

POSTSCRIPT

When the expanded sharia was first introduced in Zamfara, some thought it was a joke, according to Florence Oso. However, “all of a sudden Christians were thrown into panic” and many lives were lost in violent reactions. Despite the grandiose promises of Muslims about the potential for sharia to heal the wounds of the nation and to bring peace, “what,” asked Oso, “has sharia left in the hearts of us all? Rancour, bitterness, hatred and pains.”¹

However, at the other end of the spectrum, Mohammed Shuaibu reported recently that the American State Governor of Nebraska, Dave Heinemann, conferred on his Zamfara counterpart Citizenship of the State of Nebraska! This unusual honour was said to be due to “Governor Sani’s giant strides in the area of agriculture,” an achievement that “should not be left to go unnoticed.” Such development was recognized as the best way to alleviate hunger, poverty and all the other obstacles.²

This is the direct opposite to the two Italian cities of Rome and Naples, both of which granted Safiya, one of the famous international icons of the sharia controversy, honorary citizen-

ship!³ One party honouring the perpetrator; the others, the victim.

The question now is where all this will lead. Will Muslims continue to push for sharia? Or will people, Muslims especially, get tired of it all? We know the hopes of President Obasanjo. Haruna Dandaura, the “Apostle of Harmony” who surely had his pulse on developments, during one of my visits to him in January 2005, observed that it was already “fizzling out.” Muslims as well as Christians had indeed gotten tired of the unfulfilled and, perhaps worse, broken promises.

I dare not make a prediction. Islam runs deep in Nigeria. So does the socio-economic push for the change that so many people expect(ed) from this revival. But I do know one thing: So far it has not yielded its touted results. Volume 6 is a loud testimony from Muslims about its failure so far; this Volume 7, from Christians. There are no signs that sharia has brought peace, justice and toleration in the land. Injustice continues to spread its ugly, painful and deadly tentacles. In fact, many argue that it has caused additional death and destruction. Christians have observed sharia promises only in their breach, while religious intolerance is said to be on the increase.

But I will make one wager: The deep Islamic religious instinct for expansion and control will not disappear. It may go underground and hide, but secret strategizing will continue, accompanied by limitless patience that will not allow it to go dormant. “Peaceful Plateau” is only the most recent example of that. As a Christian missionary, I understand and appreciate that urge. One day, a year or a decade from now, it *will* re-emerge and stake its claims for Allah.

In the meantime, Nigerian Muslims need to do a lot more to make their promises sound true and become visible! The question is whether they have the wherewithal to pull it off. The basic reason for the failure of their utopia is similar to that of Marxism: an

unrealistic anthropology based on a superficial sense of evil. But a failure of the promise does not necessarily spell doom for the campaign itself. Islam's lack of realism has not prevented it from impressive victories and amazing gains throughout its history.

And with these closing words, I invite you to take the next step with me into the last volume of this series. What solutions do Nigerian Christians and Muslims offer? What of the old standby of dialogue? And are there any other recipes? Come along with me as we explore various options and parameters for Christians and Muslims to live together. Definitely, these have to include mutual understanding and correction of each other; a degree of compromise is a must. Another *sine qua non* is a shift of certain paradigms. Perhaps some Kuyperian perspectives can serve us here. Even just reaching a tolerable and reasonable management of tension would be a great step forward. For now, perhaps that is where we should set our sights.

For your final food for thought before plunging into the next volume: "Our biggest problem is that we do not have legal identity," said Bishop Pelatre of Turkey. "We have freedom of worship, but not religious freedom—that's something else."⁴

