, signatory illegible. Reproduced in CAN, 1982, p. 25.
- <sup>59</sup> Letter from Wudil Local Government, 12 Oct/82, signed by H. Y. Danyakasai. Reproduced in CAN, 1982, pp. 21-22.
- <sup>60</sup> Minchakpu, 1 Nov/99.
- <sup>61</sup> Minchakpu, p. 2. *REC*, Sep/99.
- <sup>62</sup> CAN, 1987, p. 1.
- <sup>63</sup> Minchakpu, *TC*, 1/94, pp. 10-11. This article contains more details of the story as well as of the court proceedings. The entire pro-

ceedings are found in *TC*, 1/94, pp. 16-23.

<sup>64</sup> Anonymous, *TC*, 1/90, pp. 6-11. Minchakpu, *TC*, 1/95, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> V. Musa, *TC*, 1/90, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> Wudiri, *TC*, 1/90, p. 12

<sup>67</sup> Gereng, *TC*, 1/94, pp. 4-5.

<sup>68</sup> In addition to the regular Local Government Area Council, there is a council of the chiefs in the area.

<sup>69</sup> CAN, Wase Branch.

<sup>70</sup> M. Eliot.

<sup>71</sup> CAN, 9 Jan/91.

<sup>72</sup> *REC*, Feb/98, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Minchakpu, 18 Dec/98. This is one major riot that did not make it into Volume 1.

<sup>74</sup> NIPSS, pp. 32-33.

<sup>75</sup> It is typical of Muslims to attempt to present a Muslim face to a community. When the Kaduna state government house was fenced in, Governor Abdullahi Mukhtar used the occasion to erect a Muslim dome at the entrance. CAN asked, "Do we take this to mean a declaration that the seat of government...can only be inhabited by Muslim governors?" It called on the governor to erect a cross at the entrance as well "to show his neutrality" and "to reflect the secular character of the state" (CAN, 11 Dec/89).

<sup>76</sup> Kukah, 1993, pp. 162-164. The Muslim side of this issue was, regrettably, not treated in Volume 2. However, the Muslim point of view is expressed in *NN*, 14 Aug/88 and 2 Mar/89, p. 10. While the former is an article that includes specific lists of allocations, the latter features correspondence between government authorities and CAN.

<sup>77</sup> Abbreviation for *Nongo Kristu u Sudan Hen Tiv*, meaning "The Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv," a Reformed denomination serving mainly the Tiv nation. It is a member of the TEKAN fellowship and of CAN. It is one of the few Nigerian denominations that has a non-English name, a point currently under heated debate among the constituency.

<sup>78</sup> NKST newsletter, Aug/95.

<sup>79</sup> Minchakpu, *REC* July-Aug/99.

<sup>80</sup> CAN, 12 Aug/89.

<sup>81</sup> *ThisDay*, 18 June/2002; 17 Mar/2003.

<sup>82</sup> Minchakpu, 6 May/2002.

<sup>83</sup> Ogueri, *Daily Champion*, 22 May/92. I urge the accountants among us to resist the temptation to check the figures!

<sup>84</sup> Yaro, pp. 30-32.

<sup>85</sup> CAN, 12 Aug/89.

<sup>86</sup> Anonymous, *Nigerian Christian*, Dec/96, pp. 8-9.

<sup>87</sup> Obemeata, 3 Dec/95.

<sup>88</sup> Kukah, 12 Dec/95.

<sup>89</sup> *NN*, "Islamic Education System Commended," 6 Jan/77.

<sup>90</sup> 30 Jan/77.

<sup>91</sup> CAN, 1982, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> Dandaura, 3 Dec/82, pp. 4, 7.

<sup>93</sup> Abbreviations for British Broadcasting Corporation and Voice of America, household words in Nigeria.

<sup>94</sup> CAN Youth Wing, 29 May/90.

<sup>95</sup> TEKAN / ECWA Release, 31 Dec/94.

<sup>96</sup> Baikie, p. 42. One wonders who is taking a cue from whom. Is it merely a coincidence that the nationalization of Christian schools in Nigeria coincided with the same process in Pakistan in the early 1970s? Yakubu Gowon should be able to answer that one. The question becomes more acute when we learn that in some Nigerian states these schools are being returned at the same time as they are in Pakistan. See The Barnabas Fund Prayer Notes for 20 July/2002 and Donpedro, *Vanguard*, 22 July/2002.

<sup>97</sup> CAN, 1982, pp. 15-16, 35.

<sup>98</sup> Minchakpu, 25 Mar/2002.

<sup>99</sup> Minchakpu, 25 Mar/2002.

<sup>100</sup> Minchakpu, 6 May/2002.

<sup>101</sup> Kukah, 1993, p. 193.

<sup>102</sup> B. Umar, 27 Aug/89.

<sup>103</sup> *REC*, 2/99, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> *TC*, 2/96, pp. 18-21. *REC*, Sep/96.

<sup>105</sup> Check also Adedeji, *NC*, 7 Mar/96 and *REC*, Sep/99.

<sup>106</sup> Olanipekun, 11 Dec/94. *REC*, Sep/96.

<sup>107</sup> *REC*, Sep/96.

<sup>108</sup> P. Clarke, 1984, pp. 158-159.

<sup>109</sup> *Independent*, 19 Nov/95, p. 2.

<sup>110</sup> Gereng, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Gereng, p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> CAN's "Student Wing."

<sup>113</sup> P. 36.

<sup>114</sup> CAN, Letter to the President, 12 Aug/89.

<sup>115</sup> TEKAN, Communiqué, 2001.

<sup>116</sup> *TC*, 5/87, pp. 23, 20.

<sup>117</sup> It is not that Christians resent Muslim fashion. Northern Christian men, including yours truly, will often wear Muslim/Hausa dress, some only at formal occasions, while for others it constitutes their daily attire. Many no longer associate it with Islam.

<sup>118</sup> Editorial, *TD*, 28 Mar/2003.

<sup>119</sup> Baikie, p. 42.

<sup>120</sup> CAN, 1982, pp. 16-18, 36, 39-40.

<sup>121</sup> *Open Doors*, May/94, p. 2. I am aware of some inconsistencies between this paragraph and the previous one. That's how I find it in the documents. I have no way of reconciling the conflicting information.

<sup>122</sup> CAN, 1982, pp. 39-40.

<sup>123</sup> Sabiya, Press Conference.

<sup>124</sup> Kukah, 1993, p. 194.

<sup>125</sup> Quote from *NN*, 19 Oct/88, p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> Ahianté, 29 May/2002. Only the party in power is given coverage. The other thirty are blacked out, according to Funtua.

<sup>127</sup> Funtua, *Weekly Trust*, 8 Mar/2003.

<sup>128</sup> NIPSS, pp. 21-26.

<sup>129</sup> Kukah, 1993, p. 194.

<sup>130</sup> CAN, 8 Sep/87.

<sup>131</sup> CAN, 24 Apr/91.

<sup>132</sup> Minchakpu, *TC*, 1/98, p. 89.

<sup>133</sup> Some of these explanations are offered also by Paul Ubeck and Raymond Hickey. See Kukah, 1993, pp. 154-155.

<sup>134</sup> "Dariye Inaugurates Crises Probe Panel," *TD*, 20 Aug/2002.

<sup>135</sup> Peter-Omali, 2 Mar/2004.

<sup>136</sup> "Senator Hails Plateau Peace Summit," *TD*, 20 Aug/2002.

<sup>137</sup> Isaacs, 20 Dec/2002.

<sup>138</sup> NIPSS, p. 33. Kukah, 1993, p. 160.

<sup>139</sup> REC, Jan/2002, p. 2

