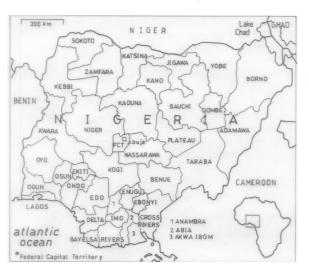*Appendix 70:*

# TEN GOOD THINGS ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF *SHARI'A* IN SOME STATES OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

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## What Twelve Northern States Are Doing

Since October 1999, twelve of Nigeria's northern states[1] have enacted legislation or taken executive action aimed at reintroducing parts of Islamic law formerly applicable in the region, but attenuated or abandoned during the colonial period and



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[1] Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Gombe, Bauchi, Kaduna, Niger, and Kebbi.

subsequently. The most contro-versial of the new laws have been those imposing—on Muslims—the penal law of the classical *shari'a,* so that, for ex-ample, a thief seen in the act by the requisite number of witnesses, if he is a Muslim, may now suffer amputation of his hand; his Christian accomplice will only go to prison for a short term.[2]  Other measures include the establishment of *shari'a* courts of first instance for the application of Islamic law to Muslims; establishment of state Councils of *Ulama* with wide mandates to formulate, interpret, and monitor the implementation of Islamic law; imposition of *zakat* (alms) taxes on Muslims; prohibition—for Muslims and non-Muslims alike—of the sale and consumption of alcohol; concerted efforts to drive out prostitution and gambling; segregation of women in the schools and in public transportation; and establishment of censorship boards 'to check the spread of immorality packaged as cultural products.'  Not all twelve states have done all of these things, and what has been done has been done differently from state to state.  But taken all together, these states have gone quite far towards the re-establishment of Islamic law within their borders, at least for Muslims, and the implementation of traditional Islamic values as the official policies of their governments.

**Reasons For Concern**

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[2] For a fuller discussion, see Ostien (2000), *passim.*

There are legitimate reasons for concern. The *shari'a* is the sacred law of Islam, incumbent on Muslims because, as many of them believe, God has commanded it. But it goes against the modern grain to find the apparatus of government being brought in to enforce the dictates of a religion, even if enforcement is against those who profess that religion and against them only. This brings religion back out of the sphere of the private, to which, for what have seemed good and sufficient reasons, it has been relegated in most of the world, and gets the state all mixed up in it again. Constitutional principles intended to confine religion to the sphere of the private seem to be infringed: the guarantee of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, for example, a guarantee as applicable to the nominal if unorthodox or non-observant Muslim as to everyone else; the ban on discrimination by government based solely on religion, which is now to be systematically practiced instead of rooted out; and in Nigeria, the ban also on the adoption, by the federal or state governments, of 'any religion as State Religion'.[3] The harsh punishments now reinstated—flogging, amputation of limbs, theoretically stoning to death and even crucifixion in certain cases—are today thought by many throughout the world to violate the universal ban on cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment. The segregation of the sexes, and the restrictions on the activities of women that are being imposed, seem inconsistent with the prohibition of discrimination based on sex. It is true

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[3] §10 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.

that most of the burden of the new laws will be borne by Muslims—who up till now have waived all constitutional objections when they might have raised them in proper cases (whether deliberately or out of ignorance of their rights is not known). But the Christians living in the affected states are with some historical justification fearful of misapplication of Islamic law to them, and fearful also of the fanaticism the new laws might encourage among Muslims. In all these ways, the new measures seem regressive, a return to a past inconsistent with modern conditions and with modern conceptions of the state and its proper relations with its citizens.

**Ten Good Things**

But there is an upside too: reasons for thinking that what the twelve northern states are doing on the whole represents progress for them and for Nigeria, despite the constitutional dissonances it creates, which still remain to be resolved. Ten such reasons follow. The first three all relate to the fact that the political units that are implementing *shari'a* in Nigeria are states within a larger federation: Nigeria is the only place in the world where the re-introduction of Islamic law has taken place in such a context. The other seven 'good things' are more heterogeneous.

**1. It teaches a lesson in applied federalism that Nigerians need to learn**. Federations are 'made for

people of fundamentally differing views.'[4]   Their whole point is to permit wide local political variations within broad national limits.   In the United States, where the author comes from, they think nothing of different states enacting widely different laws. Louisiana operates a 'civil law' system borrowed from the French, the other states are 'common law' jurisdictions.   Some state legislatures are unicameral, as in Nigeria, some are bicameral.   In some states judges are elected, in some they are appointed by the governors.   Here you can drink beer, or smoke Indian hemp, there you cannot; here the theft of $100 will attract a fine or a short jail term, there it could attract a sentence of 10 years imprisonment; here they still inflict the death penalty, there they do not.   With the reintroduction of principles drawn from Islamic law in some northern states we are beginning to see more of this sort of thing in Nigeria.   Indeed, the measures being taken differ significantly from state to state—in legislative approach, in many substantive details, and above all in the scope of 'implementation of *shari'a*' attempted—a good example, one may think, of Nigeria's new-found federalism at work even among the states that are predominantly Muslim; a good example of the different states as 'laboratories of democracy', each seeking the local political accommodations that suit it best.   Nigeria needs to see more of this, not less.

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[4] Mr. Justice Holmes in dissent in *Lochner v. New York*, 198 U.S. 45, 76 (1905).

**2.   The implementing states have conceded the supremacy of the federal constitution and laws**. The federal constitution and laws, including the chapter of the constitution on Fundamental Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (which has been enacted into law in Nigeria[5]), set the limits within which the states must act.   These limits have been explicitly recognised and accepted by all the Nigerian states that are implementing *shari'a*.   The governor who has been leading the way, Governor Sani of Zamfara State, said from the beginning that 'Whatever I am doing must be in line with my religious belief . . . as long as it is within the agreement signed by the people of Nigeria to live together which is referred to as the Constitution.'[6]   The Preamble to the Shari'a Courts Law of Zamfara State recites that it is 'subject . . . to the provisions of the Constitution.'[7] Governor Kure of Niger State said that *shari'a* law as implemented in his state would

> submit to the supremacy of the nation's constitution. . . .   [H]e assured that where the system ran contrary to the provisions of the constitution, *shari'a* would bow to give the constitution the right of way. . . .   He said that having vowed to preserve and protect the nation's constitution during his swearing in, his

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[5] Cap. 10 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (1990).

[6] 'Open Letter to the Christian Association of Nigeria', Nigerian *Guardian*, 6 December 1999, p. 69.

[7] ZS No. 6 of 1999, at ¶ 8.

administration would do nothing to flout the provisions under any guise.[8]

Most recently, in announcing the new laws adopted in Bauchi State, Governor Mu'azu reminded everyone that 'I have sworn by the Qu'ran that I will protect what is in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.'[9]  Many other examples, early and late, could be given.

The world should note that this is a large concession.  To repeat:  *shari'a* is the *sacred* law of Islam, believed to be divinely inspired down to the last detail.

> In the Islamic view, governments exist only to ensure that the *shari'a* is properly administered and enforced.  Governments are subordinate to the *shari'a* and must execute its commands and prohibitions.   In other words, what Islam envisages is a scheme of divine nomocracy, in which the law is the medium of social control— truly, a government of laws, not of men.[10]

It is therefore no small thing for a Muslim to concede that those parts of the *shari'a* that may be held by the courts to be inconsistent with man-made laws—the constitution, the African Charter—must to that extent be regarded as of no effect.   This is moreover a

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[8] Reported in *Guardian*, 17 January 2000, p. 71.

[9] Quoted in *Guardian*, 23 February 2001, p. 5.

[10] Mayer (1986), p. 431.

concession that has not been made in other countries where *shari'a* has been reintroduced in recent years—Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan—where constitutions have been formally subordinated to the *shari'a* or simply suspended. But it is a concession which is absolutely necessary within the context of the Nigerian federation; and the *shari'a* also contains a doctrine of necessity, *darura*, under which Muslims are excused from strict observation of the law when necessity demands it. The Muslims of northern Nigeria are saying that they want to implement as much of their law as they possibly can within the Constitution and laws of the federation. That attitude is entirely politically correct.

**3. The implementing states have powerful motives for acting carefully, judiciously, and strictly according to the law**. They evidently do not want to wreck the federation, or to lose the many benefits they derive from it. They do not want to drive non-Muslims from their states. They do not want to be seen, in Nigeria or abroad, as reactionary, intolerant, closed, and despotic, but rather as enlightened, progressive, open, law-abiding. They very clearly want to avoid litigation involving the constitutionality of their new laws, for fear they might lose. And we must allow that many of the Muslims in power in these states are sincerely religious, upstanding, moral, and patriotic persons, who want to see their governments working properly according to the law—for a change—as a testimony, among other things, to the benefits of

implementing *shari'a* there. Accordingly, we can expect them, for example, to avoid misapplication to non-Muslims of laws meant only for Muslims; to limit application of severe punishments only to the clearest cases, as the *shari'a* in any case itself requires; to suppress fanatics and to keep Muslim vigilante groups under control; and in general to try make things work the way they are supposed to work. Examples of these tendencies have already manifested themselves: here are two, abstracted from the newspapers:

> *Guardian* of 6 November 2000, p. 6: The president of the Zamfara Association of Islamic Scholars (ZAIS) says that the government of the state surprised ZAIS with the award of a contract to members of its executive, which would have netted each of them ₦2 million (about $20,000). But ZAIS is rejecting the contract, saying it is against not only the antigraft laws of the nation, but is also against Islamic injunctions. It would send wrong signals to the general public; it would bring ridicule on the *shari'a* legal system in the state. The president said that the job of ZAIS is to enlighten and educate, not to execute capital or other development projects. He advised the government to award the contract to appropriate and reputable professionals.

> *Sunday Punch*, 3 December 2000, pp. 1-2: An Upper S*hari'a* Court in Sokoto State saved a 17-year old man, Abdulrahman Umar, from

amputation of his hand for stealing a tape recorder valued at ₦8,000. A lower court had sentenced Umar based on his confession. But the upper court set the judgment aside and ordered a retrial by another alkali, saying that the sentence was wrong in Islamic law because it did not take many issues surrounding the case into consideration, such as whether Umar and the owner of the tape recorder were friends, Umar's age, the value of the property, and the validity of the confession.

**4. The steps taken are a victory for democracy as well as for federalism**. They have not been imposed by dictators acting unilaterally from above as a means of currying favour with Muslim radicals, as in Pakistan under Zia and in Sudan under Nimeiri and Bashir, or by revolutionary forces sweeping all before them, as in Iran under Khomeni and in Afghanistan under the Taliban. They have been enacted by democratically elected executive and legislative officials responding to the unquestionable desires of the vast majority of their constituents at a relatively local level. This again is unique in the modern political development of Islam.

**5. The Muslim majorities of the implementing states are reclaiming their heritage, and reclaiming their right to develop it themselves**. This is an understandable and healthy reaction by a colonized people whose autonomous development within their own ancient and eminently respectable tradition was

arrested, or shall we say hijacked, when the British took them over in 1900. View the effects of British rule in the north how you will: the fact remains that the laws and institutions the British introduced were alien to the culture and that they ousted the *shari'a* from the place of honour it had held; for many Muslims, British laws and institutions, supposed to have 'failed even in the land that gave them birth', have been convenient scapegoats for every ill Nigeria suffers. There should now be much less of that sort of self-excusing in the twelve states that are implementing *shari'a*. By reclaiming their own legal and cultural heritage and the right to develop it themselves, the Muslim majorities of these states are taking responsibility for themselves back onto themselves. No more blaming anyone else for laws they don't like or for institutions that don't work. They see that if they don't like it, they can change it. This is an important step in political maturation.

**6. The steps taken already represent very significant developments in Islamic law**. The parts of the *shari'a* being enacted have been extracted from the voluminous Arabic texts of the Muslim jurists, and codified in modern form in English which will often also be translated into Hausa, the *lingua franca* of the north. They are being enacted as positive law, by and subject to the control of elected legislatures. The penal provisions have been embedded within much larger 'Shari'a Penal Codes' and 'Shari'a Criminal Procedure Codes', largely English in derivation, that

carry with them all the approved Western concepts of 'due process of law'; these appear to represent permanent additions to Islamic jurisprudence in Nigeria. Westerners have suggested that to defend Islamic values, Muslims will have to understand and explain them in new ways. The steps the implementing states have taken have gone far in that direction already.

**7. The steps taken will help defuse any tendency to violent Islamic fundamentalism**. They will create a middle ground where most Muslims can stand and work within the system, subjecting themselves to the wills of their own majorities. This will not entirely eliminate the radical fringe, but it will reduce and contain it. It will help prevent Islam from 'surviving only as a refuge for blind conservatism.'[11]

**8. The steps taken will help eliminate political illusions and encourage realism**. This is the obverse of Point 5. Many Muslims have expressed inflated expectations about the benefits that will accrue from the implementation of *shari'a*.

> If this will be allowed to operate in Zamfara for six months, that state will be free from crimes. * * * [A person] will at that time, have a sound sleep with his doors wide open, or travel day and night without contemplating a possible attack by armed robbers. * * * If the Sharia law was fully

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[11] Clark (1991), p. 51.

implemented in the northern states, the ills associated with public life in the country would be eradicated. * * * When Sharia becomes fully operational . . . [a person] would want his court case taken to a Sharia court because of the high level of justice and protection of human rights in such courts. * * * All the good moral and religious values that had been lost in the society would be restored. * * * [We will] get Allah's favour. And then we will have abundant resources for development. * * * In the final analysis, the Sharia law, going by its application, is a panacea to every societal ill.[12]

The expected benefits are those associated in many religions with return by the people to conformity with the will of God. But quite probably, notwithstanding the implementation of *shari'a*, the world will wag on much as it always has, and the governments of the implementing states will find that they still have a great deal to do to trim bloated bureaucracies, reform inefficient institutions, introduce transparency and accountability, improve and encourage education, fight crime and corruption, foster development, encourage investment, and so on and on. The point is that having implemented *shari'a*, having, so to speak, cleared away that issue, they will be free to focus on the more immediate causes of their problems and perhaps to address them more realistically than they have in the

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[12] Culled from various Nigerian newspapers, November and December 1999 and January 2000.

past. Of course, there will always be those—the ineliminable radical fringe—who attribute persisting problems to a failure to implement *shari'a thoroughly enough*. But as suggested in paragraph 7, we may hope that the steps taken so far will create a middle ground where most Muslims can stand and work realistically together within the system.

**9.  The steps taken may actually result in better government**: harder work by officials and bureaucrats, less corruption among them, better and more efficient administration of justice, and so forth. When people are operating a system they themselves have put in place, and believe in, and see themselves as being responsible for, they tend to do a better job of it

**10.  The steps taken may result in more fairness towards non-Muslims in the implementing states**. Nigerians are familiar with the longstanding complaints particularly of Christians living in the states in question: problems of getting land to build churches on, or to use for burial grounds; problems with school admissions for the children; with being allowed to teach Christian Religious Knowledge alongside Islamic Religious Knowledge in the schools; with getting equal time, or any time at all, for religious broadcasting; with getting jobs in government. These have been genuine problems. But having reclaimed their own heritage and recognized their power to control and develop it themselves, the Muslim majorities of these states may now be in a position to be more generous to others not

of their own faith than they have been up till now, more tolerant, less discriminatory—perhaps not discriminatory at all, which is what the constitution calls for. Let us not forget that they have powerful motives to do so, see Point 3; and there are glorious examples in the history of Islam, which they may choose to emulate, of cultural openness, inclusiveness and cosmopolitanism, of enlightened, liberal, and progressive government open to people of all creeds and working equally for the benefit of all. That the governments of the twelve states are becoming more 'Islamic' need not imply that they will become less open or less fair to their non-Muslim constituents; the result could be just the opposite.

**Over-Reactions**

Zamfara State announced its intention to implement *shari'a* in October 1999. The early reactions of non-Muslims—in Nigeria this mostly means Christians—were almost wholly negative—clamorously and violently so. The Muslims could not possibly be motivated by sincerely held religious beliefs. Under that hypocritical cover they were actually aiming to 'destabilise the country', to 'create chaos', to 'topple the newly elected president' (a southern Christian), to 'derail Nigeria's new democratic system', to 'bring back the rule of a military dominated by northern Muslims'. They would never rest with implementing their programme in states where they predominated; their ultimate aim was to turn the country into 'the

Islamic Republic of Nigeria'; this indeed was 'the Second Jihad' (the first being that led by Usman dan Fodio in the early 19th century). If their programme went ahead in any state it must 'result in religious war in this country'. The *shari'a* was 'a monster from the pit of hell'; Governor Sani was 'Ayatollah Sani'; his minions were 'the Nigerian Taliban'. Divine intervention must be (and was) invoked by days of fasting and prayer. All of this is typical of the agitated, suspicious, polarized, apocalyptic thinking of many Nigerian Christians about religion and about politics. It is as unrealistic on its side, as the inflated expectations of Muslims about the benefits that will accrue from the implementation of *shari'a* are on theirs, *see* Point 8 above.

**Kaduna**

Unrealistic thinking and rhetorical excess can kill, and in fact mayhem did ensue, in Kaduna State, long a locus of ethnic and religious violence—in Nigeria the two are not always easily distinguishable. Probably the majority of the people living in Kaduna State are Muslims, but no one knows precisely what the breakdown is, because no reliable census has asked the question since 1952, when 61.4% were found to be Muslim.[13] In any case the governor is a Muslim, as are most of the members of the state House of Assembly. In December 1999 the House appointed a committee to consider the advisability of implementing *shari'a* in

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[13] See Paden (1973), p. 44 for a summary of the available statistics.

the state as was being done elsewhere. Large demonstrations began almost at once in the state capital, Kaduna City: thousands of Muslims brought in to shout loudly that *shari'a* must be adopted; thousands of Christians brought in to shout loudly, in effect, 'over our dead bodies'. Despite the efforts of the authorities to keep the peace, clashes on 22 February, 2000 escalated into several days of fighting and killing in Kaduna City that spread also to other parts of the state and left hundreds, perhaps thousands, dead. When the bodies of Christians began to arrive in southern cities for burial, reprisals against Muslims there left many more people dead. Sporadic outbreaks of fighting in Kaduna and elsewhere continued for several weeks before the country simmered down and its attention turned to other things.

Then, outside the glare of the publicity that had attended their first discussions, and relieved of the pressure of shouting mobs, Kaduna's politicians forged and legislated a compromise that seems to suit the situation well: a scheme of *shari'a*, customary, and civil courts to administer the multiple systems of law that have long governed the ethnically and religiously diverse population of the state,[14] and the devolution of limited powers on local government councils to make, as bye-laws, according to the desires of their more homogeneous local populations, laws that would not be accepted throughout the state. Another political experiment in one of Nigeria's thirty-six laboratories of democracy. Already some predominantly Muslim

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[14] Somewhat as proposed in Ostien (1999), pp. 67-81.

local governments have acted on it by implementing pared-down versions of the more ambitious programmes being enacted elsewhere. How well it will work out, and how satisfying it will be, remain to be seen: that of course will depend largely on the realism, the good faith, the civic-mindedness, and the hard work of officials high and low, and of ordinary citizens, all over the state.

## Conclusion ++++++

It remains an open question, throughout the world, to what extent it is possible to reconcile a population with a large proportion of devout Muslims to Western ways of government and of thinking about government.[15] This paper has assumed that Western ways of government are on the whole good ones, better, at least, than others human-kind has yet proved capable of sustaining; and several of the 'ten good things' discussed here suggest that Nigeria's Muslims have gone very far towards accepting them. But the 'reasons for concern' given at the beginning of the paper show that full reconciliation is yet to be achieved.

The comforting thing is that further reconciliation is foreseeable, through a mechanism the Muslims have agreed to: case-by-case adjudication in the courts of concrete constitutional controversies involving litigants with personal stakes in the outcomes. This process will not result in quick or global solutions, but that too

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[15] Bellaigue (2001) p. 40.

is a good thing:  one step of reconciliation at a time. And let us not assume that the decisions will all go one way:  reconciliation is a two-way street, and the *shari'a*, in the various forms it is taking, will likely win as many cases as it loses, as Western ways are adapted to Nigeria just as Nigeria is adapting to them. Meantime, Nigerians should take pride in the fact that these issues are now being addressed and worked out openly, peacefully, democratically, responsibly, according to the due processes of the law.  This is most definitely progress, and it is to be devoutly hoped that it will be sustained.

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   Private Law* (University of Jos) vol. 4, pp. 1-18
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   (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

# Short readings in

# Sphere Sovereignty

For additional sources for the theory of "sphere sovereignty" see

A.  Kuyper in J. Bratt, 1998, pp. 461-490.
R. Mouw, 2000, pp. 87-109.
J. Bolt, 2001, see index entries.

From here on, this appendix contains brief readings or quotations from Kuyperian sources on the subject of sphere sovereignty.  The sources used are all listed in the Bibliography of Vol. 8. You can go there for complete bibliographical information.

**James D. Bratt, editor**   *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader, 1998*

**Abraham Kuyper**    "Sphere Sovereignty"

**p. 466**  What is Sovereignty?  Do you not agree when I define it as the authority that has the right, the duty, and the power to break and avenge all resistance to its will?  Does not your indestructible folk-conscience tell you too that the original, absolute sovereignty cannot reside in any creature but *must* coincide with God's majesty?  If you believe in Him as Deviser and Creator, as Founder and Director of all things, your soul must also proclaim the Triune God as the only absolute Sovereign.  Provided – and this I would emphasize – we acknowledge at the same time that this supreme Sovereign once and still delegates his authority to human beings, so that on earth one never directly encounters God Himself in visible things but always sees his sovereign authority exercised in *human* office.

**pp. 468-469**  …  Hence also rises the danger that one sphere in life may encroach on its neighbor like a sticky wheel that shears off one cog after another until the whole operation is disrupted. Hence also the raison d'etre for the special sphere of authority that emerged in the State.  It must provide for sound mutual interaction among the various spheres, insofar as they are externally manifest, and keep them within just limits.  Furthermore, since personal life can be suppressed by the group in which one lives, the state must protect the individual from the tyranny of his own circle.  This Sovereign, as Scripture tersely puts it, "gives stability to the land by justice" [Prov. 29:4], for *without* justice it destroys itself and falls.  Thus the sovereignty of the State, as the power that protects the individual and defines the mutual relationships among the visible spheres, rises high *above* them by its right to command and compel.  But *within* these spheres that does not obtain.  There another authority rules, an authority that descends directly from God apart from the State.  This authority the State does not *confer* but *acknowledges*.  Even in defining laws for the mutual relationships among the spheres, the State may not set its own will as the

standard but is *bound* by the choice of a Higher will, as expressed in the nature and purpose of these spheres.  The State must see that the wheels operate as intended.  Not to suppress life nor to shackle freedom but to make possible the free movement of life in and for every sphere: does not this ideal beckon every nobler head of state?

**Luis E. Lugo** *Religion, Pluralism and Public Life, 2000*

    **Richard J. Mouw** "Some Reflections on Sphere Sovereignty"

    **p. 89** … he is obviously concerned to keep the government from undue intrusion in the affairs of the other spheres.  The key term here is "undue."  Having used the metaphors of the tree whose roots spread too far and of the grasping octopus, Kuyper quickly goes on to ask: "Does this mean that the government has no right *whatever* of interference in these autonomous spheres of life?"  His answer" "Not at all."  Government, he explains, has a "threefold right and duty": first, to adjudicate disputes between spheres, "compel[ling] mutual regard for the boundary-lines of each"; second, to defend the weak against the strong within each sphere; and third, to exercise the coercive power necessary to guarantee that citizens "bear *personal* and *financial* burdens for the maintenance of the natural unity of the State."[1]  Kuyper's three qualifications here are significant ones.  They not only suggest what governments may do, but they point to some governmental duties.  In this regard, Kuyper does actually work with a kind of sphere sovereignty notion.  Government has a special role to play among the spheres, seeing to it that the relationships among and within the spheres are properly ordered.  This ordering function is an active one.  Indeed, one can make room – given the way Kuyper actually states his three qualifications – for a fairly energetic interventionist pattern by government.

    **p. 99** … For Kuyper, the mandate given to the institutional church – local congregations and the broader ecclesial assemblies – had to do primarily with such activities as worship, catechesis, and evangelism. Churches were not to take on functions that were appropriate to other spheres.

    **p. 100** … Much of his practical activity as a public figure concentrated on opposing two very basic patterns of cultural hegemony: statism, which tries to invest political government with the right to direct all of cultural life to its own purposes; and the kind of ecclesiasticism that in his mind was typified by much of medieval life, where the church went beyond its proper authority in imposing its influence on family life, art, business, and politics.
        Kuyper' choice of the name for the university he founded, the Free University, is an important example in this regard.  The freedom of his university was meant to be a freedom from both governmental and ecclesial control.  Each of these three entities – state, church, and university – belongs to a different sphere: The state as a political body exists to guarantee the distinctness of diverse sphere boundaries; the church is meant to provide a context for preaching, the sacraments, and the fostering of spiritual nurture; the university sponsors scientific activity, in the broad sense of science as the business of

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[1] Kuyper, *Lectures*, 97.

disciplined intellectual investigation. Each of these spheres has its own unique set of functions and norms, so that what goes into good government is not the same as what makes for good preaching or good scholarship. The Christian university, then, must avoid being controlled by government, but it must also stand apart from the direct influence of ecclesiastical authority. For Kuyper, this meant that the university should be governed by an association (*vereniging)* of persons whose sole purpose is to see to it that a specific kind of confessionally guided science is allowed to flourish.

**Elaine Storkey**   "Sphere Sovereignty and the Anglo-American Tradition"

     **p. 191**  Kuyper's argument is that the state and human political institutions cannot claim any overarching total(itarian) authority because ultimate authority belongs to God alone, and all these authorities are relative before God. What is true of the state is true of all other institutions. For although it may be the most powerful and dangerous institution, sovereign state-will is not the only contender for totalitarian control. In some Islamic countries, for example, there is the concentration of power in the religious head, and in the contemporary West the same kind of threat is coming from another sphere: the economic. Given his commitment to a Calvinistic understanding of personhood and liberty, a key question for Kuyper was what form of societal structure can best resist all these bids for tyranny. His answer was the principle of sphere sovereignty, according to which each area of life has its own unique sphere, its own framework of meaning, and its own limited place as a part of human society.

     At one level, this sounds like a simple endorsement of a pluralist society where family, education, work, community, worship, the arts, and science can all flourish in an atmosphere of openness. Indeed, Weber and Hobhouse later came to a similar grasp of institutions as a plural developing matrix.[2] Kuyper's is different from other pluralist models, however. First, he understands the normative frameworks of particular institutions not in terms of individual morality or "tagged-on" ethics but as fundamental structural principles. Second, for Kuyper the limited role of the state does not point to a liberal neutrality but to an active vehicle for public justice, calling for sensitive and relevant judicial processes and laws that recognize the public dimensions of nongovernmental institutions. Third, according to Kuyper the relationship among institutions needs to be constantly and publicly addressed so as to ensure that boundaries are kept, people's lives within each sphere properly respected, and their integrity honored.

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[2] L.T. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1951), 69-89; Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 1:41-62.

**p. 204**  There is no desire to slavishly reproduce the ideas of a long-gone Dutchman as some museum piece or as a nostalgic reworking of a previous century.  The point, rather, is to recognize the relevance of some of his ideas for our own time and era, for where Christian truth shapes and forms our thinking about the contexts in which we live, it will be translatable into any time and place.  The principle of sphere sovereignty is such a principle.  Both as critique and as foundation for contemporary thought and action it still offers a valuable framework for our understanding and ordering of human institutions.


**Vincent E. Bacote**    *The Spirit in Public Theology,*  2005

**p. 81**   In regard to society, Kuyper argued, God gives sovereignty in the individual social spheres " in order that it may be sharply and decidedly expressed that these different developments of social life *have nothing above themselves but God*, and that the State cannot intrude here, and has nothing to command in their domain."[3]  The individual social spheres (such as business, family, educational institutions, and guilds) have the liberty to function on their own according to the divine ordinances that God established for each one.  This does not mean that the government can never intervene.  Rather, it becomes involved only when differing spheres clash, when there is an abuse of weaker individuals within a sphere, or when it needs to coerce all the spheres to contribute to the maintenance of the state's natural unity.[4]  Above all, the state should protect the liberty of the various social spheres, allowing them to flourish.
According to Kuyper, the church has a sovereignty within the state, but not in a Constantinian fashion.[5]  Kuyper contended that Calvinism allows the government to rule apart from the direct influence of the church.  While the magistrates are to rule according to God's divine ordinances, they have independence from the church.  God's Word rules through the conscience of those invested with governmental authority.[6]


**James E. McGoldrick**    *Abraham Kuyper: God's Renaissance Man,* 2000

**pp. 62-63**  Because he viewed God as sovereign over everyone and everything, and man as a fallen creature corrupted by sin, Kuyper contended that all earthly officials, whatever the nature of their positions, possess only a derived authority which is limited to the sphere God has allotted to them.  No one is entitled to rule absolutely, for that is a divine prerogative alone.  God delegates authority to human agents in family, church, school and state, and those who govern in such spheres are accountable to God in the discharge of their duties and in the exercise of their limited authority.  This means, for example, that neither the state nor the church is to intrude upon the other spheres but rather should protect their rights to operate freely.[7]

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[3] Kuyper, *Calvinism*, 116.
[4] Ibid., 124.
[5] Ibid., 128-129.  Kuyper wished to distance himself from Calvin's role in the death of Servetus, and he contended that the principle that led to this unfortunate incident lay in Constantinianism, not in the essential principles of Calvinism.
[6] Ibid., 133-35.
[7] Abraham Kuyper, *Sovereiniteit in Eigen Kring* (Amsterdam: J.H. Kruyt, 1880), pp. 9-12.

**p. 79**   The authority of government is subject to the laws of God, and civil rulers must employ those laws as their guidelines.  The state is not subject to the church.  The Anti-Revolutionaries desired to apply divine laws to national life outside the structure of the church so as to avoid creating a theocracy, or perhaps an ecclesiocracy.

**pp. 153-154**   John Calvin, in a chapter of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* entitled "Christian Liberty,' rejected the nature/grace division.[8]  He stressed instead that the spheres of life are autonomous in relation to one another, but are all subject to the laws of God.  Church and state operate in distinct spheres of authority, and each supports the other in the execution of its God-given tasks.  There is a sphere of life in which there are no biblical mandates, and there the human conscience must decide.  Culture is part of this sphere, and Christians must apply the antithesis within culture to distinguish their education and art from those of unbelievers.  Church and state must not rule over culture.  Calvin was not consistent about this, however, for in Geneva education was subject to both church and state.
Abraham Kuyper amplified Calvin's teaching about the spheres of authority and applied it vigorously so as to present a consistent structure in which all spheres could function autonomously.  He insisted on the separation of the spheres so as to free culture from the dictates of church and state.  He showed that sin does not inhere within matter but in human nature, so believers should approve the cultural arts and enjoy the provisions of common grace, and thereby implement the requirements of the cultural mandate.

**p. 160**  Although he emphasized the divine right of government, Kuyper insisted that civil rulers remain within the sphere of authority God has designated for them.  They must not rule the church, nor may the church dictate to the state.  When Groen and Kuyper wanted to exert Christian influence upon political affairs, they founded the Anti-Revolutionary Party, a political movement separate from any ecclesiastical body.

**p. 163**  In accord with his concept of the spheres, Kuyper contended that civil magistrates have no legitimate authority over church affairs.  They are not competent to judge the claims of competing churches to be the true church, or to be true to God's requirements.  If government had such authority, it would be an absolute regime.  Churches must determine their own understanding of divine revelation and issue their own confessions of faith, and civil rulers must not favour one church over others.

**p. 164**  … By insisting that absolute sovereignty belongs to God alone, he argued that the authority of every earthly sphere must be limited, and the state should protect the rights of those spheres to assure that justice prevails.  Sphere authority, when implemented faithfully, protects liberty by denying the state, the church, or any other authority, the right to rule absolutely.

**p. 165**  In his inaugural address at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880, Abraham Kuyper explained the concept of sphere authority and made specific applications to several areas of life.  He affirmed the independence of the churches from state control, and he categorically denied the contention of some humanists that the state is the supreme authority which grants or permits some freedoms to its subjects.

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[8] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III, XIX.

**Peter S. Heslam**  *Creating a Christian Worldview,* 1998

**p. 154**  For Kuyper, society was made up of various spheres such as the family, business, science, and art, which derived their authority not from the state, but directly from God, to whom they were accountable.  The phrase he used to denote this theory, which he launched in his speech at the opening of the Free University in 1880, was "sovereignty in the individual social spheres" now often referred to by English-speaking commentators as "sphere-sovereignty."

**pp. 155-156**   Every sphere of life develops spontaneously, Kuyper argued, according to the data it received at creation.  In the sphere of the family, for instance, the divinely created duality of man and woman gave rise to marriage, and from the innate power of reproduction, children are born who are naturally interrelated to each other.  When these offspring marry and bear their own children, yet more ties and blood relationships are formed, and so the organic interrelatedness of human society is perpetuated in an entirely spontaneous way.  The same kind of development was true for all the other spheres of society, through the exercise of powers which God had invested within nature: since these powers operated only in an organic way, the organic development of the social spheres was sustained.
… he argued that society should instead be understood as a moral (*zedelijk*) organism, in the sense that it was held together by groups sharing common philosophical positions.[9]
… It also fitted well with his idea, based on his concept of worldview, that Roman Catholicism, humanism, and Calvinism, as the three legitimate historical traditions in Dutch society, each had the right to organize those portions of society that adhered to their particular principles.  Each group also had the right to argue that its principles should provide the ideological basis for the entire social organism, a right Kuyper did not hesitate to make use of, arguing frequently that the Calvinist tradition was most closely attuned to Dutch national character, and that it represented the historical "core" (*kern*) of Dutch society.  He insisted, however, that such convictions could not be imposed by one group on any other; the organic nature of society demanded mutual recognition, and an absence of coercion or persecution.[10]
It is likely that the acceptance of this idea played an important role in the creation and legitimization of *verzuiling*, the uniquely Dutch form of political and social pillarization.  It certainly provided the rationale for Kuyper's argument that no single sector of society could presume to represent the best interests of the entire nation, an error, he thought, of which the Liberals were particularly guilty.[11]  As such it formed the basis of Kuyper's political pluralism.

**pp. 157-158**   …What is important to point out here is the role he reserved for government, particularly as his insistence on the autonomy of the social spheres implies that this role was a severely restricted one.  The state, he insisted, could not force any of the social spheres to conform to its will but, as a sphere of its own, was to occupy a place alongside all other spheres.  The supremacy of the state was, however, evident in its threefold obligation to intervene in society, in order to enforce mutual respect for the boundary lines between each sphere whenever a conflict arose between spheres; to defend the powerless within a sphere whenever that sphere abused its authority; and to impose taxes for the maintenance of national unity.  Therefore,

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[9] Kuyper, *Ons Program*, p. 57.
[10] Kuyper, *Ons Program*, 2nd edition, pp. 16-21.
[11] *De Standaard*, 10 March 1890.

although the state was merely one of the social spheres, it did enjoy supremacy, and the relation between this supremacy and the sovereignty of the social spheres was to be regulated by means both of constitutional law and of representative government, aspects of statecraft that were hallmarks of Calvinism.  Once again Kuyper's position came very close to that of von Gierke, who argued that the role of the state was to function as an umpire, maintaining the minimal conditions of order, determining conflicts of jurisdiction, and protecting members of one association from the encroachments of another.

**Abraham Kuyper**    *Lectures on Calvinism*, 1931

**p. 85**    …But the Calvinistic confession of the Sovereignty of God holds good for *all* the world, is true for all nations and is of force in all authority, which man exercises over man; even in the authority which parents possess over their children.  It is therefore a political faith which may be summarily expressed in these three theses: 1) God only—and never any creature—is possessed of sovereign rights, in the destiny of the nations, because God alone created them, maintains them by His Almighty power, and rules them by His ordinances. 2) Sin has, in the realm of politics, broken down the direct government of God, and therefore the exercise of authority, for the purpose of government, has subsequently been invested in men, as a mechanical remedy.  And 3) In whatever form this authority may reveal itself, man never possesses power over his fellow-man, in any other way than by an authority which descends upon him from the majesty of God.

**p. 90**    In a Calvinistic sense we understand hereby, that the family, the business, science, art and so forth are all social spheres, which do not owe their existence to the state, and which do not derive the law of their life from the superiority of the state, but obey a high authority within their own bosom; an authority which rules, by the grace of God, just as the sovereignty of the State does.

**p. 91**    In this independent character a special *higher authority* is of necessity involved and this highest authority we intentionally call – *sovereignty in the individual social spheres*, in order that it may be sharply and decidedly expressed that these different developments of social life have *nothing above themselves but God*, and that the State cannot intrude here, and has nothing to command in their domain.  As you feel at once, this is the deeply interesting question of our civil liberties.[12]

**pp. 96-97**      In many different directions we see therefore that sovereignty in one's own sphere asserts itself – 1) In the social sphere, by personal superiority. 2) In the corporative sphere of universities, guilds, associations, etc. 3) In the domestic sphere of the family and of married life, and  4) In communal autonomy.
In all these four spheres the State-government cannot impose its laws, but must reverence the innate law of life.  God rules in these spheres, just as supremely and sovereignly through his chosen *virtuosi*, as He exercises dominion in the sphere of the State itself, through his chosen *magistrates*.

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[12] *Cf.* Dr. A. Kuyper, *Calvinism the Source and Guarantee of Our Constitutional Liberties,* 1873; and Dr. A. Kuyper, *Sovereignty in the Spheres of Society*, 1880.

Bound by its own mandate, therefore, the government may neither ignore nor modify nor disrupt the divine mandate, under which these social spheres stand.  The sovereignty, by the grace of God, of the government is here set aside and limited, for God's sake, by another sovereignty, which is equally divine in origin.  Neither the life of science nor of art, nor of agriculture, nor of industry, nor of commerce, nor of navigation, nor of the family, nor of human relationship may be coerced to suit itself to the grace of the government.  The State may never become an octopus, which stifles the whole of life.  It must occupy its own place, on its own root, among all the other trees of the forest, and thus it has to honor and maintain every form of life which grows independently in its own sacred autonomy.

Does this mean that the government has no right *whatever* of interference in these autonomous spheres of life?  Not at all.

It possesses the threefold right and duty: 1) Whenever different spheres clash, to compel mutual regard for the boundary-lines of each;  2) To defend individuals and the weak ones, in those spheres, against the abuse of power of the rest; and  3) To coerce all together to bear *personal* and *financial* burdens for the maintenance of the natural unity of the State.

**p. 106**  But this can in no regard break the fundamental rule that the government must honor the complex of Christian churches as the multiform manifestation of the Church of Christ on earth.  That the magistrate has to respect the liberty, i.e. the sovereignty, of the Church of Christ in the individual sphere of these churches.  That Churches flourish most richly when the government allows them to live from their own strength on the voluntary principle.

**H. Evan Runner   *The Relation of the Bible to Learning*, 1967**

**p. 151**   I am sometimes asked what proof-texts there are for sphere-sovereignty, and the professor of sacred cow fame has repeatedly stoutly declared that there are none.  No; there are not, if you want a single verse.  But at least the theologians among us know that a similar state of affairs prevails with respect to such a fundamental doctrine as that of the Trinity.  Permit me to quote B.B. Warfield here.  In the volume of his collected writings entitled *Biblical Doctrines* (p. 143) he writes" "It is not in a text here and there that the New Testament bears its testimony to the doctrine of the Trinity.  The whole book is Trinitarian to the core; all its teaching is built on the assumption of the Trinity; and its allusions to the Trinity are frequent, cursory, easy and confident.  It is with a view to the cursoriness of the allusions to it in the New Testament that it has been remarked that 'the doctrine of the Trinity is not so much heard as overheard in the statements of Scripture'".  In like manner I would say of sphere-sovereignty that its Biblical proof is the integral meaning of scriptural revelation; without sphere-sovereignty the Scriptures simply cannot be understood.

**Hebden Taylor  *The Christian Philosophy of Law, Politics and the State*, 1966**

**p. 413**  … This doctrine of the sovereignty of the various spheres of society is perhaps the most significant element in Dooyeweerd's sociology and political science, since with it he wants to provide modern Christians with an intellectual weapon in the struggle against the totalitarian tendencies of modern society.

**pp. 415-416**  What then is the principle of sphere sovereignty?  The answer is that God alone is absolutely sovereign.  No particular bearer of authority on earth is the highest power from which other forms of authority are derived.  No community or institution, not even the state, must absorb the individual completely.  Only the Kingdom of God should absorb all of men's interests.  And the Kingdom of God should not, in the collectivist sense, be identified with any temporal organization.  Every temporal organization must reflect the divine law of love as it governs the eternal Kingdom of God.  As we have seen, a community is characterized by the relationship of authority and subjection.  But this authority is always limited, being defined by its own structural principle.  Within human society, therefore there is no organization such as the state, which is the whole in which other societies are but parts.  H. Van Riessen says:

> Each sphere of authority is limited by its own societal relationship.  The relation of authority and freedom exists *within* such relationships and not externally.  The social relationships exist together on a basis of equality; the one is not subordinate to the authority and control of the other.  Subjection to authority exists only within a relationship.  *Societal relationships properly stand in a coordinate relation to each other, not in a preferred or subordinate position.*[13]

In other words, the family, the university, the commercial or business enterprise, the farm, the recreational club and whatever other groups naturally develop out of the organic life of human society, including the churches, do *not* owe their origin, existence, or structural principle to the state.  They have an inner principle and cultural task all their own, entrusted to them by Almighty God.  They hold a cultural mandate directly from the Creator for the pursuance of their own peculiar task.  Upon this sovereignty given them by God the State may not infringe.

**p. 417**  … The laws which are to be enforced in these social spheres are *the laws inherent in the sphere itself*.  Similarly, in a business organization, no set of arbitrary governmental edicts and regulations can promote business operations, but only the economic laws of the business world apply; for example, a business must operate at a profit or it will go bankrupt.  Farming likewise does not receive its laws of operation and terms of reference from the government in power but only from God, and it must obey God's great ecological and biological laws for the lands and forests.

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[13] H. Van Riesen, *The Society of the Future*, p. 71.

## Kuyperian Views on Pluralism

## Selected Quotations

**Luis E. Lugo, editor   *Religion, Pluralism and Public Life*, 2000**

**p. 88**   The need to keep government in its proper place is a topic that Kuyper addressed with considerable passion in his Stone Lecture "Calvinism and Politics."  The creation order, he argued, displays a rich variety of societal spheres.  Since all of these spheres have the same origin in "the divine mandate," political authority must respect the fact each of the other spheres has its own integrity.  "Neither the life of science nor of art, nor of agriculture, nor of industry, nor of commerce, nor of navigation, nor of the family, nor of human relationship may be coerced to suit itself to the grace of government," says Kuyper.  "The State may never become an octopus, which stifles the whole of life."  He then abruptly switches metaphors and emphasizes that political government "must occupy its own place, on its own root, among all the other trees of the forest, and thus it has to honor and maintain every form of life which grows independently in its own sacred autonomy."[1]

**p. 91** … As Gordon Spykman summarized the Kuyperian concept: "Each sphere has its own identity, its own unique task, its own God-given prerogatives.  On each God has conferred its own peculiar right of existence and reason for existence.[2] …

**p. 191** Kuyper's argument is that the state and human political institutions cannot claim any overarching total(itarian) authority because ultimate authority belongs to God alone, and all these authorities are relative before God.  What is true of the state is true of all other institutions.  For although it may be the most powerful and dangerous institution, sovereign state-will is not the only contender for totalitarian control.  In some Islamic countries, for example, there is the concentration of power in the religious head, and in the contemporary West the same kind of threat is coming from another sphere: the economic.  Given his commitment to a Calvinistic understanding of personhood and liberty, a key question for Kuyper was what form of societal structure can best resist all these bids for tyranny.  His answer was the principle of sphere sovereignty, according to which each area of life has its own unique sphere, its own framework of meaning, and its own limited place as a part of human society.
At one level, this sounds like a simple endorsement of a pluralist society where family, education, work, community, worship, the arts, and science can all flourish in an atmosphere of openness.  Indeed, Weber and Hobhouse later came to a similar grasp of institutions as a plural developing matrix.[3]  Kuyper's is different from other pluralist models, however.  First, he understands the normative frameworks of particular institutions not in terms of individual

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[1] Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931) 96-97.
[2] Gordon J. Spykman, "Sphere Sovereignty in Calvin and the Calvinist Tradition," in *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*, ed. David E. Holwerda (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 167.
[3] L.T. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1951), 69-89; Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 1:41-62.

morality or "tagged-on" ethics but as fundamental structural principles.  Second, for Kuyper the limited role of the state does not point to a liberal neutrality but to an active vehicle for public justice, calling for sensitive and relevant judicial processes and laws that recognize the public dimensions of nongovernmental institutions.  Third, according to Kuyper the relationship among institutions needs to be constantly and publicly addressed so as to ensure that boundaries are kept, people's lives within each sphere properly respected, and their integrity honored.

**p. 203**  … his is a true pluralism, not another controlling force masquerading as freedom.  Yet, even though postmodern culture has taught us a distrust of metanarratives, many in the Anglo-American world are finding that it is not too late to heed Kuyper's message.  Both Britain and America need a new form of public pluralism that will both resist the totalitarianism of consumption and seek justice for different worldview communities.  As Stanley Carlson-Thies suggests, we can learn from the Dutch example, not by trying to segment American society in a copy of the way Holland was structured under Kuyper's influence but by allowing legal reform and public policies to express worldview differences in various arenas of public life, such as welfare or education.[4]

**James E. McGoldrick**   *Abraham Kuyper: God's Renaissance Man*, 2000

**p. 70** … Kuyper opposed the concept of a state church and demanded toleration for all religions, along with freedom of speech, press and assembly.[5]  His belief in sphere authority required separation of church and state and promoted the civil liberties that relationship allows.

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[4] Stanley Carlson-Thies, "The Meaning of Dutch Segmentation for Modern America," in *Sharing the Reformed Tradition: The Dutch-North American Exchange, 1846-1996*, ed. George Harinck and Hans Krabbendam (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 19965), 159, 163.

[5] Kuyper, 'Calvinism: Origin and Safeguard of Liberties,' p. 674

*Appendix 74:*

# Collectivism versus Individualism:

# A False Dilemma

# QUOTATIONS

**Hebden Taylor *The Christian Philosophy of Law, Politics and the State,* 1966**

**pp. 423-424**  The error of individualism is that it constructs the communities and associations of human society out of elemental atomistic relations between individuals conceived as sovereign agents with the result that it does not recognize that these communities also have their own peculiar structural principles.  But collectivism absolutizes one of the many temporal communities, namely, the one that is made to embrace all the others, as the whole which embraces and enfolds the parts.  This was true of the classical city-state and of all modern totalitarian regimes.  The error of such collectivistic solutions is that then this single all-embracing community is given the place of the religious basic community, the Kingdom of God, which transcends time and place.  Man cannot thus be enslaved by any such absolutized earthly community, be it church or state, since man, in the center of his personality, his "heart," also transcends time, while as long as he remains in history he functions in a multiplicity of equally significant communities and associations.[1]

The Biblical view of man in society can alone provide a way out of the dead-end humanist street of individualism versus collectivism, for it alone clearly reveals that man is an individual created together with other men.  Man's personality can develop only in relationship with God and with his neighbor.  Man is called by his Creator to love the Lord his God with all his "heart" and his neighbor as himself.  Must we therefore conclude that man is a little of both, partly individualist and partly collectivist, and that we simply have to try and steer a middle course between these two extremes?  The answer is no.  For the Biblical understanding of personality in society is entirely different.

The common error of both individualism and collectivism, in typically humanistic fashion, is that they take their starting point in man, whether that be the individual or the group.  The Biblical view of man in society transcends this dilemma.  In the light of the Word of God we know that God created man for community with his fellow men and as a social being.  This means that man does not find his purpose in himself as Locke supposed nor in the group as Karl Marx supposed but in the God who made him.  The individual and the community are equally called to live in obedience to the laws of their Creator.  In fact it is only by such obedience to God's law for man in society that the present conflict between the individual and his society will be resolved.  Both the individual and the community will then occupy their God-given place in a society dominated by love and service.

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[1] J.D. Dengerink, *Critical Historical Analysis of the Sociological Development of the Principle of Sphere Sovereignty in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Kok, Kampen, 1948), p. 192

*Appendix 75:*

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**This file contains three documents written by Boer. You can find Documents 2 and 3 by &lt;Find: xxxx&gt;.**

1. **Reflections on Ethnocentrism**
2. **Fulani vs Vom Veterinary Institute**
3. **The Yelwa Debacle from the Muslim Perspective**

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## Reflections on Ethnocentrism

## Jan H. Boer[1]

**NOTE:  The following are entries from a book of daily meditations.**

### Day 56 - Ethnocentrism

*Genesis 10:22-25  Arphaxad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg.*

In some languages, the name of an ethnic group means something like "Man," while the name for other people may be something like "Barbarian."  Perhaps this is so in your language?  Behind such names lies the human tendency to put yourself or your people at the centre of the stage, to think of them as the most important in all the world, as the greatest.  This tendency encourages tribalism, nationalism and racism.  It is an ugly and dangerous thing that causes terrible troubles in our country year after year.

In some ways, the Table of Nations is like another one produced by the ancient Babylonians.  But there is an important difference between these two versions.  That one makes the Babylonians the greatest, while this Table does not even mention Israel.  Israel is represented only by the ancestors listed above.  There is no attempt to elevate her to a special position.

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[1]J. Boer, *The Prophet Moses for Today: 366 Social Biblical Meditations*, 1995. For more discussion on ethnocentrism, see J. Boer, 2006, vol. 5, pp. 110-113, 116-118. ***Pluralism is also subject to abuse in that it makes it possible to entertain secret aims to overthrow the existing pluralistic balance by clever manipulation of the normal democratic protocols. Muslims in the West are often accused of doing just that***. *Nigerian Christians will have to watch for that.*

The Bible is not an ethnocentric account of a nation. It is the story of God's interaction with the world, including Israel. God is at its centre, not any nation, not even Israel. If there is anything special about Israel, it is that God chose a special role for her. That role was not to lead to pride or tribalism, for that role was not their own achievement but a gift of God. And that gift of God was for the benefit of all the world. Is your ethnic group a blessing to others? How?

## Day 58 - Pride Before the Fall

*Genesis 11:8 So the Lord scattered them ...over all the earth.*

People became proud of their achievements. Cultural development had continued to the point where men planned to build a large city with a huge tower that could be seen from afar. They had several motives. For one, they needed a safe place. They felt a city would provide that. They also sought to make a name for themselves. Surely a huge tower would achieve that!

Again, a case of sinful cultural development. The human race had come a long way from the simple life of the Garden of Eden. They had indeed worked out the Cultural Mandate—except for one thing. Cultural development was meant to take place in the fear of God and for His honour. But these people did it for their own honour. That kind of development always ends up in disunity, distortion and oppression. The Lord knows that.

So they were confused and scattered. That was a natural effect that was bound to come. When a group is very large and bent on its own honour, you will find that soon sub-groups form that begin to fight each other. Before long, they don't understand each other anymore, even if they all speak English. Is that not true for Yoruba, Hausa Ibo Tiv, Jukun and the rest of us? That's Nigeria's trouble. It would not happen with our hearts attuned to God. With clean hearts we could make Nigeria one and great instead of breaking it down.

## Day 107 – Tribalism

*Exodus 20:3 You shall have no other gods before me.*

There is much friction these days between Christians and Muslims. Sometimes people talk as if Nigerians will go to war against each other because of religious differences. May God forbid this from ever happening. The God we know from the Bible is a God of peace, though He can be pushed to the wall and do things He normally does not like.

One wise man said to me one day that Nigeria will never go to war over religion, but it MIGHT do so for reasons of tribe. That is, to most of us our tribe is more important than our God. Thus tribalism becomes a form of idolatry and a transgression of the first commandment.

That being the case, it is no wonder that so-called Christians will sometimes USE THE CHURCH for the advantage of their own ethnic group at the expense of other groups belonging to the same church. Again, it is no wonder that some people are ready to break up a church for the benefit THEY THINK their own group will receive. In all such cases God has been replaced by the idol of the tribe.

Tribalism is idolatry. It is putting an idol, the tribe, before God. It is also rampant in politics and business—and it brings destruction.

Well, what would you expect when you make God secondary? A healthy country? A healthy church? A healthy community? Of course not. Thank God for your tribe, but beware of tribalism.


## Day 342  Aliens

*Exodus 22:21  Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt.*

The worship of the idols of Pagan nations led to soaking the ground with the blood of innocent children. In contrast, Israel had a God who liberates from oppression. Our verse talks of the need to protect aliens.

The aliens referred to here were people who had settled in an area but who had no blood ties with the local people. Yet they had lived in a place long enough to be associated with the local people. They could no longer be called "strangers." They may well have been born in the place. Nigerian equivalents would be a Tiv man living long among the Ibo or a Jukun family among the Jarawa. They were like our modern settlers.

In Nigeria, sometimes settlers have taken over control. The situation envisioned in our text is that of a weak minority that needed legal protection. Local people often discriminate against aliens. They many deprive them of any rights. They may keep them from jobs or out of schools.

God is a merciful God. He reminds His people that they were oppressed aliens at one time. They should remember how God freed them from oppression and then do the same for the aliens among them. This reminder is repeated several times (Exodus 23:8; Deut. 10:19) and is thus apparently important to God.

Many Nigerians are "aliens" in their own country, since they live among other ethnic groups. How do you treat them?


## Day 343  How to Treat an Alien

*Leviticus 24:22  You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born.*

This is not the first time in these meditations we think about aliens and their rights. The issue of tribalism or ethnocentrism is close to the concern for aliens. Many Nigerian aliens in Nigeria complain of discrimination against them. The local state laws do not openly discriminate against them. Yet these aliens feel the force of discrimination, especially in terms of jobs and educational opportunities for their children.

We may pretend to be a modern nation, but the God of Israel was far ahead of many of us in His insistence on having the same law for the alien as for the local. Not only the same law in the book but also the same law in practice. In Deuteronomy 1:16, judges are told to "hear the disputes...and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between one of them and an alien." And then you have Deut. 27:19 – "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien…" This is clear language that leaves no room for excuses. This strictly forbids thinking in terms of "My brother is always right." Your brother may be wrong and you had better recognize it when he is.

Being an alien myself, I am reminded of my status whenever traders try to charge me higher prices. This goes against Lev. 19:33, but even more against Deut. 10:19 – "And you are to love those who are aliens." Which aliens do you love? Why?

## Day 344  Role of Alien

*Leviticus 18:26  But you must keep my decrees and my laws.  The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things.*

Aliens have certain rights, according to the Bible, but also obligations. Living in the Middle Belt of Nigeria as I have since 1966, I am only too familiar with the ugly picture of the dominant settler communities who have taken over from the locals. While the Bible calls for the acceptance of settlers or aliens, it also provides guidelines for them to follow. The basic guideline is that they follow all the commandments God gave His people. That's what our text says today.

Sometimes local people have exploded with long-developing resentment against settler communities that have taken over local power and despise the locals, their customs, their religions and their rights. These situations often go back to colonial times, when such areas were put under Hausa or Fulani emirs and who then encouraged their own people to come and dominate.

Our verse and others like it (Ex. 12:49; Lev. 16:29; 17:8-9; Num. 15:14, 29) expect the alien settler to recognize the same laws by which the people of God conduct themselves. If he puts himself above them, despises them and tramples on them, he can only expect resentment and discrimination. Worse, if he tries to force his own stamp on the host community, the community may resist him. He is no longer an alien protected by God's laws. He has become an invader.

Not surprising that some locals rise up.

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# DOCUMENT 2

# Fulani vs Vom Veterinary Institute
Jan H. Boer

A specific form of sectarian injustice was perceived by the Muslim Fulani nomadic cowherders in Plateau State.  The Independent League of Fulani Refugees published a statement with the second sentence reading as follows:  "Various forms of ethno-religious antagonism, aggression and aggravation (in the guise of covert, overt, actual, constructive, direct and oblique actions and inactions) have occurred and continued unabated in Plateau State."  The sentence referred specifically to "the antagonistic stance of the management of the Veterinary Institute at Vom towards the Fulani tribe. The antagonism took the form of a deliberate and sustained denial of adequate veterinary services to the Fulani herdsmen."  This was not only a case of serious injustice, but endangered the entire nation's supply of beef.  Though governments, most Muslims and many Christians always blame political, economic and ethnic factors for such developments, the League blamed religious and ethnic factors and considered it part of "the sectarian crisis on the Plateau" with its "intermittent intervals of lull and relapse between Christians and Muslims."  They explained that the management of the Institute consisted primarily of "native ethnic Christians," who had targeted the Fulani on "religious and ethnic accounts."  The League insisted that there was this "antagonistic posture of the Christian-dominated management."  Though other factors played a role, they were all "but an aspect of sectarian violence."

The League offered a set of five proposals to ameliorate this situation.  They appealed to international agencies associated with the United Nations to step in to ascertain the truth of the situation and, thereafter and in co-operation with domestic agencies, to put in place formal mechanisms to rectify the problem.  Amongst the solutions they suggested relocation of the Institute to a state with "a higher level of security and serenity than Plateau."  The FG was encouraged to step in to avoid the lingering suspicion that it approved of the situation. Sanctions were to be implemented against the perpetrators.  A comprehensive medical checkup of all livestock in Nigeria and surrounding countries should be conducted.[2]

In another statement  published simultaneously on Gamji, the League profusely thanked Human Rights Watch for sending in investigators. "They came and saw. Now, they know. The conscientious and assiduous manner by which the two ladies conducted

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[2]Independent League of Fulani Refugees, "Possible Outbreak…," 2003.

their work highly commends itself." The League offered them their "unreserved and eternal appreciation."  The ladies were from London and Washington.[3]

These proposals, though directed to a very specific sectoral problem, contain features that most of us should recognise by now as common across the board. I have personally been told by Fulanis themselves of the strong prejudice against them in Plateau State, even in Christian institutions. There is the suspicion of FG partiality. There is the fear that culprits will go free.  There were three highly unusual aspects to these appeals.  There were the call on the international community and the strong insistence on the part of these Muslims on religion as the basic factor—not their own, of course. This is the more significant in a document addressed largely to secular international institutions, where they would normally be advised to tone down the religious aspect. The acceptance of such a group of these two foreignWhite ladies, either secular or Christian, and their wholehearted appreciation of their work shatters every stereotype!  Overcoming the problems the Fulanis identified would require the implementation of various recommendations scattered throughout Volume 8 as well as the resolutions about the "farmer-grazer conflict" published in *Plateau Resolves.*[4]
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# DOCUMENT 3

# The Yelwa Debacle from the Muslim Perspective

**Jan H. Boer,  2009**


With reference to the 2004 violence at Yelwa, Plateau State, and under the heading "Revenge," the BBC reported that "mutilated and charred corpses were still lying on the main street of the remote market town [of Yelwa]."  "Almost every house lining the main street of Yelwa was burned and some were still smouldering. A mosque was also destroyed."  "Thousands of Muslims lined the roadside chanting religious slogans and vowing revenge on the attackers.  'Allah will avenge us. The pagans have killed our people,' said one man.  In Christian villages near Yelwa, hundreds of youth were sitting on the roadside, apparently awaiting further violence." Reports also had it that "several thousand men from four predominantly Christian ethnic groups surrounded Yelwa on Sunday."  Some of them wore uniforms, while other were partially stripped and painted black.  They allegedly carried "sophisticated weapons" and moved from "house

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[3]Independent League of Fulani Refugees,  "The Continuing Saga…," 2003.
[4]*Plateau State State of Nigeria Gazette,* 11 Nov/2004, pp. 125-127.

to house, killing whomever they could find." The report also indicated that 45 Christians were killed earlier in a Yelwa church where "they had taken refuge."

In response to above, Justice Abdulkadir Orire, a retired judge and Secretary General of JNI, reported that 200 Muslims were killed when they were attacked by "Christian militiamen with machine guns." He wondered where the Christians obtained their weaponry, if not from abroad. He also "urged the Plateau Governor [Dariye] to clarify reports that he told non-indigenous people to leave." BBC Africa analyst Elizabeth Blunt explained that "non-indigenous" "means the Muslim community, even though it may be 100 years since their families settled in the area." According to *DT's* team of Mohammed and Muhammad, the Government "denied asking Muslims to vacate the state," but the team insisted that Governor Dariye did make the suggestion and that it "generated a lot of controversy." The allegation is further supported by Mohammed Haruna, who referred to Dariye's "repeated remarks about serving quit notice to 'unruly tenants.'"[5] A few days later, *DT* reported that the Governor threatened to arrest their reporters in the state for being "most unfair, biased and sentimental." He did, in fact, send a *DT* representative "packing," saying, "He can go and stay somewhere and be writing it. He cannot stay here and attempt to change the history of the Plateau." He then called on "all strangers to support the sons of the soil to bring about peace and progress," but still insisting that "even if I spent 150 years in Bukuru, I cannot become an indigene."[6]

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[5]BBC, 5 May/2004. S. Mohammed and R. Muhammad, 7 May/2004. M. Haruna, Dec/2004.
[6]E. Bello, 8 May/2004.

# MULTICULTURAL DEMOCRACY:
# IN SEARCH OF A REFORMED APPROACH

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the invitation. I am a constitutional lawyer and a political scientist, who specializes in church-state relations, but not a trained theologian. It is therefore an honor to speak to you this morning.

The title of the paper that I would like to present is: 'Multicultural Democracy: in Search of a Reformed Approach'. As the title indicates already, it is very much meant to serve as a discussion paper, not as the final word about this complex issue.

The paper consists of four sections. I will start out by saying a few things about the concept of multicultural democracy in general. Next, I will specifically deal with the topic of church and state, which you will be discussing today and which is obviously at the heart of the concept of multicultural democracy. Section three looks at the Reformed contribution to the topic of church and state in religiously plural societies in the past. Finally, section four raises the question whether the notion of pluriform democracy, as developed by Reformed thinkers and put into practice in the Netherlands during the better part of the twentieth century, should be replaced by the concept of multicultural democracy.

## 1.  THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURAL DEMOCRACY

The starting point of my paper is what to me was the most inspiring publication of last year: the Human Development Report 2004, published for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). According to this report, entitled *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*, "[c]ultural diversity is here to stay – and to grow. States need to

find ways of forging national unity amid this diversity. The world, ever more interdependent economically, cannot function unless people respect diversity and build unity through common bonds of humanity. In this age of globalization the demands for cultural recognition can no longer be ignored by any state or by the international community".[1]

The way states manage this cultural diversity matters because cultural liberty, "being able to choose one's identity – who one is – without losing the respect of others or being excluded from other choices,"[2] can be regarded as a human right. Usually five categories of human rights are distinguished: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. Of these five categories cultural rights have, certainly in the West, up till now received the least attention. Yet, there can be no doubt that cultural rights are human rights as well, and that their importance grows almost by the day.

The fact that cultural liberty is a human right implies, that states are under an obligation to actively pursue multicultural policies, "policies that explicitly recognize cultural differences."[3] The so-called *Minorities at Risk* data set, created by researchers at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, estimates that almost 900 million people in the world today, that is around one of seven, are discriminated against or disadvantaged because of their identity.[4] Yet, it is perfectly possible for a state to be multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious, et cetera. In order to achieve this, nation states should be replaced by state nations, "where various 'nations' – be they ethnic, religious, linguistic or indigenous identities – can coexist peacefully and cooperatively in a single state polity."[5] More specifically, according to the Human Development Report 2004, multicultural policies are required in the following five fields: political participation, access to justice, language, socio-economic policies and, last but not least, religion.

As far as political participation is concerned, a multicultural conception of democracy requires that power-sharing arrangements be introduced. Power can either be shared territorially through federalism or, when the different groups are dispersed throughout a country, through consociation. Consociation is "a political arrangement in which various groups, such as ethnic or racial populations within a country or region, share power according to an agreed formula or mechanism."[6] Examples of such mechanisms include an electoral system of proportional representation, executive power-sharing, provisions for cultural autonomy, and safeguards in the form of mutual vetoes.

As far as access to justice is concerned, recognition of customary law ought to be considered, which could mean the introduction of some form of legal pluralism in for

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[1] At 2.
[2] At 1.
[3] At 2.
[4] Cited at 31.
[5] At 49.
[6] Www.homoexcelsior.com.

example an area of law such as personal law which governs sensitive topics like marriage, divorce, guardianship, adoption, inheritance and succession.

As far as language is concerned, recognition of a language "symbolizes respect for the people who speak it, their culture and their full inclusion in society."[7] Therefore, in addition to a unifying national language the adoption of one or two local languages is recommended.

As far as socio-economic policies are concerned, recognizing legitimate collective claims to land and livelihoods and taking affirmative action are two means of addressing inequalities between groups.

Finally, because religion is of profound importance to one's identity, from the point of view of cultural liberty guaranteeing religious liberty in the best possible way is of foremost importance. As I said earlier, given the fact that this is the theme that you will be discussing today, I will elaborate on the issue of religion – or church and state – in the following section of my paper. Before doing so, however, I should like to make one more remark about the concept of multicultural democracy.

The Human Development Report 2004 defends a limited kind of multiculturalism. Thus, in addition to a greater respect for diversity, it also stresses the need for a stronger commitment to unity. The boundary is to be found in a common commitment to a "universal ethics based on universal human rights and respect for the freedom, equality and dignity of all individuals."[8] The approach could be summed up as "Diversity Within Unity." therefore, to use a phrase coined by the American sociologist Amitai Etzioni, who uses the term in a somewhat different way, however.

2.      **CHURCH AND STATE**

The Human Development Report 2004 distinguishes between secular and non-secular states. Non-secular states come in three varieties. First of all, a non-secular state can be a theocracy, governed, as it were, by divine law. Examples of such states include the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan under the Taliban. Secondly, a non-secular state can have an established religion, that is a formal alliance between a particular religion and the government. Examples include Buddhism in Bhuta, Burma and Thailand; Hinduism in Nepal; Islam in Bangladesh, Libya and Malaysia; and Roman Catholicism in Argentina, Bolivia and Costa Rica. Thirdly, a non-secular state can have an established church or religion, but nonetheless recognize and even financially support more than one religion. Examples of such states include Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. None of these three types of non-secular states stands out from the point of view of ensuring religious freedom, although in practice the third type performs without doubt better than the first two. Generally speaking, however, a secular state is to be preferred.

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[7] At 9.
[8] At 90.

Contrary to what is usually assumed, secular states come in at least three different varieties as well.

To begin with, there are anti-religious, secular states, which exclude religion from their own affairs but do not hesitate to interfere in the affairs of religion. Examples include Communist regimes in China and, formerly, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Secondly, a secular state can be neutral or laicist. Neutral states are characterized by a strict separation between church and state. The state should be neutral as far as religion is concerned and this neutrality is considered to be realized best by stripping the public square of all religious elements. The United States after the Second World War and France since the Separation Law of 1905 are probably the best examples of countries with this type of church–state relations, although the differences between both countries should not be underestimated.

Thirdly, there are secular states asserting equal respect and principled distance to all religious and secular worldviews in society and their affiliated organizations. This engagement may take the form of support for religions, such as public funding of religious schools, as long as this is done even-handedly. The Human Development Report mentions the Indian Constitution as an example, but the Netherlands also fits in this category as we will see later on. What is important to note at this moment is that secularism apparently does not automatically imply the privatization of religion. In fact, in this third type of secular state the neutrality of the state is protected better than in so-called neutral or laicist, secular states. For this reason, according to American political scientists Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper in their book *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies* (1997), there is "much to learn from the Dutch experience. (…) [T]he Dutch may do a better job at securing religious rights than almost any other country in the world."[9] The Human Development Report puts it this way: "What is important from the human development perspective is to expand human freedoms and human rights – and to recognize equality. Secular and democratic states are most likely to achieve these goals where the state provides reasonable accommodation of religious practices, where all religions have the same relation to the state and where the state protects human rights."[10]

This position roughly corresponds with what the American historian Wilfred M. McClay has argued in a recent essay entitled 'Two Concepts of Secularism'. According to McClay "[t]here is on the one hand, a way of understanding the secular idea as an opponent of established belief – including a *nonreligious* establishment – and a protector of the rights of free exercise and free association. On the other hand, one can understand the secular ideal as a proponent of established *unbelief* and a protector of individual

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[9] Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper, *The Challenge of Pluralism. Church and State in Five Democracies* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield 1997), at 82, 201.
[10] At 8.

expressive rights, a category that includes rights of religious expression."[11] The former view, which understands secularism as a freedom from establishmentarian imposition of any worldview on society, is a rather minimal understanding of secularism and can therefore be called "negative secularism." The latter view, called "establishmentarian or positive secularism," is held by more militant secularists, who can to a certain extent be considered enemies of religion (with important exceptions, such as the Christian separationists): "Such a regime seeks, under the guise of separating church and state, to exclude religious thought and discourse from any serious participation in public life, and to confine religious belief and practice, as much as possible, to the realm of private predilection and individual taste."[12] In this terminology the Human Development Report prefers negative secularism.

In order for negative secularism to work, however, religious faiths must undergo a certain degree of adaptation in accommodating themselves to it. "They must," as McClay puts it, "learn their table manners, and learn how to behave around strangers."[13] One of the most intriguing questions in this respect is of course whether Islam will manage to achieve this degree of adaptation. "But," as McClay rightly observes, "the task of adapting to a negative-secular order faces all the world's religions, if they are to bring any of their resources to bear effectively on the task of living in the next century."[14] Interestingly enough, Protestants have been among the first to adapt to negative secularism, which brings me to my discussion of the Reformed contribution to the issue of church and state in religiously plural societies in the past.

## 3. THE REFORMED CONTRIBUTION[15]

When I say that Protestants have been among the first to adapt to negative secularism, I have in mind the approach of principled public pluralism that neo-Calvinists such as Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) and legal philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977) have developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,[16] and which is set out in section seven of the excellent report on 'Church, State and the Kingdom of God' by John Hiemstra. I therefore can be brief about it here. Suffice it to say that a major starting-point for this theory of society is that, no matter how sovereign nation states and other political entities might regard themselves to be, ultimate sovereignty only belongs to God. This goes back as far as to the early church's confession that "Jesus is Lord" (1 Corinthians 12: 3). From this it follows that neither the national state nor for example a

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[11] Wilfred M. McClay, "Two Concepts of Secularism," in: Hugh Heclo and Wilfred M. McClay (eds.), *Religion Returns to the Public Square. Faith and Policy in America* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003) 31-61, at 46.

[12] Ibidem, 47-48.

[13] Ibidem, 52.

[14] Ibidem, 54.

[15] Parts of this section and the next one are based on: Hans-Martien ten Napel "Protestantism, Globalization and the Democratic Constitutional State," in: V. Küster (ed.), *Reshaping Protestantism in a Global Context* (forthcoming).

[16] James William Skillen, *The Development of Calvinistic Political Theory in the Netherlands, with Special Reference to the Thought of Herman Dooyeweerd* (Ph.D.: Duke University, 1974); Luis E. Lugo (ed.), *Religion, Pluralism, and Public Life. Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 2000).

supranational institution like the European Union in themselves can claim to be the ideal of political organization in this world. The criterium for the legitimacy of both is how well they are doing in establishing justice, nationally as well as internationally. Since justice in the political sphere will not easily amount to the ideal of biblical justice, it is referred to as public justice instead.

As far as domestic justice is concerned – to which I will limit myself in this paper – two kinds of pluralism are important. The first type can be called institutional or associational pluralism.[17] It starts from the idea that God has created society with the potential to unfold into a number of different spheres, such as the family, education, business, the arts and government. Since government constitutes only one of these spheres, it is under an obligation to recognize and uphold the autonomy and freedom of civil society that has responsibilities of its own. The second type can be called directional pluralism.[18] This principle implies that religion, on the other hand, does not constitute a separate sphere, but has instead a bearing on all aspects of life.[19] However, since Jesus and Jesus only is Lord, society should neither be governed by a particular religion, such as Christianity or Islam, nor by some other value system, such as Secular Humanism. Instead, a government should uphold the right of all people who live within its territory to be free to practise their diverse religious or nonreligious faiths in both private and public life.

What John Hiemstra does not deal with in his report, probably due to lack of space, is the fact that the rise of pluriform democracy in the Netherlands in the early twentieth century is to a considerable extent rooted in precisely this well worked-out theory of Reformed origin. Politically speaking, the single most important characteristic of the Netherlands is without doubt that it is a religiously plural society. Since the Reformation and the revolt against the Spanish (1568–1648), Dutch society has consisted, roughly speaking,[20] of three groups: Roman Catholics, orthodox Reformed and a secular or humanistic minority. Thus, Dutch politics during the past 400 years can be interpreted as a permanent struggle for power between these three groups of about equal size, but with distinctive identities. After Roman Catholics had been dominant during the Middle Ages, orthodox Reformed took over during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and humanists dominated the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The twentieth century has been dominated by orthodox Reformed and Roman Catholics together. Throughout this period, one of the main issues has precisely been argument about the type of church–state relations that should be preferred. As a result, the Netherlands has known very different regimes.[21] In the time of the Republic (1579–1795), the Dutch Reformed Church was more or less the established church, making it a non-secular state of the second type distinguished earlier. After the Batavian Revolution of 1795 had brought the secular state, the nineteenth century was characterized by a strict separation of church and state. Finally, in 1917,

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[17] Richard Mouw and Sander Griffioen, *Pluralisms and Horizons. An Essay in Christian Public Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 1993) 16.
[18] Ibidem.
[19] Note that religion is not synonymous with the church as an institution, which is confined to its own sphere.
[20] Roughly speaking, if only because (certainly in the beginning) many humanists were practising Christians.
[21] Monsma and Soper, *Challenge of Pluralism*, 51-86.

under pressure from a political alliance of orthodox Reformed and Roman Catholics principled public pluralism was introduced, making the Netherlands a secular state of the third type mentioned above. The approach of principled public pluralism as developed by Neo-Calvinists has strong similarities with Roman Catholic social teaching.[22]

Unfortunately, until now this latter paradigm shift is misinterpreted in the so-called "consociational democracy" literature, through which the Netherlands is known best both nationally and internationally. According to consociational democracy theory, the key issue at the beginning of the twentieth century was whether the stability of the political system could be maintained, despite the gradually increasing degree of segmentation or pillarization of Dutch society. This was eventually done by prudent elites that prevented a near-civil war by establishing a consociational democracy, characterized by precisely the kind of power-sharing mechanisms that the Human Development Report speaks about, that is an electoral system of proportional representation, executive power-sharing, provisions for cultural autonomy, and safeguards in the form of mutual vetoes. In reality, however, as the historically oriented American political scientist Stanley Carlson-Thies has rightly pointed out, "[t]he four subcultures which took shape in the latter decades of the nineteenth century [by this time the secular or humanistic minority had split up politically into Liberals and Socialists, HMtN] did not pose a deadly challenge to democratic governance, as assumed by consociational theory. The challenge was instead to state policies inhospitable to the diversity of ways of life embodied in the subcultures. The prevailing liberal model tolerated, but privatized, differences. But Catholics and orthodox Protestants insisted that their religious beliefs should guide also their public activities and institutions. (…) Segmentation (…) necessitated the transformation of state policies and structures. The Netherlands became not a consociational democracy but a pluriform democracy – a democracy in which subculturally-rooted differences are affirmatively accommodated by the state."[23] I must admit that, in the light of the Human Development Report 2004, I object much less to the term "consociational democracy" as such than I used to do, but the problem is that it is still too much associated with the largely negative meaning that the term "pillarization" has for most social scientists and historians. The period of pillarization between 1917 and 1967 is, possibly partly as a result of personal experiences and frustrations, regarded by them as a culturally "dark" period of Dutch history, in which the political and religious elites of the day succeeded in controlling their rank and file adherents on an unprecedented scale. As the Human Development Report demonstrates, however, it is also possible to be more positive about the same period in Dutch history, and to regard it as a kind of second "Golden Age" in which religious and political life flourished once more.

After it had been introduced first in the field of education, by means of the adoption of a constitutional amendment in 1917, the model of principled public pluralism has later also

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[22] James W. Skillen and Rockne M. McCarthy (eds.), *Political Order and the Plural Structure of Society* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press 1991); *Journal of Markets and Morality* 5 (2000) nr. 1, special issue on "A Century of Christian Social Teaching: the Legacy of Leo XIII and Abraham Kuyper."

[23] Stanley Warren Carlson-Thies, Democracy in the Netherlands: Consociational or Pluriform? (Ph.D.: University of Toronto 1993) iv-v.

been applied to other areas, such as the media,[24] and – after World War II – health and social welfare services. Because of the shifting worldview beliefs of the society, however, from the 1960s onwards yet another paradigm shift with regard to church–state relations in the Netherlands is gradually taking place, which might bring with it the end of pluriformity. In essence, this most recent shift involves a return to the neutral or laicist state of the nineteenth century, at a moment in time when society because of both secularization and immigration is becoming more plural than it already was. The pace of change is slow, because – as Monsma and Soper have noted – the pluralist theories of society of Reformed and Catholic origin "have become part of the Dutch mindset on issues of church and state."[25] Yet, the change is unmistakable, as is currently demonstrated for example by the demise of the pluralist broadcasting system. Again, to many social scientists and historians, this marks a kind of liberation from a "medieval past," and the dawning of a new era of "enlightenment." Others, however, are increasingly worried about the effects that the secularization and individualization processes may have on the cohesion of Dutch society. They regard the present situation as being a culturally "dark" era because relatively few people and organizations are still trying to maintain an explicit relation between their religious and other beliefs and social and political action. This might even be an explanation for the widening "confidence gap" between Dutch citizens and the Dutch political system about which a number of Dutch politicians and political commentators have become increasingly concerned over the last few years, especially since 9/11. Because of the de-pillarization process, Dutch people are finding it increasingly difficult to relate to parties and politicians that in their eyes have become too technocratic.

Since the prospects for Dutch pluriform democracy are greatly dependent on the process of European unification, it appears indispensable to take developments at the European level into account as well. The draft Constitution, which was recently voted down in the French and Dutch referendums, provides in Article I-51, that the European Union "respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States" (paragraph 1) and "equally respects the status of philosophical and non-confessional organisations" (paragraph 2). This restraint is perhaps understandable, given the principle of subsidiarity.[26] More plausible, however, is that the topic of church-state relations has proven too sensitive to regulate at this stage, given the already problematic nature of the discussion about the possible inclusion of an explicit reference to the Judeo-Christian heritage in the Preamble. As a result, one will have to wait and see whether for example the French tradition of Laicism or the Eastern Orthodox inclination towards the established church model will prevail in the European Union, although a gradual process of convergence is conceivable as well. Even the Dutch model of pluriform democracy might have a – be it small – chance of success, especially since the European Union, according to the Preamble of its draft

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[24] See John Hiemstra, *Worldviews on the Air: Founding a Pluralist Broadcasting System in the Netherlands* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America 1997).

[25] Monsma and Soper, *Challenge of Pluralism*, 58.

[26] In Article 9, paragraph 3, of the draft Constitution subsidiarity is described as the principle that 'in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence the Union shall act only if and insofar as the objectives of the intended action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States'.

Constitution, sees itself as "united in its diversity." It would be interesting to explore whether there is a difference between "Unity in Diversity" and "Diversity within Unity," which as we have seen is the approach of the Human Development Report. This brings me to the question which marks the beginning of the fourth and final section of my presentation: could Dutch pluriform democracy, despite its specific historical shape, also more generally serve as a model for the United States and the Two-Thirds World respectively, in so far as it presents a middle course (Via Media, as Anglicans would say) between the rivalling models of the neutral or laicist state and multicultural democracy?

## 4. FROM PLURIFORM DEMOCRACY TO MULTICULTURAL DEMOCRACY?

With respect to the United States, Carlson-Thies has on the one hand remarked during an international conference on Sharing the Reformed Tradition: The Dutch-North American Exchange, 1846-1996, held at the Free University in Amsterdam in 1996, that "[i]n the final analysis, what is most important is not any direct line of influence from the philosophers and builders of Dutch segmentation to American pluralist developments. Great leaders like Groen van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, and Herman Schaepman were not seeking to craft a Dutch model of pluralism for export to the world."[27] On the other hand, he suggested during the same conference that "[t]o resolve its dilemmas of religion and public life, America needs to adopt for itself at the end of this century the pluralistic solution the Netherlands adopted near the beginning."[28] Five years into the twenty-first century this has far from happened yet, although for example in the case law of the U.S. Supreme Court there is at least since the early 1980s a growing tendency to move away from the model of strict church-state separation.[29] Noteworthy as well is the Faith-Based and Community Initiative which President Bush has launched during his first term. While the Dutch seem to abandon the model of principled public pluralism, scholars, judges and politicians in the United States are seeking its inspiration.

Outside the West, the situation is different, if only because such classical doctrines of the democratic constitutional state as the rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances and democratic accountability – which can be seen as necessary preconditions for a pluriform democracy, because they forge unity – are not universally respected. Nevertheless, by their adherents the notion of pluriform democracy is regarded as relevant to all cultures and all times, because it is believed to correspond "with the way things really are in terms of God and the nature of human being."[30] As James Skillen puts it, the President of the Center for Public Justice in Washington, D.C., "Dutch society at the turn of the [twentieth, HMtN] century could not or should not be taken as a model for

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[27] Stanley W. Carlson-Thies, "The Meaning of Dutch Segmentation for Modern America," in: George Harinck and Hans Krabbendam (eds.), *Sharing the Reformed Tradition: The Dutch-North American Exchange, 1846-1996* (Amsterdam 1996) 159-175, at 172.

[28] Ibidem.

[29] See for an excellent survey John Witte Jr., *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment. Essential Rights and Liberties* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press 2000).

[30] Peter S. Heslam, "Prophet of a Third Way: The Shape of Kuyper's Socio-Political Vision," *Journal of Markets and Morality* 5 (2002) 11-33, at 26.

all times, but Kuyper's way of seeking to discover and honor the integrity of creation's diversity illuminates one of the central social challenges people will always face in all parts of the world. (…) If individualism, collectivism, and secularism are all misleading in one direction or another, then the need for a God-centered, pluralist social vision will remain strong throughout the world."[31]

Given the analysis of the Human Development Report 2004 that virtually all societies have by now become more or less multicultural societies, however, both in the Netherlands and abroad proponents of the model of pluriform democracy will be confronted with the question whether it should be replaced by the concept of multicultural democracy. In his report on 'Church, State and the Kingdom of God' John Hiemstra observes that the removal from the Belgic Confession of the Constantinian element of the state's task that requires it to enforce true religion, as was done by the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands a century ago, was in keeping with the principle of *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est* ("the reformed church is always reforming"): "This reflects the biblical belief that the Holy Spirit is always urging Christians to renewal, reform, liberation and greater maturity in our sinful and broken lives and societies." At the time this step was considered necessary by Kuyper to adapt to the negative secularism of the approach of public pluralism. Would not a new adaptation of Calvinism to modern circumstances be therefore in the spirit of Kuyper? This is obviously a difficult question. On the one hand, the notion of pluriform democracy covers already two of the five dimensions of the concept of multicultural democracy, political participation and religion. Moreover, there seem to be no fundamental objections against multicultural policies in the three remaining fields of access to justice, language and socio-economic policies, although especially legal pluralism is still considered something of a taboo in the West. On the other hand, however, from a Reformed perspective something will probably be missing in the concept of multicultural democracy, in the sense that it is too much involved with directional pluralism and too little with institutional pluralism. What this demonstrates once more is that the latter doctrine, institutional pluralism or sphere sovereignty, remains the most distinctive Reformed contribution to the topic of church and state.

Yet, further reflection on the concept of multicultural democracy from a Reformed perspective appears desirable, because of its importance from the point of view both of human development and for Protestantism. As far as the importance of the topic for Protestantism is concerned, Oxford theologian Alister E. McGrath believes that religious conservatism has the future, i.e. evangelical Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.[32] In the Blackwell Companion to Protestantism, co-edited by him, it is remarked that "a comprehensive Protestant political and legal platform, faithful to the cardinal convictions of historical Protestantism and responsive to the needs of an intensely pluralistic modern polity, did not emerge in the twentieth century."[33] The name

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[31] James W. Skillen, "Why Kuyper now?," in: Luis Lugo (ed.), *Religion, Pluralism, and Public Life. Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan 2000) 365-372, at 368.

[32] "McGrath voorziet einde protestantisme," *Beweging* 67 (2003) 29-34.

[33] John Witte Jr., "Protestantism, Law and Legal Thought," in: Alister E. McGrath and Darren C. Marks (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell 2004) 298-305, at 304.

of Dooyeweerd does not appear in the 512-page volume. The conclusion of this paper, however, must be that a public role of the historically mainline denominations still cannot be missed. In the past, Protestantism in general and Calvinism in particular have acted as a force toward cultural liberty by helping to pave the way for the "three great revolutions" in the Netherlands (sixteenth century), England (seventeenth century) and North America (eighteenth century) that gave rise to the democratic constitutional state.[34] In particular the approach of principled public pluralism, developed by neo-Calvinists, has the potential to act once again as a force toward cultural liberty in these multicultural times, especially if they succeed in building bridges with Roman Catholicism and Evangelicalism. As far as Roman Catholicism is concerned, I already indicated that the approach of principled public pluralism has strong similarities with Roman Catholic social teaching. As far as Evangelicalism is concerned, given its growth and the simultaneous decline of the historically mainline churches, this appears to be in the interest of pluralist thought. Evangelicalism for its part has to gain from this development as well, because in the United States, and particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, it is characterized by a "lack of theorisation about political engagement."[35] After the central event in Kuyper's life, his religious conversion resulting from conversations with the orthodox farmers and labourers of Beesd between 1863 and 1867,[36] he dedicated his life to persuading and equipping the orthodox Reformed to participate in the public life of church, state and society, where necessary in cooperation with the Roman Catholics. This latter cooperation was a remarkable development, in the sense that it occurred in a country in which orthodox Protestants and Roman Catholics had gone their separate ways for centuries and in a period of time in which of course no ecumenical contacts whatsoever existed between their respective churches.

Finally, as far as the importance of the topic for human development is concerned, according to the Human Development Report 2004 human development is as much a question of politics as economics: 'If the world is to reach the Millennium Development Goals and ultimately eradicate poverty, it must first successfully confront the challenge of how to build inclusive, culturally diverse societies. Not just because doing so successfully is a precondition for countries to focus properly on other priorities of economic growth, health and education for all citizens. But because allowing people full cultural expression is an important development end in itself.'[37]

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[34] Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 1994 [1931]) 86, 14.

[35] Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001) 316. See, however, the document "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility," adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Association of Evangelicals in October 2004, at www.nae.net.

[36] G. Puchinger, *Abraham Kuyper: De jonge Kuyper (1837-1867)* (Franeker: Wever, 1987); see also George harinck (ed.), *Dr. G. Puchinger, Abraham Kuyper: His Early Journey of Faith* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998).

[37] At 5.

# Church as Institute and Organism

## Selected Quotations

**John Bolt**   *A Free Church, A Holy Nation,* **2001**

**p. 427**  To Tocqueville's observations we add a distinction that was a cornerstone of Abraham Kuyper's public theology, the distinction between the church as *institute* and the church as *organism*.[1] … the basic idea is clear and serves two distinct purposes.  Kuyper understands the institutional church as the body of Christian believers gathered in structured fellowship – pastors, elders, deacons, presbyteries, synods – and regulated by creeds, confessions and a rule of polity (church order).  The purpose of the institution is the evangelization, gathering, and discipling of a group of believers, who gather for worship, preaching, sacraments, and instruction in the faith.  The institutional church's task is limited to her specific sphere[2]; she must not be a direct political agent but must remain true to her own spiritual purpose.

**pp. 428-429—**  … the *organic* character of the Christian life must come to expression in the form of *organized* Christian communal activity in areas other than the institutional church.
…      From the ecclesiastical inner circle of the believing community, gathered around Word and sacraments, must radiate "beams of faith's light into the realm of common grace,"[3] into the world of education, art, science, politics, business, and industry.  In Kuyper's view, Christians who go out into their various vocations do so neither as direct emissaries of the institutional church nor as mere individual believers.  He is opposed to "church-sponsored" social and political action, and even speaks approvingly of a Calvinist note of "secularization."[4]  Christian social, cultural, and political action does not flow *directly* from the structures and authorities of the church, but comes to expression *organically* in the various spheres of life as believers live out the faith and spirituality that develops and is nurtured in the church's worship and discipline.  The concrete expression of this life of Christian discipleship is manifested through the rich voluntary association life of a nation's citizens.  Christians, too, can create educational institutions, form trade unions and philanthropic societies and, yes, also political action groups.  For Kuyper, this distinctly Christian associational life, was, in fact, a mandate of the organic unity of the body of Christ.  Christians are not just individual believers; they are a body.

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[1] Kuyper explicitly considers this distinction in two places: in a sermon, "Geworteld en Gegrond" ("Rooted and Grounded"), in *Predicatien*, 3rd ed. (Kampen:Kok, 1913), 323-51; and in *De Gemeene Gratie*, 2nd ed., 3 vols, (Kampen:Kok, n.d.), 2:253-60.  For a scholarly treatment see P.A. Van Leeuwen, *Het Kerkbegrip in the Theologie van Abraham Kuyper* (Franeker: T. Wever, 1946), 106-21; H. Zwaanstra, "Abraham Kuyper's Conception of the Church," *Calvin Theological Journal* 9 (1974), 149-81.
[2] The institute/organism distinction is thus linked to Kuyper's notion of sphere sovereignty.  See Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 59-68, 90-109,000
[3] Kuyper, *De Gemeene Gratie,* 2:350.
[4] Kuyper, *De gemeene Gratie*, 2:279.  Secularization here is understood specifically as being freed from the direct tutelage and patronage of the institutional church.

**Bennie van der Walt**    *The Liberating Message,* 1994

**Church as Institute:**

**pp. 454-457**    The most important task of the church is to disseminate the Word of God in the world: in the first instance to its own members, but also to the world at large.  Does this indicate that the church has a purely "spiritual" task?  No, not at all.  Does it then imply that the church also has a political task?  Yes – indirectly.

*Should the church for example teach that Christ is the King* and that only He has dominion over our lives?  This is not merely a religious (or, if you will, spiritual) confession, but it also has very clear political implications.  When the early church confessed Christ as the only King and Saviour, it was openly in conflict with the world (the Roman Empire): the emperor regarded himself as absolute ruler and saviour!
…

Thus the primary task of the church is also not to become involved in all sorts of social, political and economic liberation programmes.  It would, however, in its preaching, have to point out very clearly that "spiritual" liberation will have consequences in *all* spheres of life.  In this way at least signs of God's *all-encompassing* liberation of the life of man are erected.

A clear example could also be found in the *interpretation by the church of the concept of the poor.*
…

The Biblical concept of *conversion*, however, is something totally different.  Conversion indicates a new relationship to both God and one's fellow men.  It is not merely an inward experience.  It also implies public obedience, as well as service to others.

Conversion furthermore touches on not only the so-called spiritual part of our lives, but the totality of our humanity.  Selective conversion or conversion regarding some points only – usually those things that are easiest to give up – is one of the deadliest dangers, because in doing this we are deluding not God but only ourselves.
…

In the prophetic task of the church, the Word has to open the eyes of its own members and to sensitise their consciences towards the sin and vices of the world.  Biblical norms for men's thinking and deeds have to be revealed and should be applied to all situations.

The church has an awesome educative task as regards its own members, who are often neglected scandalously.  The purpose of this should not only be personal edification in faith, or personal renewal but, because the members of the church should be as salt and as light in the world, there should be renewal of entire social structures and reformation of the wrong structures.

In his preaching the minister has to establish guidelines from the Bible which should guide the members of the church in their own decisions.  He may, however, never misuse the pulpit to propagate his personal ideas regarding politics and social issues.

When wider issues are at stake which touch the fabric of the entire church (such as abortion, war, secret organisations etc.), *larger church meetings* have to comment.  Great care should be taken, however, especially when the Scriptures do not give very

clear guidelines on a particular issue.  The church has to be particularly careful not to make itself appear ridiculous in the eyes of the world by making amateurish statements on matters of which it has little knowledge.


**Church as Organism:**

**p. 461**          Thus far we have dealt with the church as an institution.  The most important – and at the same time the most neglected – aspect has not been dealt with: the task of the faithful Christian (kingdom citizen) in society at large.

          *Personally*, each believer has to be a witness in every sphere through word and deed.  His Christian worldview and his Christian attitude to life must guard against rot like salt and should pervade the whole of life like active yeast.

          *On the organised level* Christians have to pool their strengths and their resources in order to achieve particular aims.  Sometimes it may be necessary to found separate Christian organisations.  Under different circumstances it would be best to work within the framework of existing organisations, associations and parties and to try and reform these.

*Appendix 78:*

## Make Your Own History

## James W Skillen[1]

## [Note:  Except for the first, the footnotes are original.]

….

       The key to a revival of Christian social and political life today must be a revived understanding of God's ordinances – God's normative will for all of life, including politics.  We are grateful that H. Evan Runner helped to introduce many of us to a tradition of Christian thought and life which has led to a revival of concern for God's ordinances for all of life.

…

       It is to Groen van Prinsterer's credit, early in the nineteenth century, that he was one of the first modern Protestants to begin to reflect with deep seriousness on the meaning of human history-shaping power in this world. He saw that Christians were mistaken in thinking of themselves primarily as members of a church that rides through history.

…

Christians ought to see themselves as people called by God to *make* history according to his will, Groen believed.[2]  Only with such an attitude would Christianity truly live. As Groen gained insight into this simple truth, he began to recognize that different, competing spirits were at work in the shaping of history.  And the spirit of the French Revolution was at odds with the Spirit of Christ in all areas of life.[3]  The Christian battle could not be carried on simply by preserving an orthodox church in the world, but would have to be carried on in politics and education, in journalism and science.

       Recognizing that God by his Spirit was calling Christians out of their somewhat passive journey *through* "secular" history, Groen urged his fellow Christians to reread the Scriptures in order to understand the responsibility that the people of God have to shape the history of this world to the glory of God.[4]

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[1] J. Skillen, 1981, excerpts from the chapter.

[2] See especially the closing pages of *Ongeloof en Revolutie*, pp. 322-27.

[3] Groen, *Lectures VIII and IX from Unbelief and Revolution, pp. 17-18*

[4] Groen did not entirely free himself from the older attitude which accepted past historical patterns and institutions as a revelation of the will of God.  For a criticism of the "historicism" and "organicism" in

…

      With this issue of human responsibility for shaping history, we confront one of the most important challenges of modernity. It is one thing for people to try to adjust themselves to a seemingly unchanging order of nature; it is something else for them to contribute to the continuing creative changes in human life.

…

      The revival of Calvinism, expressed in the life work of Groen van Prinsterer and then of Abraham Kuyper, was a fundamental challenge to that basic liberal and revolutionary outlook of modernity.[5] True human freedom and responsibility in history, they asserted, is possible only through submission to *God's ordinances*.[6] Human beings cannot escape the "heteronomous" character of creaturely life. The true law of life comes from outside the human will; it comes from another – from the will of God. That is what "heteronomy" means. The heteronomous character of God's will stands in direct opposition to all claims of human autonomy.

      The key to human responsibility in history, then, as Kuyper saw it, is not for human creatures to try to hold on forever to seemingly unchanging patterns of social life; nor should they launch out into the future with the conviction that they are free to create social and political life in any autonomous way they choose. Rather, human beings must give shape to an ever unfolding creation by seeking to respond obediently to God's ordinances for different areas of life.

…

…      But Calvinism itself would have to be continually reforming. Reformed Christianity was not a pure and clean package that could simply be protected and handed down through an otherwise corrupt and changing history.

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Groen, see the excellent article by Herman Dooyeweerd, "Het Historisch Element in Groen's Staatsleer," in H. Smitskamp et al., *Groen's "Ongeloof en Revolutie": Een Bundel Studien* (Wageningen, 1949), pp. 118-37.

[5] Regularly Kuyper criticized the spirit and consequences of liberalism and the Revolution. See Dirk Jellema, "Abraham Kuyper's Attack on Liberalism," *Review of Politics*, 19 (1957), 472-85.

[6] This language is everywhere in Kuyper's writings, but see especially the section, "Ordinantien Gods," in his *Ons Program* (Amsterdam, 1879), pp. 116-29. Also see Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, 1961), pp. 70-71.

…

…      On the one hand, Kuyper, along with many Catholics and other Protestants, was a vigorous opponent of secularization, if by "secularization" we understand the outworking of the spirit of liberalism which claims that human beings have no master in history, no ordinances from God to bind them, and that they are autonomous in their freedom to shape politics, art, science, education, and all of culture.  But unlike most Catholics and many Protestants of his day, Kuyper was a strong promoter of the secularization process if by "secularization" we mean the freeing of different life spheres from ecclesiastical control.[7]  Kuyper believed that politics, art, science, education, and other areas of life should be free to unfold in obedience to God's ordinances.  Each sphere of life had to be free of direct control by any other so that each could learn obedience to God's special ordinances for each area of life.  Artists must be free to obey God's norms for art; they must not be locked up into obedience to what ecclesiastical officials believe to be good art.  Teachers and scholars must be free to respond obediently to God's ordinances of truth for the entire creation; they must not be under orders to teach and publish only what ecclesiastical office bearers approve as scientific truth.[8]

…

…      We must shape history in accord with those ordinances and not merely ride through history proclaiming that they exist.

…

…      Sphere sovereignty means nothing more sophisticated yet nothing less important than the fact that God is the only sovereign of this world and that all of his ordinances must be obeyed.[9]  Individuals are not sovereign; the state is not sovereign; the church is not sovereign.  God alone is sovereign.

…

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[7] Kuyper, pp. 46-54, 59-66.

[8] Kuyper, *Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring*  (Amsterdam, 1880).  On this subject of "sphere sovereignty" and also on some other important themes, see the two articles on Herman Dooyeweerd's philosophy by Jacob Klapwijk in *The Reformed Journal* (February, 1980, pp. 12-15, and March, 1980, pp. 20-24).

[9] On the different meanings of sphere sovereignty, see Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture*, pp. 40-60.

The individualistic and collectivistic humanists blaspheme God by shouting autonomy and turning their backs on the reality of God's creation. Christians violate God's commandments when they confess with pious voice that God is sovereign, but then cast their votes, buy their homes, sell their stocks, or run their schools and colleges by considering only the demands of the American way of life, or asking only about the requirements of a healthy profit margin, or looking only to the habits and expectations of tradition.

…

…. There is no common secular tradition to which we can pledge our troth as Christians and still hope to have truly principled pluralism.

…

The people of God cannot simply ride through a history that is being shaped by these [secular] spirits and traditions. And they certainly must not continue to accommodate themselves to these tension-filled systems and expect that God's ordinances will still shine through in their deeds to brighten a dark world. Christians have only one healthy option, and that is to take God's Word so seriously that they refuse to live by any other ordinances or by any other hope than the ordinances of creation and the hope of the Gospel.

…

… There is more at stake than a somewhat reduced confidence in "progress" on the part of western man. His whole life perspective has undergone a shock. The unfulfilled promises of progress have brought about an emptiness, a vacuum, with respect to the *meaning* of life and society. Many among us even experience the demise of the idea of progress as a kind of divine betrayal. The very thing in which we had placed all our trust is turning against us to devour us. And what does one have left when one's gods betray him?

If this observation is correct, then we find ourselves at a very critical juncture in the development of western civilization. No society or civilization can continue to exist without having found an answer to the question of meaning. The emptiness created by the death of the god of progress must be filled with something else. But what will that be?[10]

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[10] Quote from Goudzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress*, pp. 248-49.

….

…     Goudzwaard admits the tentative and uncertain character of his proposals about the responsibility of modern economic enterprises and the relationship of government to the economy.

But the question is not whether we must become disciples of Kuyper and his followers.  The question is: Will we take up the historical struggle of our day in the spirit of Biblical revival?  Will we become self-critical about our illegitimate accommodations to the spirits and traditions of our time?  Will we quit trying to *ride through* history and begin trying to *shape* history in obedience to divine ordinances?  This is our only calling – to serve God and neighbors according to the Creator's ordinances fulfilled in Christ.  This is also the only way that we can contribute to a healthy unfolding of a just society  - one that will be respectful of the true plurality of God-given associations, institutions, and social relationships.

*Appendix 80:*

# Crescendo of the Cross
# Henry G. Farrant[1]

Henry George Farrant was the longest-serving Nigeria Field Secretary of the Sudan United Mission (SUM), British Branch, as well as long-time Secretary of SUM Nigeria, the on-the-field council of all SUM branches in Nigeria.  For 20 years he was also Secretary of the Conference of Missions, "which linked {all Protestant] missions of the Northern Region with one another in fellowship and common effort, and gave expression to their policies with governments and other interested bodies."[2]  He was a true missionary statesman and, indeed, a giant in the land.

I had the fortune to meet him in his own house in the UK shortly before he passed away. He was an old man but still of clear and adventurous mind. Prior to my visit I had sent him a draft of "The Last of the Livingstones,"[3] my master's thesis—"*doctorandus scriptie*" as it is called at the Free University of Amsterdam--about H. Karl W. Kumm, the founder of the SUM. He had read enough of it to be excited about it and to strongly encourage me to complete the study with a doctoral thesis. This was in sharp contrast with an executive officer of the SUM, a much younger man, who expressed unhappiness with my depiction of Kumm's career and missiology. Even at his advanced age, Farrant had retained his sense of openness and adventure.

The following material constitutes short quotations from his book *Crescendo of the Cross:*

**Title Page:**

"*Crescendo of the Cross* answers the question of the year 1904….  Will the cross or the crescent prevail in the Sudan?"

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[1]H. Farrant, 1956, miscellaneous quotations.

[2]H. Farrant, 1956, inside cover.  For expansive information about Farrant see J. Boer, 1979, pp. 296-309, 402-409, 505-506. See Index for shorter references;  1984, see entry "Farrant" in Index.

[3]Subsequently, the SUM cooperated with a German publisher to publish a "corrective" of my treatment of Kumm as it ended up in my doctoral dissertation of 1979. Though it was meant to serve as a corrective of my work, Peter J. Spartalis, the Australian author,  asked for and received my permission to use the title *The Last of the Livingstones*, my own title for Kumm, as his title! (Peter J. Spartalis, *Karl Kumm—The Last of the Livingstones: Pioneer Missionary Statesman.* Bonn: Verlag fur Kultur under Wissenschaft, 1994.)

Why the title?  In 1904 the challenge which called men and women to the Sudan was, "Cross or Crescent?"  Which will prevail?  After fifty years it is possible to answer the question, and in a play on words the title does so—Cross or Crescent?  Crescendo of the Cross! (p. 5)

p. 7 – In 1904, and thereabouts, Dr. Grattan Guinness and a few men and women of discernment set the Sudan squarely before the Church of Christ and asked its members to choose whether the Cross or the Crescent would prevail in that stricken stretch of Africa. There could not have been in the mental make-up of the little band anything of the fatalism of Islam, for they appeared to think that believers really had a choice and that, by their own action, in faith they could determine whether the pagan people of the Sudan would become Moslems and perish, or find salvation in Christ and live forever. It was an apparently preposterous idea for the die seemed to have been already cast and to have fallen in favour of the Crescent. Along three thousand miles of frontier the millions of Islam met animists. The strategic position of the Moslems was ideal.

p. 16 – The cherished object of an indigenous, self-governing, Church is in harmony with political independence and each illustrates the other. Missionaries and African Christians feel at home in the march towards two kinds of independence. The Northern Region of Nigeria contains 17,000,000 people, of whom 11,000,000 are Moslems.

p. 17 – The success of the minority in retaining liberty must depend on their having qualities of determination and character, and the Christian community will be expected to provide leadership. If the Church is alive in Christ it will be irrepressible, and if it is not there is not a great deal which can be done from outside to help it.

In the Eastern Sudan the Moslem community is divided into two political parties, the National Unionist, which originally aimed at union with Egypt, and the Umma, which seeks the absolute independence of the country.

pp. 17-18 In several Mohammedan countries in the world a struggle is going on between a very rigid Moslem party and a more moderate one which would prefer to give a considerable measure of religious liberty. The struggle got great publicity in Egypt when the Moslem Brotherhood was declared illegal by the Government in 1954 and several of its members hanged. If the more tolerant policy wins and the liberty of Christians in

Mohammedan countries becomes the same as that of Moslems in Christian countries it will add to the internal harmony and to the strength of the countries which adopt it and be a cause for praise in the Church.

pp. 22-23 – It is the fashion to put nationalism high on the list of the opponents of the Gospel, but I do not include it at all. There is nothing inherent in it which makes it necessarily a foe of Christ. If it is sometimes in opposition, it is because of an accident of circumstances; it can as easily be for the Gospel as against it and sometimes changes front very quickly. Its threat is the same as that of riches, its potential power of seducing the heart away from Christ.

p. 24 – We are accustomed to discussion on an international platform among men of different religions, or none, and there must be a code of morals and behavior which is accepted by all participants in such conversations.

p. 25 – The remarkable place that Christian morality has in international affairs as a criterion of behavior, even when we lament how far short of it the nations come, is an evidence of the unaccompanied Word.

p. 29 – The delegates of the Eastern and Western Regions wanted self-government in 1956. The Northern delegates wished to postpone this date, because they knew themselves to be less accustomed to the Western way of doing things. There were men in the Eastern and Western delegations who were university trained in European professions and it was expected by the Northerners, and possibly by other interested persons, that they would dominate the debate. This did not happen and the reverse did. The Northern delegation exercised more and more influence and when the discussions ended was obviously on top.

p. 41 – For a good many years a number of denominations, or denominational foreign missions, had representative directors on the S.U.M. Board in London. One thing was accepted, however, as an axiom by the founders. It was agreed that the result of the work of missionaries from many different Churches must be a harmony and not a number of different and unrelated bodies in the Sudan. They therefore pledged themselves in the constitution of the Mission to work, with other like-minded folk, for an African Church.

p. 71 – In the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria there are thirteen ministers. Ten are Moslems and three are non-Moslems. If the proportion were accurately related to

the numbers of the two kinds there would be five of the latter, but it is something to be noted that, out of three, two are Christians, though the number of Christians is relatively small.

pp. 71-72 – It is almost certain that there will soon be a great influx into the Church. Africans hate to be called pagans. To get away from the name they will enter Islam or the Christian Church. It is not a high motive for entrance to the Christian faith, but in Europe, tribes followed their chiefs in the Church with no deeper spiritual understanding and in Africa, Islam has grown by the appeal of its culture just as much as by its religious teaching. The Church in the near future will have masses of unconverted adherents whom it must lead to the truth.

p. 75 – It is important that Christians should learn not to make the Christian faith into a political party. It requires much wisdom to avoid it.

There is a kind of activity, however, which is mistaken for Christian witness, which attracts one group and permanently alienates another and makes the Christian community into a political party. The trap can only be avoided by a spiritual understanding of our Lord's teaching and having a consequent love for all men. The biggest mistake of this sort that the Church in the Sudan could make would be to wall off Islam so that Moslems become impermeable by the Gospel.

p. 76 – The Church must become the evangelist to its millions. It is not permitted in Christ to continue to think of Islam only as being a rival to the Christian faith. It is required to know that Moslems are should to be saved and that Christians have been saved in order to witness.

When the Church has flamed with love and, along three thousand miles of contact, the Gospel is preached to Sudanese Moslems by Sudanese Christians, then to the question of 1904—Cross or Crescent?—there will be a full volume, glorious answer in a …

<div align="center">CRESCENDO OF THE CROSS.</div>

*Appendix 81:*

## Christians and Politics in Nigeria
*Today's Challenge*
Number 2, 1995

Gaius M. Musa[1]

….

## What should Christians then do in the next political dispensation?

**The Positives (Romans 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:2; I Pet. 2:13-15)**

We must realize that politics is not dirty; it is only when dirty people are allowed to get involved in the games, that they make the rules of the game dirty.

  a. With this in mind, the Christians' main task now is to go on their knees in prayer and fasting for God to appoint the right people into power.
  b. They are also to seek for election into public offices. The presence of dedicated Christians in the Constitutional Conference made a difference in many decisions. Our presence in politics will make a difference.
  c. They must register for national election in order to have the opportunity to cast their votes for the right candidates into power.
  d. They must be prepared to use their pen to write against certain ills and policies that are a detriment to the public freedom of speech, ownership and religion. More Christians could write letters to their congressmen on vital issues. CAN is doing well by keeping Christians informed on national issues and state life by writing in national dailies and in their publications. God is interested in these (Jer. 24:5).
  e. The Christians must ensure that they pay their taxes, respect and obey the government and accept the obligation to see that the funds collected from the public are used in fulfilling proper functions of government as economically and as honestly as possible.

Every involvement of Christians in politics should be with the view of protecting the rights of those who are deprived of their legitimate rights. Christians should be sure that individuals as actual and potential sons of God should be objects of dignity and not of exploitation.

**The Role of the Christian Ministers in the Nigerian Politics**

Since the ministers are also Christians, their role in politics may not differ much from that of other Christians. But there are few areas of emphasis which will need noting.

  **Biblical Teaching on Politics**

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[1]*TC,* 2/95, p.9.

A. The Christian ministers should be responsible in teaching and guiding individual Christians in their relationship and responsibility to the voting for and being voted into political position
B. The Christian ministers should seek to be close to men and women in position of political leadership in order to assure them of their moral and spiritual support through prayer; personal visits at a specific appointed time will be necessary. This will encourage and strengthen those men from getting discouraged in the midst of problems.
C. Christian leaders should watch to see that the best policies from a Christian viewpoint are followed. This is so because we believe that what is Biblical based, only that has eternal value.
D. Christian ministers should get involved in actual partisan politics if they feel led to do so. The books of Nehemiah and Ezra encourage such participation. These men worked in the political circles of their day as a result of revolution and war which left their land a waste and leaders gone into exile or murdered. There was need for Godly people to revive the land, to rebuild the city and restore the worship of Yahweh. God, therefore, sent both Nehemiah and Ezra into the political arena with a burden to revive their country and rebuild its cities. They were laughed at in their efforts, were opposed and conspired against. But through God's help, they prevailed and were successful in their God-given task. The city walls and God's temple were rebuilt. The temple worship of the Lord was revived. Real men and women of God like these are needed in Nigeria's political arena today.

As we view the hungry and unemployed sitting along the main streets, as we see the roads in decay, business shops boarded up and the land awakening from its fear, we feel like Jeremiah who wept over the fallen city (Lam. 1:12).

We too should ask God to send some of his wisest children into the political field, to help them to stand for righteousness and truth in high places, and to give them a heart burdened for their people. Pray that God should send ministers to the political arena to give them holy anger against bribery, nepotism, misuse of power and public funds and to give them hearts of justice for all.

*Appendix 82:*

# Essential Features of the Islamic Political System
# by
# Abul Ala Maududi[1]

The political system of Islam is based on three principles: *Tawhid* (unity of *Allah*), *Risalat* (Prophethood) and *Khilafat* (vicegerency). It is difficult to appreciate the different aspects of Islamic polity without fully understanding these three principles. I will therefore begin with a brief exposition of what they are.

*Tawhid* means that only *Allah* is the Creator, Sustainer and Master of the universe and of all that exists in it, organic or inorganic. The sovereignty of this kingdom is vested only in Him. He alone has the right to command or forbid. Worship and obedience are due to Him alone, no one and nothing else shares it in any way. Life, in all its forms, our physical organs and faculties, the apparent control which we have over nearly everything in our lives and the things themselves, none of them has been created or acquired by us in our own right. They have been bestowed on us entirely by *Allah*. Hence, it is not for us to decide the aim and purpose of our existence or to set the limits of our authority; nor is anyone else entitled to make these decisions for us. This right rests only with *Allah*, who has created us, endowed us with mental and physical faculties, and provided material things for our use. Tawhid means that only *Allah* is the Creator, Sustainer and Master of the universe and of all that exists in it, organic or inorganic. The sovereignty of this kingdom is vested only in Him. He alone has the right to command or forbid. Worship and obedience are due to Him alone, no one and nothing else shares it in any way. Life, in all its forms, our physical organs and faculties, the apparent control which we have over nearly everything in our lives and the things themselves, none of them has been created or acquired by us in our own right. They have been bestowed on us entirely by *Allah*. Hence, it is not for us to decide the aim and purpose of our existence or to set the limits of our authority; nor is anyone else entitled to make these decisions for us. This right rests only with *Allah*, who has created us, endowed us with mental and physical faculties, and provided material things for our use. Tawhid means that only *Allah* is the Creator, Sustainer and Master of the universe and of all that exists in it, organic or inorganic. The sovereignty of this kingdom is vested only in Him. He alone has the right to command or forbid. Worship and obedience are due to Him alone, no one and nothing else shares it in any way. Life, in all its forms, our physical organs and faculties, the apparent control which we have over nearly everything in our lives and the things themselves, none of them has been created or acquired by us in our own right. They have been bestowed on us entirely by *Allah*. Hence, it is not for us to decide the aim and purpose of our existence or to set the limits of our authority; nor is anyone else entitled to make these decisions for us. This right rests only with *Allah*, who has created us, endowed us with mental and physical faculties, and provided material things for our use.

*This principle of the unity of Allah totally negates the concept of the legal and political independence of human beings, individually or collectively. No individual, family, class or race can set themselves above Allah. Allah alone is the Ruler and His commandments are the Law.*

The medium through which we receive the law of *Allah* is known as *Risalat*. We have received two things from this source: the Book in which *Allah* has set out His law, and the authoritative interpretation and exemplification of the Book by the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him through word and deed, in his capacity as the representative of *Allah*. The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, has also, in accordance with the intention of the Divine Book, given us a model for the Islamic way of life by himself implementing the law and providing necessary details where required. The combination of these two elements is called the Shariʿah.

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[1]A. Mawdudi, www.islam101.com/politics/politicalsystem.htm.

Now consider *Khilafat.* According to the Arabic lexicon, it means 'representation'. Man, according to Islam, is the representative of *Allah* on earth, His vicegerent. That is to say, by virtue of the powers delegated to him by *Allah*, he is required to exercise his *Allah*-given authority in this world within the limits prescribed by *Allah*.

Take, for example, the case of an estate which someone has been appointed to administer on your behalf. You will see that four conditions are invariably met. First, the real ownership of the estate remains vested in you and not in the administrator; second, he administers your property only in accordance with your instructions; third, he exercises his authority within the limits prescribed by you; and fourth, in the administration of the trust he executes your will and not his own. These four conditions are so inherent in the concept of 'representation' that if any representative fails to observe them he will rightly be blamed for breaking the covenant which was implied in the concept of 'representation'. This is exactly what Islam means when it affirms that man is the vicegerent of *Allah* on earth. Hence, these four conditions are also involved in the concept of *Khilafat.*

A state that is established in accordance with this political theory will in fact be a human caliphate under the sovereignty of *Allah* and will do *Allah*'s will by working within the limits prescribed by Him and in accordance with His instructions and injunctions.

*This is a new and revised translation of a talk given by the author on Radio Pakistan, Lahore, on 20th January, 1948.*

## Democracy in Islam

The above explanation of the term *Khilafat* also makes it abundantly clear that no individual or dynasty or class can be *Khilafah*, but that the authority of caliphate is bestowed on any community which accepts the principles of *Tawhid* and *Risalat*. In such a society, each individual shares the *Allah*-given caliphate. This is the point where democracy begins in Islam.

Every person in an Islamic society enjoys the rights and powers of the caliphate of *Allah* and in this respect all individuals are equal. No one can deprive anyone of his rights and powers. The agency for running the affairs of the state will be established in accordance with the will of these individuals, and the authority of the state will only be an extension of the powers of the individual delegated to it. Their opinion will be decisive in the formation of the Government, which will be run with their advice and in accordance with their wishes. Whoever gains their confidence will carry out the duties of the caliphate on their behalf; and when he loses this confidence he will have to relinquish his office. In this respect the political system in Islam is as perfect a democracy as ever can be.

What distinguishes Islamic democracy from Western democracy is that while the latter is based on the concept of popular sovereignty the former rests on the principle of popular *Khilafat*. In Western democracy the people are sovereign, in Islam sovereignty is vested in *Allah* and the people are His caliphs or representatives. In the former the people make their own laws; in the latter they have to follow and obey the laws (Shariʿah) given by *Allah* through His Prophet. In one the Government undertakes to fulfil the will of the people; in the other Government and the people alike have to do the will of *Allah*. Western democracy is a kind of absolute authority which exercises its powers in a free and uncontrolled manner, whereas Islamic democracy is subservient to the Divine Law and exercises its authority in accordance with the injunctions of *Allah* and within the limits prescribed by Him.

## Purpose of the Islamic State

The Holy Qur'an clearly states that the aim and purpose of this state, built on the foundation of *Tawhid*, *Risalat* and *Khilafat*, is the establishment, maintenance and development of those virtues which the Creator of the universe wishes human life to be enriched by, and the prevention and eradication of those evils which are abhorrent to *Allah*. The state in Islam is not intended for political administration only nor for the fulfilment through it of the collective will of any particular set of people. Rather, Islam places a high

ideal before the state for the achievement of which it must use all the means at its disposal. The aim is to encourage the qualities of purity, beauty, goodness, virtue, success and prosperity which *Allah* wants to flourish in the life of His people and to suppress all kinds of exploitation and injustice. As well as placing before us this high ideal, Islam clearly states the desired virtues and the undesirable evils. The Islamic state can thus plan its welfare programmes in every age and in any environment.

The constant demand made by Islam is that the principles of morality must be observed at all costs and in all walks of life. Hence, it lays down an unalterable requirement for the state to base its politics on justice, truth and honesty. It is not prepared, under any circumstances, to tolerate fraud, falsehood and injustice for the sake of political, administrative or national expediency. Whether it be relations between the rulers and the ruled within the state, or relations of the state with other states, precedence must always be given to truth, honesty and justice. It imposes obligations on the state similar to those it imposes on the individual: to fulfil all contracts and obligations; to have consistent standards in all dealings; to remember obligations as well as rights and not to forget the rights of others when expecting them to fulfil their obligations; to use power and authority for the establishment for justice and not for the perpetration of injustice; to look on duty as a sacred obligation; and to regard power as a trust from *Allah* to be used in the belief that one has to render an account of one's actions to Him in the Hereafter.

## Fundamental Rights

Although an Islamic state may be set up anywhere on earth, Islam does not seek to restrict human rights or privileges to the geographical limits of its own state. Islam has laid down universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected in all circumstances irrespective of whether a person lives on the territory of the Islamic state or outside it and whether he is at peace with the state or at war. For example, human blood is sacred and may not be spilled without justification; it is not permissible to oppress women, children, old people, the sick or the wounded; woman's honour and chastity must be respected in all circumstances; and the hungry must be fed, the naked clothed, and the wounded or diseased treated medically.

These, and a few other provisions, have been laid down by Islam as fundamental rights for every man by virtue of his status as a human being, to be enjoyed under the constitution of an Islamic state.

The rights of citizenship in Islam, however, are not confined to persons born within the limits of its state but are granted to every Muslim irrespective of his place of birth. A Muslim *ipso facto* becomes the citizen of an Islamic state as soon as he sets foot on its territory with the intention of living there; he thus enjoys equal rights of citizenship with those who are its citizens by birth. Citizenship must therefore be common to all the citizens of all the Islamic states that exist in the world; a Muslim will not need a passport for entry or exit from any of them. And every Muslim must be regarded as eligible for positions of the highest responsibility in an Islamic state without distinction of race, colour or class.

Islam has also laid down certain rights for non-Muslims who may be living within the boundaries of an Islamic state, and these rights must necessarily form part of the Islamic constitution. According to Islamic terminology such non-Muslims are called *dhimmis* (the covenanted), implying that the Islamic state has entered into a covenant with them and guaranteed their rights.

The life, property and honour of a *dhimmi* is to be respected and protected in exactly the same way as that of a Muslim citizen. There is no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens in respect of civil or criminal law; and the Islamic state shall not interfere with the personal law of non-Muslims. They will have full freedom of conscience and belief and will be entitled to perform their religious rites and ceremonies. As well as being able to practise their religion, they are entitled to criticise Islam. However the rights given in this respect are not unlimited: the civil law of the country has to be fully respected and all criticism has to be made within its framework.

These rights are irrevocable and non-Muslims can only be deprived of them if they renounce the convenant which grants them citizenship. However much a non-Muslim state may oppress its Muslim

citizens, it is not permissible for an Islamic state to retaliate against its non-Muslim subjects. This injunction holds good even if all the Muslims outside the boundaries of an Islamic state are massacred.

## Executive and Legislature

The responsibility for the administration of the Government in an Islamic state is entrusted to an Amir (leader) who may be likened to the President or the Prime Minister in a Western democratic state. All adult men and women who accept the fundamentals of the constitution are entitled to vote in the election for the leader.

The basic qualifications for the election of an Amir are that he should command the confidence of the largest number of people in respect of his knowledge and grasp of the spirit of Islam; he should possess the Islamic attribute of fear of *Allah*; he should be endowed with the quality of statesmanship. In short, he should be both able and virtuous.

A Shura (consultative council), elected by the people, will assist and guide the Amir. It is obligatory for the Amir to administer the country with the advice of his Shura. The Amir can retain office only so long as he enjoys the confidence of the people, and must resign when he loses this confidence. Every citizen has the right to criticise the Amir and his Government, and all responsible means for the expression of public opinion should be available.

Legislation in an Islamic state should be within the limits prescribed by the Shari'ah. The injunctions of *Allah* and His Prophet are to be accepted and obeyed and no legislative body can alter or modify them or make any new laws which are contrary to their spirit. The duty of ascertaining the real intent of those commandments which are open to more than one interpretation should devolve on people possessing a specialised knowledge of the law of Shari'ah. Hence, such matters may have to be referred to a sub-committee of the Shã r~ comprising men learned in Islamic law. Great scope would still be available for legislation on questions not covered by any specific injunctions of the Shari'ah, and the advisory council or legislature is free to legislate in regard to these matters.

In Islam the judiciary is not placed under the control of the executive. It derives its authority directly from the Shari'ah and is answerable to *Allah*. The judges will obviously be appointed by the Government but, once appointed, will have to administer justice impartially according to the law of *Allah*. All the organs and functionaries of the Government should come within their jurisdiction: even the highest executive authority of the Government will be liable to be called upon to appear in a court of law as a plaintiff or defendant. Rulers and ruled are subject to the same law and there can be no discrimination on the basis of position, power or privilege. Islam stands for equality and scrupulously adheres to this principle in the social, economic and political realms alike.

This page is taken from http://www.jamaat.org

*Appendix 83:*

# The Christian Reformed Church

# Statement on Government and Justice

In the church's statement of faith called "Our World Belongs to God," in paragraphs 53-55, we read the following about justice:[1]

**53.** Since God establishes the powers that rule,
we are called to respect them,
unless they trample his Word.
We are to obey God in politics,
pray for our rulers,
and help governments to know his will for public life.
Knowing that God's people
live under many forms of government,
we are thankful for the freedoms
enjoyed by citizens of many lands;
we grieve with those who live under oppression,
and we work for their liberty
to live without fear.

**54.** We call on governments to do public justice
and to protect the freedoms and rights
of individuals, groups, and institutions,
so that each may freely do
the tasks God gives.

[1]For the entire statement, go to J. Boer, 2006, vol. 5, Appendix 18.

We urge governments to ensure the well-being of all citizens

by protecting children from abuse and pornography,

by guarding the elderly and poor,

and by promoting the freedom to speak, to work,

to worship, and to associate.


**55.** Following the Prince of Peace,

we are called to be peacemakers,

and to promote harmony and order.

We call on our governments to work for peace;

we deplore the arms race

and the horrors that we risk.

We call on all nations to limit their weapons

to those needed in the defense of justice and freedom.

We pledge to walk in ways of peace,

confessing that our world belongs to God;

he is our sure defense.


You will note here also the emphasis on justice, but it falls far short of its comprehensive Muslim equivalent.  In fact, paragraph 54 seems arbitrarily selective and extremely minimal in the examples of the protections it wants the government to offer.  Except for the reference to pornography and abuse aimed at children, the explicit moral component, so strong in Islam, is altogether missing.  Is this a sign that the extreme sense of the private and the personal so typical of modern secularism has invaded the heart of this denomination so that the need for government to help curb wide spread immoral freelancing with its attendant social chaos never even occurred to her?  Nevertheless, the emphasis on governmental responsibility for justice, minimal as it is, is there.

However, paragraph 53 has a hidden radical element that seems to have escaped the attention even of the authors. We are to respect the government "unless they trample His Word."  Western governments do so increasingly without robust Christian intervention.  Their increasing disregard for the creation order especially in the

arrangements around sex, marriage and family, including wholesale and tax-supported abortions is scandalous. It stands in stark contrast to their persistent and ineffective crusades against (some) drugs. With all this trampling His Word, one would expect the CRC to have adopted a more radical, less respectful, stance towards government. Unfortunately, the comforts and conveniences the wealthy middle class enjoys in North America has lulled her to sleep. The CRC is a "respectable" denomination and does its work in gentlemanly style without any challenge to governments that trample freely. In fact, it bursts with pride when the US President visits the campus of its Calvin College without any apparent challenge from the college's leadership, in spite of considerable public protest on the part of a group of faculty and students.

*Appendix 84:*

# Politics and Islam

Since Islam is a way of life, then it is very difficult to separate politics from religion. But this is theory. In practice the two have separated a long time ago. However, the two influence each other profoundly.


## Major political principles

### Consultation (Shura)

It should be practiced all the time by Muslims. This is left to the Muslim community to decide for itself how best to uphold Shura.
[42:38] And those who answer the Call of their Lord, and perform prayers, and who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them.

### Voting (Bay'a, pledge of allegiance)

Muslims are encouraged to participate in public affairs. Their mission is always to enjoin right and forbid wrong and to do good deeds. Voting is an expression of that.

### Rule of law and justice

God commands justice. And the purpose of sending messengers and holy books is to achieve justice, declares the Quran. One should stand up for justice even if it is against his/her own interest, or the interest of his parents or family.

### Tolerance towards minorities

Muslims gave a great example to others in the realm of religious tolerance. Jews and Christians lived in relative freedom under the Islamic rule at a time when minorities were persecuted by other religions. The mere fact that minorities still live among Muslims testify to this assertion. Spain was a marvelous example of Jews, Christians and Muslims living together.

Those principles were adhered to most of the time in the Islamic history. And certainly they were violated sometimes. But this is the nature of every human effort; it is not perfect. All people are fallible from the Islamic perspective including the Imams and Caliphs.

What is the nature of the Islamic political system?
Is it theocratic? Dictatorial? Democratic?

# Contemporary Islamic Politics

In general, Islamic countries have the appearance of democratic or constitutional systems. What is lacking is the essence of democracy and freedom. There are constitutions, parliaments, elections, parties, courts, and media. But all of these are under the control of the ruler. Some rulers have recently allowed a measured and limited opening in the system. Most rulers, however, especially in the Arab world, remain beyond criticism and accountability. They are usually praised for their ultimate wisdom in running the affairs of the country and for always making the right decisions. Those rulers (kings, presidents, emirs, sheikhs, and leaders) are depicted as infallible. Their regimes are authoritarian, oppressive, and intolerant, in stark contradiction to the ideal Islamic principles.

## Who is to Blame?

In principle, Islam stands for justice, the rule of law, independent judiciary, due process, consultation, accountability of the ruler, participation of the populace, and tolerance towards minorities. So how can one explain the authoritarianism that pervades and rules Muslim lands? It seems that there are internal and external factors.

### Internal Factors

Muslims have to begin with themselves. They have tolerated tyrants and despots even when Islam recommended standing up to them. Some of that may have come from jurists who emphasized the superiority of law and order over chaos even if it came at the expense of freedom and liberty. The situation in Iraq today may make that stand conceivable.

Second, Islam gives priority to the community over the individual. This caused people to forgo their rights and privileges for the benefits of society at large. Unfortunately, this attitude encouraged oppressive rulers. They claimed to guard the interests of the people as a whole, while they eventually violated the rights of most individuals.

### External Factors

Colonialism has played a significant role in denying people freedom and liberty. The West did not advance and civilize the people as it propagated. Thousands of

people were killed in wars of independence. In Algeria alone, more than 1.5 million people were killed in the revolution against the French occupation.

For the Arabs, the creation of Israel made any talk of political freedom and democracy unpatriotic. The Arabs were in a state of war with Israel, and all resources of the countries were to be devoted to solving that problem. The tyrants would accuse anyone who asks for freedom of being an enemy of the state and the people. (Meanwhile, they failed to see the prosperous democracy in Israel).

Recently, the West supported efforts in Eastern Europe and Latin America to establish democratic governments, but when the Muslims were concerned, the West showed no similar interest in supporting such endeavors. Muslim people are of the opinion that the West wants them to remain under dictatorial regimes. Regimes that serve the interests of the West.

## Political Actors

1. The ruling cliques. They currently have good control of the state. Most depend on the military and secret police to assert their authority. (Musharraf of Pakistan, Qaddafi of Libya, Mubarak of Egypt, Saleh of Yemen, Bin Ali of Tunisia, and Bashir of Sudan are all military men. In Syria, Turkey, Algeria, Mauritania, Somalia, and most of the newly established Islamic states of the former Soviet Union, the army has the upper hand.)
2. Religious parties. They represent a real challenge to the governments especially since they have access to the people through the mosques and non-governmental social programs.
3. Secular groups. They are closer to the West in theory, but they do not have a sound base among people. Secularism is viewed as apostasy by the vast majority of Islamic scholars.

## The Role of religion

All political actors use Islam to earn legitimacy. During the recent elections in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood slogan was: Islam is the solution. The official title of the King of Morocco is: Commander of the Believers. The King of Saudi Arabia's title is: the Custodian of the two Sacred Mosques (in Mecca and Madina). Most of the constitutions of Muslim countries make Islam the official religion of the state, *the* (or *a*) main source of legislation, and/or require that the president of the country be a Muslim.

*Appendix 85:*

REFLECTIONS ON UTOPIA

**Jan H. Boer**

During the discussion on Muslim views on sharia in Volume 6, I emphasized a number of times that many Muslims have their hopes pinned high on the great society that the new sharia regime will usher in. I described their hopes as utopian without explaining the term. I am about to explain it now on basis of a succinct article on the subject by the Dutch philosopher Jan Hoogland, who, in turn, reviews an article on the topic written by Hans Achterhuis, the author of an educational publication on the subject. *A utopia is defined as the expectation or picture of an ideal future. It is a situation where all the shortcomings and the negatives of our current society will be done away with. It pictures an reshaped world where people all work together towards the common good of the entire society—quite the opposite of what obtains in the Nigeria of today—or the world!* Such utopian visions tend to share certain characteristics. One is that "those who devote themselves to utopian thinking easily lose their capacity for self-criticism." Secondly, "Utopians create an ideal dream world that can never be realized." Thirdly, "wherever people have been inspired by social utopian visions in order to reshape society, they create a heavy toll of many victims." All the Communist countries are ready examples of such developments.

What, it is asked, causes social utopian visions to inflict such extreme suffering? According to Achterhuis, the reason is that the devotees are so convinced of their own benign motives that they are blinded to the harsh effects of their actions and cannot tolerate criticism. They simply lose their capacity for self-critique. They have fallen prey to a conviction that they are serving "het absolute goed"—the absolute, highest good; the *summum bonum*—and are no longer prepared to take into consideration any limitations of their schemes and the "soms slechte inborst van de mens"—the sometimes negative tendencies in the human breast. They regard themselves as people capable of creating happiness for the human race. Anyone driven by such high motives and ideals, becomes increasingly incapacitated to recognize a positive role of criticism to keep him on the straight and narrow. Whoever critiques such well-meaning attempts, proves himself a bad person. That is why such people disappear in Communist states.

A comparison of this description of utopianism with the hopes of many pr-sharia activists and their hostile reactions to critics comes almost naturally. Re-read this section and then go back to the section on "hope" in Chapter 4 xxxx? of Volume 6. You will immediately recognize these utopian characteristics, especially if you also read the section on Christian experience with sharia in Volume 7. It is impossible not to recognize the affinity of utopian schemes to the sharia dreams of, still for lack of better term, Fundamentalists.

However, there is one difference between the Achterhuis/Hoogland depiction of utopianism and the sharia campaign in Nigeria. Utopian visions, according to Hoogland,

are generally non-religious: the new society is created by human efforts. No divine being is needed to achieve it, nor any other religious concepts or being. Here is where the sharia utopia differs. It is a religiously-driven utopia, but a religion in which it is still man who has to build it, man driven by the religious sharia. The standards come from God; it is human effort of obedience that brings it about. God's promise guarantees its realisation as long as Muslims obey His sharia.

Of course, Christianity also expects and hopes for "a new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells." It shares this hope with utopians. However, Christianity insists that this will eventually be brought about by God Himself and in His own time. The human race is not capable of bringing it to realization. Here we touch upon another antithetical moment between the two religions. Islam shares with Humanism and secularism a high, positive view of human capability and rejects the Christian view of sin that limits human capability for the good.

Christianity is more realistic about human nature. It is a difference that crops up in various fronts in Christian-Muslim relations that must be recognized head on. It cannot be wished or washed away. A politically-correct-driven attitude that ignores this basic difference will solve no Nigerian problems but only prolong them. All Christian social thinking is shaped by this doctrine of sin; it constantly insists on checks and balances and on limiting power. It means that, quite apart from their negative experiences with sharia, Christians can never share in the optimistic hopes of Muslims in sharia. Christians do believe in being guided by the laws of God, but they also recognize that they constantly fail to live up to that standard. The Bible is too realistic in its depiction of the human condition for Christians to ignore or forget it. They always build it into their structures. When we eventually begin to negotiate about appropriate structures for the nation, this issue will always be there and *must* be taken into consideration.

*Appendix 86:*

*Consensus Politics*

This appendix contains a number of quotations about consensus politics. It is meant to provide some background information to the subject as briefly touched upon in Chapter 8.

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# Consensus Decision Making[1]
## What is consensus?
Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of community and trust.

## Consensus vs. voting
Voting is a means by which we choose one alternative from several. Consensus, on the other hand, is a process of synthesizing many diverse elements together.

Voting is a win or lose model, in which people are more often concerned with the numbers it takes to "win" than with the issue itself. Voting does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, it is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision-making.

With consensus people can and should work through differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. It is possible for one person's insights or strongly held beliefs to sway the whole group. No ideas are lost, each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

A group committed to consensus may utilize other forms of decision making (individual, compromise, majority rules) when appropriate; however, a group that has adopted a consensus model will use that process for any item that brings up a lot of emotions, is something that concerns people's ethics, politics, morals or other areas where there is much investment.

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[1]www.actupny.org/.

**What does consensus mean?**
Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision; this often happens because, when it works, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals.

Consensus takes more time and member skill, but uses lots of resources before a decision is made, creates commitment to the decision and often facilitates creative decision. It gives everyone some experience with new processes of interaction and conflict resolution, which is basic but important skill-building. For consensus to be a positive experience, it is best if the group has 1) common values, 2) some skill in group process and conflict resolution, or a commitment to let these be facilitated, 3) commitment and responsibility to the group by its members and 4) sufficient time for everyone to participate in the process.

**Forming the consensus proposals**
During discussion a proposal for resolution is put forward. It is amended and modified through more discussion, or withdrawn if it seems to be a dead end. During this discussion period it is important to articulate differences clearly. It is the responsibility of those who are having trouble with a proposal to put forth alternative suggestions.

The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and trade-offs are replaced with creative alternatives, and compromise with synthesis.

When a proposal seems to be well understood by everyone, and there are no new changes asked for, the facilitator(s) can ask if there are any objections or reservations to it. If there are no objections, there can be a call for consensus. If there are still no objections, then after a moment of silence you have your decision. Once consensus does appear to have been reached, it really helps to have someone repeat the decision to the group so everyone is clear on what has been decided.

**Difficulties in reaching consensus**
If a decision has been reached, or is on the verge of being reached that you cannot support, there are several ways to express your objections:

**Non-support** ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")

**Reservations** ('I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")

**Standing aside** ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it. ")

**Blocking** ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. It is immoral." If a final decision violates someone's fundamental moral values they are obligated to block consensus.)

**Withdrawing from the group**. Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations or stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and it is just as desirable as a lukewarm beer or a lukewarm bath.

If consensus is blocked and no new consensus can be reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable. Major philosophical or moral questions that will come up with each affinity group will have to be worked through as soon as the group forms.

**Roles in a consensus meeting**
There are several roles which, if filled, can help consensus decision making run smoothly. The facilitator(s) aids the group in defining decisions that need to be made, helps them through the stages of reaching an agreement, keeps the meeting moving, focuses discussion to the point-at hand; makes sure everyone has the opportunity to participate, and formulates and tests to see if consensus has been reached. Facilitators help to direct the process of the meeting, not its content. They never make decisions for the group. If a facilitator feels too emotionally involved in an issue or discussion and cannot remain neutral in behavior, if not in attitude, then s/he should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item.

A vibes-watcher is someone besides the facilitator who watches and comments on individual and group feelings and patterns of participation. Vibes-watchers need to be especially tuned in to the sexism of group dynamics.

A recorder can take notes on the meeting, especially of decisions made and means of implementation and a time-keeper keeps things going on schedule so that each agenda item can be covered in the time allotted for it (if discussion runs over the time for an item, the group may or may not decide to contract for more time to finish up).

Even though individuals take on these roles, all participants in a meeting should be aware of and involved in the issues, process, and feelings of the group, and should share their individual expertise in helping the group run smoothly and reach a decision. This is especially true when it comes to finding compromise agreements to seemingly contradictory positions.
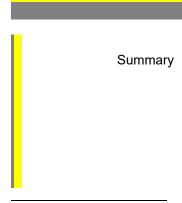================xxxx

*Kwasi Wiredu*

# *Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics*

*A Plea for a Non-party Polity*

Summary

*Wiredu[2] discusses the use of the consensus principle for political theory and practice in Africa. The consensus principle used to be widespread in African politics, and Wiredu elaborates on the example of the traditional political system of the Ashantis in Ghana as a possible guideline for a recommendable path for African politics. For empirical data, he draws from historical material published by British anthropologists (Evans-Pritchard & Fortes et al.) and Ghanaian intellectuals (Busia et al.). According to Wiredu, a non-party system based on consensus as a central principle of political organisation in Africa could avoid the evident problems of both the one-party system*

*and the multi-party system imposed by the West.*

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**Decision making by consensus**

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*Kai Kresse in dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu*

1 **I**t is often remarked that decision making in traditional African life and governance was, as a rule, by consensus. Like all generalisations about complex subjects, it may be legitimate to take this with a pinch of prudence. But there is considerable evidence that decision by consensus was often the order of the day in African deliberations, and on principle. So it was not just an exercise in hyperbole when Kaunda, (democratically) displaced President of Zambia, said *»In our original societies we operated by consensus. An issue was talked out in solemn conclave until such time as agreement could be achieved«* [1](#), or when Nyerere, retired President of Tanzania, also said, *»in African society the traditional method of conducting affairs is by free discussion«* and quoted Guy Clutton-Brock with approval to the effect that *»The elders sit under the big trees, and talk until they agree«*. [2](#)

2 **I**ronically, both pronouncements were made in the course of a defence of the one-party system. Of this I will have more to say below. But for now, let us note an important fact about the role of consensus in African life. It is that the reliance on consensus is not a peculiarly political phenomenon. Where consensus characterizes political decision making in Africa, it is manifestation of an immanent approach to social interaction. Generally, in interpersonal relations among adults, consensus as a basis of joint action was taken as axiomatic. This is not to say it was always attained. Nowhere was African society a realm of unbroken harmony. On the contrary, conflicts (including mortal ones) among lineages and ethnic groups and within them were not infrequent. The remarkable thing, however, is that if and when a resolution of the issues was negotiated, the point of it was seen in the attainment of reconciliation rather than the mere abstention from further recriminations or collisions. It is important to note that disputes can be settled without the achievement of reconciliation.

3 **R**econciliation is, in fact, a form of consensus. It is a restoration of goodwill through a reappraisal of the significance of the initial bones of contention. It does not necessarily involve a complete identity of moral or cognitive opinions. It suffices that all parties are able to feel that adequate account has been taken of their points of view in any proposed scheme of future action or coexistence. Similarly, consensus does not in general entail total agreement. To begin with, consensus usually presupposes an original position of diversity. Because issues do not always polarize opinion on lines of strict contradictoriness, dialogue can function, by means, for example, of the smoothing of

*»In our original societies we operated by consensus. An issue was talked out in solemn conclave until such time as agreement could be achieved.«*

*Kenneth Kaunda*
(Note 1)

edges, to produce compromises that are agreeable to all or, at least, not obnoxious to any. Furthermore, where there is the will to consensus, dialogue can lead to a willing suspension of disagreement, making possible agreed actions without necessarily agreed notions.

4   **T**his is important because certain situations do, indeed, precipitate exhaustive disjunctions which no dialogic accommodations can mediate. For example, either we are to go to war or we are not. The problem then is how a group without unanimity may settle on one option rather than the other without alienating anyone. This is the severest challenge of consensus, and it can only be met by the willing suspension of disbelief in the prevailing option on the part of the residual minority. The feasibility of this depends not only on the patience and persuasiveness of the right people, but also on the fact that African traditional systems of the consensual type were not such as to place any one group of persons consistently in the position of a minority. Of this, too, more below.

5   **B**ut, first, let us see how faith in consensus worked in one concrete example of an African traditional system of polities. It may be well to note, as a preliminary, that African political systems of the past displayed considerable variety. There is a basic distinction between those systems with a centralized authority exercised through the machinery of government, and those without any such authority in which social life was not regulated at any level by the sort of machinery that might be called a government. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard classify the Zulu (of South Africa), the Ngwato (also of South Africa), the Bemba (of Zambia), the Banyankole (of Uganda), and the Kede (of northern Nigeria) under the first category, and the Logoli (of western Kenya), the Tallensi (of northern Ghana), and the Nuer (of southern Sudan) under the second. [3]

6   **I**t is, or should be, a matter of substantial interest to political thinkers that societies of the second description – that is, anarchistic societies – existed and functioned in an orderly manner, or at least not with any less order than the more centralized ones. It is also, perhaps, easier in the context of the less centralized social orders to appreciate the necessity of consensus. Where the exercise of authority (as, for example, in the settlement of disputes) rested purely on moral and, perhaps, metaphysical prestige, it is obvious that decision by the preponderance of numbers would be likely to be dysfunctional. But it is more interesting to observe that the habit of decision by consensus in politics was studiously cultivated in some of the most centralized and, if it comes to it, warlike, ethnic groups of Africa, such as the Zulu and the Ashantis. By a somewhat paradoxical contrast, the authorities in some of the comparatively less militaristic of the centralized societies, such as the Bemba or the Banyankole, seem to have manifested less enthusiasm for consensus in political decision making than the Ashantis or the Zulu. [4] In what immediately follows I propose to take advantage of the elaborate description and analysis of the Ashanti traditional system of politics in K. A. Busia's *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti* [5] and my own personal experience to trace the course of consensus in the Ashanti political example.

*The political organisation of the Ashantis*

7    **T**he lineage is the basic political unit among the Ashantis. Because they are a matrilineal group, this unit consists of all the people in a town or village having a common female ancestor, which, as a rule, is quite a considerable body of persons. Every such unit has a head, and every such head is automatically a member of the council which is the governing body of the town or village. The qualifications for lineage headship are seniority in age, wisdom, a sense of civic responsibility and logical persuasiveness. All these qualities are often united in the most senior, but non-senile, member of the lineage. In that case, election is almost routine. But where these qualities do not seem to converge in one person, election may entail prolonged and painstaking consultations and discussions aimed at consensus. There is never an act of formal voting. Indeed, there is no longstanding word for "voting" in the language of the Ashantis. The expression which is currently used for that process *(aba to)* is an obvious modern coinage for a modern cultural import or, shall we say, imposition.

8    **T**he point, then, at which the head of a lineage is elected is the point at which consensus first makes itself felt in the Ashanti political process. This office, when conferred on a person, is for life unless moral, intellectual, or physical degeneration sets in. As the representative of the lineage in the governing council of a town, he or, in rare cases, she is in duty bound to hold consultations with the adult members of the lineage regarding municipal matters. In any matter of particular significance, consensus is always the watchword. It is also the watchword at the level of the municipal council, which, as indicated, consists of the lineage heads.

9    **T**hat council is presided over by the "natural ruler" of the town, called a chief. This word, though tainted with colonial condescension, has remained in general use even in the postindependence era by dint of terminological inertia. The "natural" aspect of this position lies in its basic hereditary status: normally, a chief can only come from the royal lineage. But it is only basically hereditary, for a lineage being a quite substantial kinship group, there is at any one time a non-negligible number of qualified candidates. The choice, which is proposed by the "queen mother" (the mother or aunt or maternal sister or cousin of the chief), has to be approved by the council and endorsed by the populace through an organisation called, in literal translation, "the young people's association" in order to become final.

10    **C**ontrary to a deliberately fostered appearance, the personal word of the chief was not law. His official word, on the other hand, is the consensus of his council, and it is only in this capacity that it may be law; which is why the Akans have the saying that there are no bad kings, only bad councilors. Of course, an especially opinionated chief, if he also had the temerity, might try, sometimes with success, to impose his will upon a council. But a chief of such habits was as likely as not to be eventually deposed. In truth, as Abraham, also speaking of the Akans, points out in *The Mind of Africa*, *»kingship was more a sacred office than a political one«*. 6 The office was "sacred" because a chief

was supposed to be the link between the living population and their departed ancestors, who were supposed to supervise human interests from their postmortem vantage point. In so far as it was political, it bore substantial analogies to the status of a constitutional monarch. The chief was the symbol of the unity of his kingdom and, in the normal course of his duties, fulfilled a variety of ceremonial functions. But he was unlike a constitutional monarch in being a member (at least as a lineage personage) of the ruling council, and in being in a position to exercise legitimate influence on its deliberations by virtue, not of any supposed divine inspiration, but rather of whatever intrinsic persuasiveness his ideas may have had.

11    If these facts are borne in mind, it becomes apparent that the council was strongly representative with respect to both the nature of its composition and the content of its decisions. This representativeness was duplicated at all levels of authority in the Ashanti state. The town or city councils were the most basic theater of political authority. Representatives from these councils constituted divisional councils presided over by "paramount" chiefs. These latter units also sent representatives to the national council presided over by the *Asantehene*, the king of the Ashantis, at the highest level of traditional government. It is at this stage, perhaps, needless to say that decision was by consensus at all these levels.

12    Now, this adherence to the principle of consensus was a premeditated option. It was based on the belief that *ultimately* the interests of all members of society are the same, although their immediate perceptions of those interests may be different. This thought is given expression in an art motif depicting a crocodile with one stomach and two heads locked in struggle over food. If they could but see that the food was, in any case, destined for the same stomach, the irrationality of the conflict would be manifest to them. But is there a chance of it? The Ashanti answer is: "Yes, human beings have the ability eventually to cut through their differences to the rock bottom identity of interests." And, on this view, the means to that objective is simply rational discussion. Of the capabilities of this means the Ashantis are explicit. "There is", they say, "no problem of human relations that cannot be resolved by dialogue." Dialogue, of course, presupposes not just two parties (at least), but also two conflicting positions: "One head does not hold council." Nor was any suggestion that one voice might be entitled to be heard to the exclusion of others countenanced for one moment: "Two heads are better than one", says another maxim. Indeed, so much did the Ashantis (and the Akans in general) prize rational discussion as an avenue to consensus among adults that the capacity for elegant and persuasive discourse was made one of the most crucial qualifications for high office.

## *Representation and democracy*

»One head does 13 not hold council.«

*Akan proverb*

13    I would like to emphasize that the pursuit of consensus was a deliberate effort to go beyond decision by majority opinion. It is easier to secure majority agreement than to achieve consensus. And the fact was not lost upon the Ashantis. But they spurned that line of least resistance. To them, majority opinion is not in itself a good enough

basis for decision making, for it deprives the minority of the right to have their will reflected in the given decision. Or, to put it in terms of the concept of representation, it deprives the minority of the right of representation in the decision in question.

**14** Two concepts of representation are involved in these considerations. There is the representation of a given constituency in council, and there is the representation of the will of a representative in the making of a given decision. Let us call the first formal and the second substantive representation. Then, it is obvious that you can have formal representation without its substantive correlate. Yet, the formal is for the sake of the substantive. On the Ashanti view, substantive representation is a matter of a fundamental human right. Each human being has the right to be represented not only in council, but also in counsel in any matter relevant to his or her interests or those of their groups. This is why consensus is so important.

**15** Nor are pragmatic reasons lacking to the same purport. Formal representation without substance is apt to induce disaffection. If the system in use is such as to cause some groups periodically to be in substantively unrepresented minorities, then seasonal disaffection becomes institutionalized. The results are the well-known inclemencies of adversarial politics. From the Ashanti standpoint, consensus is the antidote. But, again, can consensus always be had? As already noted, the Ashantis seem to have thought that it could, at least in principle. But suppose this is not the case. Even so, it can always be aimed at, and the point is that any system of politics that is seriously dedicated to this aim must be institutionally different from a system based on the sway of the majority, however hedged around with "checks and balances".

»The Ashanti system **16** was a consensual democracy. It was a democracy because government was by the consent, and subject to the control, of the people as expressed through their representatives. It was consensual because, at least as a rule, that consent was negotiated on the principle of consensus.«

What is the bearing of these considerations on democracy? Current forms of democracy are generally systems based on the majority principle. The party that wins the majority of seats or the greatest proportion of the votes, if the system in force is one of proportional representation, is invested with governmental power. Parties under this scheme of political things are organisations of people of similar tendencies and aspirations with the sole aim of gaining power for the implementation of their policies. Let us call such systems *majoritarian democracies*. Then, those based on consensus may be called *consensual democracies*. The Ashanti system was a consensual democracy. It was a democracy because government was by the consent, and subject to the control, of the people as expressed through their representatives. It was consensual because, at least as a rule, that consent was negotiated on the principle of consensus. (By contrast, the majoritarian system might be said to be, in principle, based on "consent" without consensus.)

### A non-party system

»For all concerned, the **17** system was set up for participation in power, not its appropriation, and the underlying

The Ashanti system, furthermore, was not a party system in the sense of the word "party" noted in the last paragraph, which is basic to majoritarian democracy. But in a broad lexical sense there were parties. The lineages were parties to the project of good government. Moreover, in every Ashanti town the youth constituted themselves into

philosophy was one of cooperation, not confrontation.«

an organized party under a recognized leader who was entitled to make representations directly (though not as a member) to the relevant council on all matters of public interest. The sense in which the system in question did not feature parties is that none of the groups mentioned organized themselves for the purpose of gaining power in a way which entailed others not being in power or, worse, being out of it. For all concerned, the system was set up for participation in power, not its appropriation, and the underlying philosophy was one of cooperation, not confrontation.

18    This is the aspect of the traditional system to which the advocates of the one-party system appealed in their attempts to prove its African ancestry and authenticity. The illusory analogy was this. In a one-party system there is no conflict of parties. No party loses because the party wins. The comparison is faulty for the following reason. In the traditional set-up, no party lost because all the parties were natural partners in power or, more strictly, because there were no parties. In the one-party situation, the reason why no party loses is because murdered parties do not compete. (If these last remarks should occasion any sense of inconsistency, a careful disambiguation of the term "party" in this context should dissipate it.)

19    The disappearance of the one-party system from the African scene is, and should remain, unlamented. But my reason for mentioning that subject is not to flog a dead horse; it is, in fact, to paint out the good parts of a bad case. One valid point which was made again and again by the one-party persuaders is that there is no necessary connection between democracy and the multiparty system. An associated insight was that indigenous African systems of politics, at least in some well-known instances, offered examples of democracy without a multiparty mechanism.

»Akoko nan tiaba na enkum ba«

The hen treads upon its chicks, but it does not kill them

*Ashanti symbol*

20    But although the traditional systems in question avoided this mechanism, it should be constantly borne in mind that, as already noted, it had room for parties in the broad sense. This is important because these parties provided the centers of independent thought presupposed by the very idea of meaningful dialogue in the process of political decision making – those conditions of rational interaction that the one-party system was so efficient in destroying.

***Western pressure to multi-partyism: a cul-de sac?***

**Kwasi Wiredu**:
"Toward Decolonizing African Philosophy and Religion".
In: *African Studies Quarterly* 1.4 (1997).
Article

21    In the drive towards democracy that occurred in Africa in the past half decade or so, 7 African dictators, civilian and military, were under sustained Western pressure to adopt the multiparty way of life. This proved politically fatal to some of them, though others eventually discovered tricks for surviving multiparty elections. There is no denying, of course, that some gains in freedom have accrued to the African populations. But how substantial have these been and to what extent have these developments built on the strengths of the indigenous institutions of politics in Africa? It is hard to be convinced that this

question has yet attracted enough attention.

22   The cause of this relative neglect of the question may conceivably be connected with its difficulty. The conditions of traditional political life were surely less complicated than those of the present. The kinship networks that provided the mainstay of the consensual politics of traditional times are simply incapable of serving the same purpose in modern Africa. This is especially so in the urban areas, where industrialisation, albeit paltry in many parts of Africa, has created conditions, such as sharp socioeconomic cleavages, which carry all or many of the ingredients of ideological politics. In these circumstances it may well seem a trifle too utopian to envisage the possibility of a non-party approach to politics.

»In the matter of conflict among the ethnic groups, it should be noted that African history furnishes examples not only of conflict, but also of cooperation among them.«

23   It might seem, furthermore, that the account of traditional politics given above essentially involves exaggerations of harmony in traditional life. In fact, even if consensus prevailed in the politics of certain ethnic groups in Africa, historically, interethnic relations involving those same groups have, by nature, been marked, or more strictly, marred by frequent wars, the most extreme negations of consensus. The point is not just that there have been ethnic wars from time to time, as was conceded early on, but more seriously, that the ethnic orientation of the various groups, by their own inward fixations, has tended to generate conflict in their external relations.

24   Of this the contemporary world has unspeakably tragic illustrations. It might seem, therefore, that neither in the past nor in the present nor in any foreseeable future can consensus be seen to have been, or to promise, a realistic basis for politics in any African state that is a composite of distinct ethnic units. On the contrary, so it might appear, the more pluralistic approach of a multiparty system, provided it incorporates reasonable safeguards against the tyranny of the majority, offers the more practical option.

25   The premises of both objections may be granted, quite readily in the first case and with a qualification in the second. But the conclusions in favor of the multiparty system in both cases are non sequiturs. As regards the premises, it is true that any suggestion that the kinship basis of traditional politics could be a model for contemporary African politics can be dismissed as an anachronistic nostalgia. But, in the matter of conflict among the ethnic groups, it should be noted that African history furnishes examples not only of conflict, but also of cooperation among them. Still, the history of interethnic conflict and the problem of its contemporary reverberations ought not to be minimized. Interestingly, exactly this is one of the reasons why the idea of a consensual non-party system ought to be taken especially seriously in Africa.

26   One of the most persistent causes of political instability in Africa derives from the fact that, in ever so many contemporary African states, certain ethnic groups have found themselves in the minority both numerically and politically. Under a system of majoritarian democracy this means that, even with all the safeguards, they will consistently find themselves outside the corridors of power. The frustrations and disaffections, with their disruptive consequences for the polity, should not have caught

anybody by surprise.

**Non-party consensus politics: the way out?**

27  Consider the non-party alternative. Imagine a dispensation under which governments are formed not by parties, but by the consensus of elected representatives. Government, in other words, becomes a kind of coalition – a coalition not, as in the common acceptation, of parties, but of citizens. There is no impediment whatsoever to the formation of political associations to propagate preferred ideologies. But in councils of state, affiliation with any such association does not necessarily determine the chances of selection for a position of responsibility.

28  Two things can be expected. First, political associations will be avenues for channeling all desirable pluralisms, but they will be without the Hobbesian proclivities of political parties, as they are known under majoritarian politics. And second, without the constraints of membership in parties relentlessly dedicated to wrestling power or retaining it, representatives will be more likely to be actuated by the objective merits of given proposals than by ulterior considerations. In such an environment, willingness to compromise, and with it the prospects of consensus, will be enhanced.

29  Consensus is not just an optional bonus. As can be inferred from my earlier remarks, it is essential for securing substantive, or what might also be called decisional, representation for representatives and, through them, for the citizens at large. This is nothing short of a matter of fundamental human rights. Consensus as a political decision procedure requires, in principle, that each representative should be persuaded, if not of the optimality of each decision, at least of its practical necessity, all things considered. If discussion has been even moderately rational and the spirit has been one of respectful accommodation on all sides, surviving reservations on the part of a momentary minority will not prevent the recognition that, if the community is to go forward, a particular line of action must be taken.

30  This should not be confused with decision making on the principle of the supreme right of the majority. In the case under discussion, the majority prevails not over, but upon, the minority – it prevails upon them to accept the proposal in question, not just to live with it, which latter is the basic plight of minorities under majoritarian democracy. In a consensus system, the voluntary acquiescence of the minority with respect to a given issue would normally be necessary for the adoption of a decision. In the rare case of an intractable division, a majority vote might be used to break the impasse. But the success of the system must be judged by the rarity of such predicaments in the workings of the decision making bodies of the state. A less unwelcome use of majorities might occur in the election of representatives. Here choice may have to be determined by superior numbers in terms of votes. But even here the representatives will be under obligation to consult with all the tendencies of opinion in their constituencies and work out, as much as possible, a consensual basis of representation.

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**F**urther points of detail and even of principle remain to be spelled out, but these indications must make it plausible to suppose that, in the consensual non-party system, no one group, ethnic or ideological, will be afflicted with the sense of being permanent outsiders to state power. That alone should suffice to forestall some, at least, of the unhappy conflicts that have bedeviled African life into our own times. Thus, far from the complexities of contemporary African life making the consensual, non-party precedents of traditional African politics now unusable, they make them indispensable. For this reason, if for no other, the exploration of that alternative to multiparty politics should commend itself to the urgent attention of contemporary African philosophers and political scientists. But there is nothing peculiarly African about the idea itself. If it is valid, especially with respect to its human rights dimension, it ought to be a concern for our whole species.

1 Gideon-Cyrus M. Mutiso / S.W. Rohio (ed.) (1975): *Readings in African Political Thought*. London: Heinemann, 476. r1r1

Ibid., 478.
K.A. Busia also comments on the same single-minded pursuit of consensus as it obtained among the traditional Akans of Ghana in his (1967) *Africa in Search of Democracy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul). The passage will bear extended quotation:
2 *»When a council, each member of which was the representative of a lineage, met to discuss matters affecting the whole community, it had always to grapple with the problem of reconciling sectional and common interests. In order to do this, the members had to talk things over: they had to listen to all the different points of view. So strong was the value of solidarity that the chief aim of the councilors was to reach unanimity, and they talked till this was achieved.«* (28)
r2r2

3 M. Fortes / E.E. Evans-Pritchard (ed.) (1940): *African Political Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5. r3r3

See, for example, Max Gluckman: "The Kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa"; I. Shapera: "The
4 political organisation of the Ngwato of Bechuanaland Protectorate" (present-day Botswana); and Audrey Richards: "The political system of the Bemba tribe – north-eastern Rhodesia" (in present-day Zambia); all in Fortes / Evans-Pritchard, Note 3. r4r4

K.A. Busia (1951): *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of the Ashanti*. London: Frank Cass.
The Ashantis are a subgroup of the Akans. Other subgroups are the Akims, Akuapims,
5 Denkyiras, Fantes, Kwahus, Brongs, Wassas, and Nzimas. The Akans, as a whole, constitute nearly half of the population of Ghana, occupying parts of the middle and southern regions of the country. The Ivory Coast is also home to some Akan groups. The account given of the Ashanti system is true, in all essentials, of the Akans in general. r5r5

6 W.E. Abraham (1962): *The Mind of Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
*»[B]ecause the king was surrounded by councilors whose offices were political, and was*

*himself only a representation of the unity of the people, it was quite possible to remove him from office; the catalogue of the possible grounds of removal was already held in advance.«* (77). r6r6

<u>7</u> The text was written in 1995. *(Editor's note)* r7r7

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The following quotations are about two huge northern Canadian territories very sparsely inhabited by the Inuit people, formerly known as Eskimos. They have adopted a consensus model for their government that "mimics" their traditions. The first quotation is featured here because it is a grass root statement from a local hockey player.

*Consensus vs Party Politics:*

*Nunavut and the North West Territory employ a consensus style of government. The traditional party system is not employed. Rather, what happens is that independent candidates run for office and once elected they gather together to elect the Premier and the cabinet from amongst their number.*

*I like this concept because it bypasses the party system entirely and allows electors to vote for the best person to represent them rather than vote along party lines regardless of how poor a candidate they are faced with voting for under the party system.*

Hockey Team Captain Dave   (www.hockeyforum.com)[3]

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**Consensus Government of Northern Canada Territories**

*One unique feature of territorial government is the system of government and the election process.*

*Until 1978, members of the government of the territories were individuals who are not members of a party, but are elected as independents by the people in their constituency*

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[3]Posted 21 June/2004.

*or riding. Soon after a general election, the Members elect, from amongst themselves, one Member to fill the position of Speaker and another to Premier. (The title was formerly Government Leader). They also choose other Members to be Executive Council Members, also called Cabinet Ministers. The absence of party structures allowed each Member to vote as he or she wished on any subject matter. Approval of any decision requires agreement by the majority of Members. This is called consensus government. In 1978, the Yukon organised political parties and now elects members the same way provinces do. However, consensus government is still used in the Northwest Territories and in Nunavut.*

*The consensus system of governing is more in keeping with the way that aboriginal peoples have traditionally made decisions. Unanimous agreement is not necessary for decisions to be made, motions passed, and legislation enacted. A simple majority carries the vote.*

*Members, who are not in Cabinet, are referred to as Regular Members. They become the unofficial opposition in the House. They are responsible, through questioning and through standing committees, for holding the Government accountable and responsive to the people.*

*As there are significantly more regular members than members of the cabinet, they exert considerable influence on many of the decisions and the direction of the government, far more so than the Official Opposition does in the party-based system used in the provinces and at the federal level.[4]*

*============xxxx*

## Consensus politics, and elections[5]

*Nunavut will have no political parties at the territorial level. Instead, the legislative assembly of the new territory will operate on the basis of consensus politics. Like the aboriginal decision-making system it mimics, the legislative assembly's decisions will be made according to the consensus of the majority of its members rather than political*

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[4]www.Canadian-Politics.com.

[5]Mike Vlessides,  www.nunavut.com.

*party lines. Political parties exist in Nunavut only for the purposes of supporting candidates running in federal elections.*

*In February 1999, Nunavut elected its first 19-member legislative assembly. (A groundbreaking proposal to elect an equal number of women and men to Nunavut's legislative assembly was defeated in a 1997 Nunavut-wide plebiscite.) The members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) hold a secret ballot to elect a speaker, who oversees operation of the assembly. Also elected in a secret vote by the MLAs is the premier of Nunavut, as well as the executive (cabinet). The regular sittings of the assembly will be open to the public.*

*Nunavut Implementation Commissioner Meeka Kilabuk shows off some early suggestions for a Nunavut territorial flag. The contest was open to all Canadian citizens, but the Chief Herald of Canada had the last word*

*Nunavut's government has 10 departments, each headed by a minister; MLAs without ministerial portfolios will perform the role of the opposition. Territorial elections will be held every five years by popular vote. Federally, Nunavut is represented by one member of Parliament, and one senator.*

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# What is meant by the term politics of consensus?[6]

**In:** [History Politics and Society](#)

[ [Edit](#) ]

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[6][http://wiki.answers.com](#).

This is a method where the ruling party uses a system of asking the various sides in an argument to put forward their own ideas and then trying for find a CONSENSUS, which is a agreement that all parties can AGREE with. By getting all sides to contribute their own ideas, the final agreement is built with input from all sides of the question, rather than one group over-ruling all the others, with their power.

Consensus is a hall mark of a mature nation's ability to make good laws with agreement from all sides of the political spectrum.

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### *DOTMOCRACY[7]*

Group decision-making is faster, easier and smarter when you use the dotmocracy process. This site is a free collection of resources for dotmocracy facilitators.

# What is dotmocracy?

**Dotmocracy is an established facilitation method for collecting and prioritizing ideas among a large number of people.**
**It is an equal opportunity & participatory group decision-making process.**
Participants write down ideas and apply dots under each idea to show which ones they prefer. The final result is a graph-like visual representation of the groups collective preferences.
read more

# Essential Step-by-Step Process

# 1. An issue is presented with questions.

The sponsoring organization(s) provides a preamble of important information about the issue to be addressed. For example fact sheets, opinion papers and summary documents could be published; experts and key stakeholder could make presentations. Post the key questions to be answered by the dotmocracy process where all participants can see, for example in large letters on poster paper or with a projector.

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[7]http://dotmocracy.org.  Go to the website and download the handbook.

## 2. Discuss potential solutions.

In small groups, participants brainstorm and deliberate potential answers to the posted questions. Collectively and independently participants draft many ideas.

## 3. Post proposals.

Participants clearly print each idea statement on its own Co-op Tools dotmocracy sheet. Sheets are either posted on a wall or passed around among participants.

## 4. Fill dots to record opinions. Write comments.

Participants read and consider each idea and fill-in one dot per a sheet to record their opinion on a scale of strong agreement, agreement, neutral, disagreement, and strong disagreement or confusion. Participants sign each sheet that they dot and may optionally add brief comments.

## Repeat steps 2 through 4.

Participants review and discuss comments and dotting patterns and post new ideas to be dotted.

## 5. Formulate a common solution.

The dotting process is called to close and the results are published. The most popular ideas should be celebrated. A small group of trusted stakeholder representatives and decision-makers discuss and formulate a final decision or plan that selects, combines, prioritizes and/or finds compromise between popular ideas with minimal disagreement.
This process should follow the official Rules & Requirements. Facilitators should download and read the complete Dotmocracy handbook.
read more

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*The Daily Times  (Pakistani)    October 12, 2008*

> **ANALYSIS:** Politics of consensus —***Dr Hasan-Askari Rizvi    (an excerpt)***

Political parties in Pakistan have a weak tradition of working together on a consensus-agenda in a sustained manner. Dominated by personalities in the absence of internal democracy, most parties find it difficult to rise above their partisan outlook, narrow ideological considerations and the desire to out manoeuvre each other. At times, they agree on abstract principles but diverge when these principles are applied to concrete situations.

For example, most political parties would agree that suicide bombings are inhuman and un-Islamic. However, some of them will not condemn militant groups even if they own a suicide attack.

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**Human Rights—Calvinist Perspectives**

**by**

**World Alliance of Reformed Churches**

**And**

**Paul Marshall**

**This appendix contains human rights documents that have been produced by Calvinists of different stripes. The first is from** WARC, World Alliance of Reformed Churches. **"Reformed" is another word for "Calvinist." The WARC contribution is a summary of their programme on human rights. At the end of this first document you will find a bibliography of Reformed/Calvinist literature on human rights.**

The second document is an excerpt from **Paul Marshall.** Marshall features especially in Part 2 of Volume 5 as well as in the chapter on Human Rights in this volume. He is identified in these writings as a Kuyperian, the school of thought that has given shape to this series. Kuyperianism is a school of thought within the Reformed or Calvinist traditions. Find it at "xxxx."

**The Theological Basis of Human Rights (1970-1976, 1987, 1994, 1997)**

**World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)[1]**

The 1970 General Council recommended that the Department of Theology undertake a study on
"The Theological Basis of Human Rights and a Theology of Liberation." The study would include consideration of such questions as: "How can I be free? God liberating or oppressing? Can the Church be a liberating Church? What does freedom mean when applied to institutions? Freedom as creativity – a biblical concept?" Jürgen Moltmann wrote the initial paper. It

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[1]WARC, "Theological Studies." http://warc.jalb.de/warcajsp/….

"stimulated a wide response from groups of theologians and churches throughout the world". Between 1971 and 1975 many of the member churches, some officially and others unofficially, as well as a number of special committees and groups of theologians produced a variety of statements on several aspects of the issue in question. In a consultation held in London in February 1976, attended by 21 participants from 14 countries in all continents, the [final consensus statement], drafted by Jürgen Moltmann and Jan M. Lochman, was approved. According to Richmond Smith, then Executive Secretary, "up to the present [1982] the report has gone through several major reprintings in English, French, German and Spanish. What is more to the point, the report has been very favourably received through the Reformed family and far beyond." Following an initiative sponsored by WARC in 1977, it was proposed that a limited research project be implemented, involving Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed theologians concerned with the study of the theological basis of human rights. An informal interconfessional study group met in Geneva in 1980 and produced a [Report of a Limited Research Project on the Theological Basis of Human Rights].

In the context of the 1982 General Council's rejection of the apartheid system as a sin and the 1983 Executive Committee's call for a worldwide ecumenical gathering of churches to bear witness to peace and justice (see [A Covenant for Peace and Justice, 1983]), the John Knox International Reformed Center organized in August 1987 a seminar on "Forms of solidarity: Human Rights" whose findings were published in its studies series (see below). In connection with the 1989 General Council debates on Christian witness in view of the ecological crisis, WARC published a "Proposal for enlarging the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (see below). The Alliance's 1994 Executive Committee meeting recommended that "measures be taken for the revival of the proposal to hold a consultation on the theological imperatives for human rights, and its implementation before the 1997 General Council." In the following year, the Executive Committee authorized "the holding of a small consultation on the theological imperatives of human rights, to revise the 1977 (sic) Theological Statement on Human Rights". A consultation held in 1997, with the assistance of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, realized that a simple revision of the Theological Statement on Human Rights was not appropriate and that a new statement should be prepared.

WARC and John Knox Center publications related to this study:

"The Theology of Human Rights and the Theology of Liberation" (Interim Report), Reformed World, 33(6), June 1975, pp. 268-274.

"[The Theological Basis of Human Rights]" (1976 London Consultation), Reformed World, 34(2), June 1976, pp. 50-58.

"[A Christian Declaration on Human Rights]" (Jürgen Moltmann), Reformed World, 34(2), June 1976, pp. 58-72.

"[Report of a Limited Research Project on the Theological Basis of Human Rights]", Reformed World, 36(8), 1981, pp. 370-375.

Rights of Future Generations – Rights of Nature – Proposal for enlarging the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Lukas Vischer, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1990, 68 pp. Contents: Proposal for a resolution; I. Human Rights, Rights of Humanity, and Rights of Nature (Jürgen Moltmann and Elisabeth Giesser); II. The Rights of Future Generations (Peter Saladin and Christoph Zenger); III. The Rights of Nature (Jörg Leimbacher); IV. Rights of Creation – Theological Perspectives (Christian Link); V. The Role and Contribution of the Churches (Lukas Vischer); Appendix: The United Nations 1982 World Charter for Nature.

Forms of Solidarity – Human Rights. Geneva, John Knox Center, 1988, 195 pp. Essays, Bible studies and regional reports in English, German and French.

Reformed World, 48(2), June 1998. Texts on "Theology and Human Rights" by Alan D. Falconer, Jill Schaeffer and Clement John.

Reformed World, 48(3), September 1998. Texts on "Theology and Human Rights" by Russel

Botman, Charles Harper, Julio de Santa Ana and Sun Soon-Hwa.

## A Proposed Christian Framework for Human Rights

### Paul Marshall[2]
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# VI.   A Proposed Christian Framework for Human Rights

In speaking of rights I will not, first of all, speak of positive rights, that is, rights encoded in and protected by positive law.  I will refer to rights as particular rightful claims which we have as God's creatures.  Such claims are prior to positive law and form some of its essential preconditions and objects of attention.  Such claims are, insofar as they are political rights, claims to freedoms and access to resources which must be protected by governments.  The other side of this coin is that governments are obliged to refrain from interfering with human action in the claimed area and to protect ability to engage in such action.  In short, such rights lead to limits on the range of actions of states and governments; such rights specify where they must and must not act.

Such limits cannot be specified abstractly for they are always elaborated in concrete time and place; they are historically formed.  Nor, in spite of this, are they relative, for there are always specific principles which must guide their elaboration.

The limits on the state may first of all be found in the fact that it is a servant of God, a creature, and that nothing in God's creation can of itself function as *the* source and centre of all authority.  Such a centre of authority lies only in God.  If we make something in creation into such a centre then we have made it an idol, a god, the director of our lives.  At times the church has tried to be such a source of authority.  In much of liberalism "the individual," and in communism "society," has been portrayed as such a source.

In our age the state especially seeks to usurp this position.  But the state is not the centre of earthly authority either.  It must recognize other authorities, others which are also responsible to God, such as the person, the family, the church, and so forth.  It is in this mutual delimitation of authority, and its concomitant responsibility, that *rights in general* take their place.  It is in the delimitation of the authority and responsibility – and hence the freedom and needs – of the person that *human rights* appear.  As God gives responsibility and authority to more than just persons, then rights should refer to more than *human rights* (the rights of the person).  In principle we can speak of the rights of families, of marriage, of churches, of states, of animals, and perhaps also of inanimate things, as all of these have their particular place, claim and authority in the world that God has made.

We could in principle discuss the question of rights of each and all of these.  But here I shall concentrate on the theme of *human* rights, which means that we must delineate the area of authority, responsibility and freedom of *persons* within God's creation.

We first of all find the authority of the person by understanding our place in God's creation.  God has made us, male and female, and placed us within the world to love our Creator and Redeemer, to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to steward the earth.  This is what we are

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[2]P. Marshall, 1983, pp. 19-23

made for, this is what we are fitted for.  We all are called, both Christian and non-Christian, to live out every dimension of our lives in joyful obedience to God.

Hence we can say that human beings are given the authority and hence the right to fulfill the calling that God has given them.  We, along with all creatures, are God's servants.  We may say that each of us has a right to be a servant of God, to fulfill our particular office and calling for God's glory.  Human beings have the right to do what God calls them to do.  Their rights relate to their God-given human duties and responsibilities.  Human beings have a right to the institutions and the resources they need to carry out their responsibilities.  Hence the political order must be one in which men and women can express themselves as God's imagers, or, to put it another way, there must be social space for human personality.

This necessarily implies, first of all, *the right to be*, the right to life itself, the right to be unharmed.[3]  This right belongs to each human life.  Such human life always exists in bodies of flesh and blood and bones, hence humans have a right to remain whole, not to be harmed, aborted, maimed, tortured, molested, placed in hostage or terrorized.  The basic needs of individuals to food, nurture, shelter and care are implicit in the right to life itself.  The Biblical message pointedly indicates that the fulfillment of such needs is not a matter of charity but of God's requirement of justice, and is therefore a matter of the structure of the public order.  This justice therefore requires an allocation of material and cultural goods such that human life is made possible, protected, and enhanced so that humans can realize their God-given tasks within human history.  These tasks entail the use of "nature" and its resources.  This use is not only a right of the human species or of the human "community," for each of us is also called.  The earth is the Lord's, and persons have the right to a stewardly possession and use of it.  In a differentiated society, this implies some right to privacy, and its concomitant private property.[4]

Similarly we may speak of the rights of humans as parents to raise and educate their children, for so God has commanded us.  We may also speak of the right to marriage and family life.  As God holds us responsible for the politics of this world we may speak of the rights of citizens to exercise responsibility and authority for the direction of the state.

In each area of God's calling and callings to humankind, individually and together, we can speak of the human right to what is needed to fulfill those callings.  The state's own calling is to protect those callings.

In describing this framework for human rights at least three questions arise.  First, there is the problem of sin: do rights still pertain when humankind is fallen?  Are rights forfeited, or can they be ignored, when people do not use their freedom in order to act in responsible ways?  Second, what happens when rights conflict?  Third, how do these rights as described so far, as rightful *claims*, relate to rights in positive law, such as in a charter of rights?

The response to the first of these questions is that, as we have tried to show, our rights are not rooted in our own righteousness or independent dignity; they are rooted in God's graceful dealing with us.  God's ordering of creation, the calling given to us all, does not cease because of human sin, although, because of such sin, God's provisions for us are misused and turned to evil.  Hence sin does not eradicate rights, nor does the misuse of the freedom of rights lead to their forfeiture.

Similarly, as rights portray the range of the state's competence to act, then the state cannot refuse to respect rights even if they are misused.  If rights specify particular spheres of authority, then their use and misuse is the responsibility of those who have such rights.  The wheat and the tares will co-exist until God's final day of judgement.  Therefore even though rights are granted as freedoms, as room, as social space, to act according to God's calling, one

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[3] This paragraph relies heavily on B. Zylstra, "Using the Constitution to Defend Religious Rights," pp. 93-114 of Lynn R. Buzzard, ed., *Freedom and Faith: The Impact of Law on Religious Liberty* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), p. 96.

[4] This is not, of course, a justification for presently existing property rights and distributions.

cannot be *forced* to follow that calling within one's sphere of right. If we deny this then we must deny human rights, for all of us fail in our callings, all of us misuse freedom, none of us perfectly reflect the *Imago Dei*.

Rights as we have spoken of them so far, as rightful claims, always conflict. There are many persons with rights, and their exercise of those rights will affect the lives and rights of others. The claim of one to free speech will affect the claim of another to be dealt with truthfully and with integrity. The claim of one to property will affect the claim of another to food and shelter. The claim of one to government resources will reduce what is available to meet other claims. In this situation we cannot pretend that human rights are invariant. Rather, they are specific, varied, legitimate claims for protection which must all be addressed simultaneously. Governments are faced at one and the same time with claims for access to food and shelter by some, with claims for the means of education by others, with claims not to be interfered with by others. None of these claims is illegitimate, so none can be dismissed. None of these claims is invariant and contextless, for each claim always affects the treatment of other such legitimate claims. In addition, the very limits of the resources and powers of government means that all possible claims cannot be met simultaneously.

In this situation, the calling of governments is to use its power in a just and equitable way, bearing in mind and paying tribute to the mutual public claims of diverse people and things, to protect the freedom of and protect access to the resources required for each person, community or organization to fulfill its God-given calling and responsibility, and to prevent the oppression of one by another. *Justice* points to the manner and means of weighing and simultaneously meeting different rights. *Rights* in turn, as God-given arenas of authority, point to the limits of the state's acting and *to what it is that must be related in a just fashion.*

It is in terms of this framework of the just recognition of a diversity of rights that the misuse of rights must come into focus. The misuse of the rights of one will adversely affect the rights of another and so a just adjudication of the relation of these rights will lead to a mutual delineation which restricts adverse consequences for others. In this way the misuse of rights will inevitably affect the range of those rights. Nevertheless, this will not lead to their denial or removal but rather to a relative limitation with respect to the rights of others.

This framework for rights may at first appear to be arbitrary, for even as governments affirm human rights, they must still judge competing claims and delimit the scope of competing rights. This appears to leave rights subject to government discretion and, hence, to government denial. This fear is misplaced, for it is clear that any government must deal with competing rights.[5] This is not just a problem with the framework we offer. This fear also misunderstands the place of a framework for human rights as claims.

What we have described so far are not acts of positive law which directly specify what positive, legally enshrined rights each might have, for because of conflicts such rights can never themselves be isolated as positive law. Rather it is a framework *within which* we specify what rights should mean in a particular place at a particular time; it is a framework to guide the development of positive law.

This leads us to our third question, what is the relation of positive law to such rights?

To ensure that government action is not arbitrary with respect to rights, not the actual rights themselves but the just, mutual delimitation of respective rights should be enacted in law. The most fundamental of these should be encoded in constitutional or fundamental law. In this way human rights can lead to *positive rights*, and these positive rights will specify both the legal

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[5] Cf. The remarks of Joel Feinberg, "A human right must be held to be absolute in the sense that rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are most plausibly interpreted as absolute, namely as 'ideal directives' to relevant parties to 'do their best' for the values involved…. If a human right is absolute only in the sense in which an ideal directive is absolute, then it is satisfied whenever it is given the serious and respectful consideration it deserves, even when that consideration is followed by a reluctant invasion of its corresponding interest." *Social Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 86.

limits on the state and also the legal demarcation between differing rights of differing persons. Such positive rights, created by the body of citizens, provide a public legal expression of and foundation for citizens' mutual respect for one another's rights.

**We can then offer a PRELIMINARY FORMAL DEFINITION of positive human rights.** *Human rights are the legally codified recognition of the freedoms which must be allowed to and the resources which must be protected for each person in the society, which are to be arrived at by a just adjudication of competing legitimate claims in recognition of the independent responsibility and authority of human persons to pursue their callings.*

## VII.   Closing

As we attempt to start constructing a framework for rights we find, of course, a host of questions unanswered.  Indeed the question of rights has underscored the necessity for us to understand the meaning of justice.  Such a framework does not itself bring justice into the world, nor is it specific enough to answer our immediate questions.  However, if hope for the downtrodden and suffering of this world lies in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and if our political life is to flow from that gospel, then we must ensure that even our basic political categories, such as rights, are re-formed in the light of God's Word.  I hope that this tentative framework may be a step in that direction.

*Appendix 88:*

# REC Recommendations re Human Rights[1]

Drawing upon this "Testimony on Human Rights," and on the basis of its guiding principles, your committee recommends that the RES Chicago 1984 adopt the following declarations:

A. In light of these Biblical perspectives as understood within the tradition of the Reformed Confessions, we affirm with heart and mouth the universal legitimacy of human rights as the God-given freedom and responsibility of all people to exercise faithfully the multifaceted office to which we are all called as covenant partners and kingdom citizens in our various life-relationships and with the several spheres of societal life.

B. Affirming human rights as originally and permanently secured in God's good order for creation, which though fallen under sin, is now redeemed in Christ Jesus, we gladly accept the Biblical claim which rests upon us to protect, promote, and practice human rights as an urgently important way to deal justly with our fellowmen and to pursue righteousness and peace in a broken world.

C. With heartfelt sorrow born of a deep sense of corporate guilt we confess before God, within this fellowship of churches, and in the presence of our fellowmen the sinful violations of human rights which hang heavy on our conscience. We have been slow to rectify the lasting effects of past transgressions. We have been hesitant to challenge the many gross and subtle forms of injustice which inflict untold suffering upon multitudes of people around the globe and at our very doorsteps. Even within our Christian communities we have added to our guilt by tolerating and abetting societal structures and habits of life which restrict and even deny the God-given rights of others. Our conscience, disciplined by God's Word, accuses us.

> O Lord, if thou shouldst mark iniquities,
> Lord, who could stand? (Psalm 130:3)

Adapting words from a penitential psalm of David, who, like us, pleaded guilty to charges of human rights violations, we stand before the tribunal of divine judgment and forgiving grace to offer this prayer:

> Have mercy upon us, O God,
>    according to thy steadfast love;
>    according to thy abundant mercy
>    blot out our transgressions.
> Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity,
>    and cleanse us from our sin.
> For we know our transgression
>    and our sin is ever before us.
> Create in us a clean heart, O God,

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[1]Reformed Ecumenical Synod/Counsel, *RES Testimony on Human Rights.* Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983, pp. 150-154.

and put a new and right spirit within us.
(Psalm 51:1-3, 10)


D. Leaving to God (who alone can judge the heart) the "secret sins" (Psalm 90:8) and "hidden faults" (Psalm 19:12) which beset us all, we openly decry our complicity, both active and passive, in transgressing the law of love; we openly denounce every assault upon public justice; and we commit ourselves openly to work with renewed dedication for a fuller realization of the following manifestations of human rights:

1. the right to life – challenging us to rise up unitedly in righteous indignation at the wanton slaughter of millions of unborn human beings, to counteract the ruthless killing of countless innocent people in many lands, and to work fervently for justice and peace in the face of the enormous life-threatening potentials of modern warfare;

2. the right to basic life needs – challenging us to share our food more generously with the poor and needy, the malnourished and starving peoples of the world, and to devise effective ways of distributing more equitable other basic good gifts of God's creation, such as clothing, shelter, energy, and health care;

3. the rights of marriage and family life – challenging us to remove unbiblical obstacles to freedom of choice in marriage partners and to combat societal systems which permit the capricious invasion of the intimacy of family life and the forceful disappearance of family members;

4. the right to freedom of worship – challenging us to intervene on behalf of persecuted worshiping communities, Christians and others, assuring them the opportunity to gather in their places of worship without molestation, discrimination, or reprisal;

5. the right to religious liberty – challenging us in a religiously pluralist world to plead the cause of all persons and communities to freely choose and change their religions, to live out their beliefs freely, both privately and publicly, within the various structures of society;

6. the right to work – challenging us to a reformation of economic systems which exploit some at the expense of others, of working conditions which disrupt people's lives, deprive them of meaningful employment, and withhold from them a fair return upon their labors;

7. the right to freedom of association (including the right of non-association) – challenging us to encourage societal conditions which make possible a life-enriching diversity of voluntary associations in which people, in keeping with their respective beliefs, can organize for the achievement of legitimate goals and purposes, whether cultural, social economic, political, educational, scientific, recreational, or other; and which protect the rights of labor unions, as voluntary associations of workers, to promote stewardly enterprises;

8. the right of all citizens to participate responsibly in the political processes of the nation – challenging us to promote societal structures which allow

all citizens, in harmony with their respective beliefs, equitable representation and participation in the crucial decision-making processes of the nation and which safeguard the basic rights of self-determination equitably for all groups in society;

9. the right to freedom of choice in education – challenging us to defend the prior right of the home to choose the kind of schools its children shall attend, without unjust penalties attached to such choices, so that all school systems, of whatever religion or philosophy, shall have equal standing with the government under the constitutional law of the land;

10. the right to freedom from all forms of discrimination – challenging us to advocate human rights for all, without distinctions based on race, color, ethnic origin, religion, sex, language, social status, political conviction, wealth, or property.

11. the right to an evenhanded administration of public justice – challenging us to help shape a legal order which grants to all people equal treatment before the law and free access to the courts for redress of wrongs, with the assurance that no persons shall be subject to cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, arbitrary detention, imprisonment without fair trial, or unlawful restriction of liberty;

12. the right to a fair share in the rich resources of creation – challenging us, while developing the resources of creation and protecting them against exploitation and pollution, to curtail consumptive greed and eliminate the abject poverty of needy neighbors the world over.

E. By way of continuing implementation of the 1980 RES report on "The Church and Its Social Calling," we reaffirm our commitment to the task of the church in its preaching, teaching, pastoral, deaconal, and fellowshipping ministries to be a vital and vigorous advocate and practitioner of a Biblical view of human rights as a crucial aspect of its calling to equip the Christian community for its witness in the world.

F. In our world, badly polarized by individualist and collectivist ideologies, we advocate a Biblically-directed pluralist view of societal relationships as an authentic alternative to the adversarial situations and overwhelming problems created by these two dominant ideologies, in order thus to create a better way to work for greater justice and peace in the world and a fuller realization of human rights among all peoples.

G. In keeping with a Biblically-Reformed view of the task of the institutional church –

1. we urge our worldwide member churches, cognizant of the very different circumstances under which they live, both within their borders and where feasible beyond, and whenever feasible in cooperation with other Christian churches and organizations, to do all within their power to promote an obedient response to this "Testimony on Human Rights;"

2. we urge our member churches in South Africa to do all within their power to see to it that human rights in their land become properly safeguarded in everyday practice and in constitutional law, perhaps in the form of a bill of

human rights, assuring all groups full and fair opportunity for a proper adjudication of human rights issues by means of full and free access to the courts of the land;

3. we urge our member churches, especially those in North America and Europe, in cooperation with our member churches in Latin America, to do all in their power to help alleviate the widespread and atrocious violations of human rights which have been inflicted upon the severely suffering Latin American peoples.

H. In ecumenical relations, as we seek to cooperate with other Christian churches and organizations in protecting and promoting human rights, we urge our member churches to deepen the unity already evident and to resolve the differences which still prevail among the various Christian traditions in their views and practices of human rights.

I. Recognizing that this report represents a first concerted effort by the RES to address the urgent human rights issues of our day, we urge our member churches, led by the Spirit, to engage in continuing reflection upon the principles of God's Word for human rights and in ongoing action to establish liberty and justice for all.

J. We urge our member churches to take full advantage of this "Testimony on Human Rights" in their various ministries, especially in the educational task and public responsibility of the church in the world.

K. We urge our member churches to publicize the "Pastoral Statement – A Call to Commitment and Action" liberally in order to assure its wide circulation among their people and within their societies, thus to promote an effective protection and just practice of human rights by all and for all.

*Appendix 89:*

**REPORT FROM REFORMED ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (REC) ON RELIGIOUS PLURALISM.**
(A statement adopted by the REC Assembly, 2005 )

**Christian Witness amidst Religious Pluralism**
In 1992 and 1996 respectively, the REC issued clear statements on its understanding of Christian mission and the uniqueness of Christ. These statements were made against the background of the world-wide phenomenon of religious pluralism. Though these statements were very helpful and answered a number of questions, we the REC member churches, have realised that our exploration of the reality of religious pluralism has been far from complete. To have a clear theological position on the uniqueness of Christ is one thing. How we witness to that in day to day life-situations of religious pluralism is another matter. The fact is that many REC church members live with people of other faiths on a daily basis. Hence, churches are called to reflect anew on the question of how to relate to and witness to people of other faiths. The main focus of this document will be on this question: *How do Christians encounter the reality of religious pluralism, with all its challenges, and how can they credibly live out their faith in Christ in these situations?* In this document we use the term 'religious pluralism' for the sociological reality of living in a multireligious society.

*Different Facets of Religious Pluralism*

We observe that the contexts of religious pluralism in which the REC member churches live, differ greatly and have various facets. We acknowledge that the contexts of religious pluralism, refered to below, should not be seen as three distinct models, but as stages on a continuum. We also observe that in the course of time contexts can be subject to change. The guidelines mentioned below intend to be guidelines, and in no way want to impede the guidance of the Holy Spirit on appropriate responses to specific contexts.

• There are contexts in which people of different religious traditions live harmoniously together and where there are possibilities for cooperation in public life, for constructive encounters and open witness to the Gospel.

• There are also contexts, which in the past were harmonious but in which growing tensions now occur. In some cases, this has caused a general deterioration of relationships between the communities. In other cases, we see a more diverse response. Some people engaged in encounters are strengthened in their determination to build bridges; with others these tensions lead to a confirmation of their negative perceptions and/or a reinforcement of existing prejudices.

• There are also contexts in which the relationships between people of different faiths are openly hostile and sometimes even violent. The reality is that some of the REC member churches have to function in very difficult and oppressive circumstances. In such situations public witness to Christ is very hard. Often this coincides with situations in which the Christian community forms a small minority.

Needless to say, these different contexts call for different forms of Christian witness. Sensitivity to the possibilities in each of these situations and a prayerful discernment of God's will and way for our Christian witness is vital. We signal that apart from the setting of the individual contexts in which the REC member churches work, relationships between the different faith communities are also influenced by global events and developments. We see a growing tendency in most religious traditions towards fundamentalism, even militant fundamentalism. We also observe a fear for the increase of violent confrontations between some adherents of the different religious communities. As REC churches we are called upon to resist this build up of negative mutual perceptions and the escalation of suspicion, to help dismantle prejudices and to contribute positively towards maintaining good relationships and building peace.

*Biblical-Theological Reflection on relating to People of other Faiths*

The multi-religiousness of the societies we live in also confronts us with a series of theological questions.The REC document *The Unique Person and Work of Christ* makes two clear points: On the one hand it states that 'Scripture emphasises that Christ has come once and for all. His incarnation is the very center of history. It is the "crucial divine intervention." (Visser 't Hooft, *No other name*: 97) Therefore, there can be no other saviors. (See also Romans 6:10, Hebrews 7:27 and 9:28).'[1] Yet the document also very clearly indicates that this unique revelation of God in Christ, does not deny that there can be knowledge of God in other religious traditions. To the question: 'Does God also speak and deal with people in other ways than through an explicit knowledge of Christ?' an affirmative answer is given: '…we know that God was present in some sense among (…) people who had never heard the name of Jesus Christ.' Also: 'The Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts of men and women long before any of God's human agents bring the saving message of good news in Jesus Christ.'[2] This is often referred to as common grace. The Dutch missiologist J.H. Bavinck calls this phenomenon God's manifestation - his speechless speech - in creation and history.[3]

As we are reminded in Acts 14:17, 'Yet He has not left Himself without testimony...' Having considered what the Bible says about other religions, we discovered anew that in the Bible the emphasis is on encounters and relationships, and not primarily on the comparison of systems of thought. It deals with how we think about and relate to people who believe differently than we do. Truth in the Bible is first of all about a Person we need to meet: Jesus Christ. The Bible urges us towards encounters, encounters with God through Christ and encounters with other people.

Having been met by Christ and having been changed through this experience, we are now called upon to look at other people with the eyes of Christ. The Bible tells us that *all* people are created in the image of God, *all* are His and *all* are loved by Him. We know that God's concern is not only for Israel and the church, but for the whole of His creation. His heart goes out to *all humanity*: He so loved the *world* that He gave His only Son. (John 3:16) [4] This implies that we acknowledge the dignity of every human being, treat all people with deep respect and be willing to care for them, in the way Christ cared for us.

*The Missionary Calling of the Church amidst Religious Pluralism*

What then is the missionary calling of the church within the context of religious pluralism? The mission of the church (*missio ecclesiae*) is participation in God's mission (*missio Dei*). Since we believe that God in Christ has reached out to the whole world, we as faithful disciples of Christ want to follow in his footsteps by loving all of humanity as He does: fellow Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus etc., proclaiming the good news of Christ to all. It is this love of Christ which urges us on (2 Cor. 5:14).

The way in which we as REC churches seek to carry out this missionary calling depends on the context in which each church is called to witness. This will be a multi-dimensional task. Witness according to our understanding is an holistic testimony to God in Christ, in words, deeds and presence.

• The context of harmonious relationships allows for a wide range of opportunities for witness. Direct and clear evangelism, challenging people to radically reorient their lives, should be pursued.[5] Dialogue also should have a prominent place. In today's ever-changing religious climate harmonious relationships can never be taken for granted but should be nurtured with great care. One way in which this is realised, occurs when people of different faiths cooperate in the public domain for good government and for a just and peaceful society.

• In the context of growing estrangement the witness to Christ will have to include ways of dispelling the tension and intentional efforts towards mutual understanding, both on the community level and on an individual basis. Interreligious dialogue is one way to witness to Christ. It can help us to break through the caricatures we have made of each other and to see real faces – people's hopes, pains and stories. Listening to the faith stories of others, and having an opportunity to tell our own stories might also help dispel the distortions we have of one another's faiths and break away from thinking in categories of 'them' and 'us'.

• In the context of open hostility, verbal witness is often very difficult and dialogue at times virtually impossible. While we keep on looking and praying for opportunities for verbal witness and dialogue, we acknowledge that this context might require yet other forms of witness to Christ such as Christian service (diakonia) or Christian presence.[6] By 'Christian presence' we mean being present among people with the hope and intention that our lives be understood as witness to the love of Christ. In all these contexts we as churches seek to fulfil our calling, convinced that Christ is the only way, the unique way of salvation and convinced that in Him God is reconciling the world to Himself. We implore all on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. (2 Cor 5:16-20, Eph. 2:7-10, Rom. 8: 12-27 and Col. 1:15-20).

*Concluding Remarks*

In our religiously pluralistic world, we as churches are called to witness to Christ. This is our task, our challenge, but also our joy. In the great variety of contexts in which we live, we seek to give a sincere and intelligible testimony of the hope that lives within us, but

we want to do it with respect and gentleness (1 Peter 3:15): in 'bold humility' and 'humble boldness'.[7] In all this we want to remember that we are not called to win arguments or vindicate *our* faith but as ambassadors of Christ to meet and journey with *people*. Our prayer is that what people hear from us, see in us and experience from us along the journey may be a worthy testimony to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

1 *The Unique Person and Work of Christ*, (1995), 2.
2 *The Unique Person and Work of Christ*, 2.
3 J.H. Bavinck, *Religieus Besef en Christelijk Geloof,* Kok: Kampen 1949, 163.
4 *The Unique Person and Work of Christ*, 17.
5 D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigmshifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis Books: Maryknoll 1997, 420.
6 Traditionally four forms of dialogue are distinguished: dialogue of life, dialogue of joint social action, intellectual dialogue and dialogue of the spirit (See REC Agenda, The Netherlands 2005, 132/133). *The Unique Person and Work of Christ* indicates that also within the Reformed tradition there is room for interreligious cooperation for reconciliation and peace. See page 3.
7 D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission¸* 489.

*Appendix 90:*

NOTE: This appendix contains two sections of the Communique. They are separated by xxxx
**Human Rights and Legal Affairs**
**Issues of Islamophobia and speech restrictions.**

SECTION ON

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

105. The Conference emphasized that it was important to follow up and coordinate work in the area of human rights in Islam among Member States, and affirmed that these rights, by nature, are universal. It stressed that it was important for the international community to treat questions of human rights objectively and as indivisible. It called for drafting the "Islamic Covenant on Human Rights" and the "Covenant on Women's Right in Islam", and for finalizing the drafting of the "Islamic Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination". It emphasized that the possibility of establishing an independent body to promote human rights in Member States should continue to be considered so that, upon establishment, the body can supervise the drafting of the covenants. The Conference welcomed the proposal to establish the post of the OIC High Commissioner on Human Rights and instructed the General Secretariat to prepare the draft terms of reference and financial implications and present them to the next ICFM.

106. The Conference stressed its support of the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly that seeks to promote and consolidate human rights and defend fundamental freedoms. It called upon all Muslim States to seize the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in order to present and highlight the concept of human rights from a Muslim perspective. It urged Member States to take initiatives within the UN system, following the example of the Moroccan initiative relating to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training adopted by the Human Rights Council in 2007.

107. The Conference commended the efforts of the Secretary-General through his visit to Geneva, Switzerland, in the period from 12 to 15 March 2007, his address to the meeting of the Human Rights Council, and his intense consultations with the officials and representatives of various countries and international organizations on human rights issues. It commended the valuable efforts of the OIC Open-ended Working Group on human rights and humanitarian matters at the United Nations Office in Geneva to protect the interests of the Muslim countries. It called on Member States to pursue coordination positively and cooperation among themselves in the area of human rights, particularly at international forums, and to unite their positions at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on issues of concern to the Muslim world as a whole, while taking into account the specificities of each Member State.

108. The Conference recognized the need for an institutionalized cooperation among the judiciaries of the Member States, including inter alia, their constant consultations at the regional and international levels and fora, with a view to coordinating their common positions and achieving common interests, particularly in the process of progressive development and codification of international law. By welcoming the convening of the First Conference of the Heads of the Judiciary of Muslim Countries, in Tehran, on 4-6 December, 2007, the Conference took note of its recommendations to establish the Cooperative of Cooperation of the Judiciaries of the Muslim Countries in Tehran and entrusting an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Legal Experts with formulating and finalizing its Statute for submission to the next Conference of the Heads of the Judiciary of the Muslim Countries, for consideration and adoption; and invited all Member States to actively participate in this process.

112. The Conference, by recalling the prominent place of Man in Islam as Allah's vicegerent on earth and hence the paramount importance attached by Muslim thought to the promotion of human rights, and expressing its deep concern over attempts to exploit the issue of Human Rights to discredit the principles and provisions of Islamic Sharia and to interfere in the affairs of Muslim States, emphasized that human rights should be addressed on an objective and indivisible basis, without selectivity or discrimination. It further reaffirmed the right of States to adhere to their religious, social, and cultural specificities, and called for abstaining from using the universality of human rights as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of States and undermining their national sovereignty. It also endorsed the right of every State to express reservations on international instruments on Human Rights, as part of their sovereign rights; and called upon Member States to continue their active coordination and cooperation in the field of human rights particularly in the relevant international fora to face any attempt to use human rights as a means of political pressure on any Member State. It called for adopting a unified position among Member States vis-à-vis

campaigns and draft resolutions that target OIC Member States in those fields.

113. The Conference further expressed its deep concern over the recurrent and misguided association of Islam with violations of human rights, and expressed deep concern over any activities that use them to attack OIC Member States for political purposes. It emphasized the need to face the growing attempts to create a new form of hegemony of the one culture, through which the industrialized countries seek to impose their values, opinions, and lifestyles on developing countries, to the detriment, and at the expense of effacing cultural identities, and in this regard, it welcomed the establishment of "the NAM Center for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity" in Tehran.

114. The Conference also appreciated the activities of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGGE) on the follow-up of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and its sub-committee and called upon them to continue their activities in developing "the Islamic Charter on Human Rights" and the Islamic Covenants on human rights issues in accordance with Resolution No. 60/27-P; and requested the Member States to ratify the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam as soon as possible.

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## Islamophobia and Speech Restrictions

9. In his general report on major activities of the Organization, H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the OIC, He emphasized that ignorance about Islam and also premeditated and historically entrenched animosity on the part of a minority in the West, as well as the failure to disseminate the true values of Islam are the reasons lying behind the increasing wave of Islamophobia.

# Cultural and Social Affairs (mostly re Islamophobia, cartoons, and efforts to restrict freedom of speech

176. The Conference expressed its deep concern at the systematically negative stereotyping of Muslims, Islam, and other divine religions and, by denouncing categorically the overall surge in intolerance and discrimination against Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries, in particular in the West, affirmed the firm determination of Member States to combat Islamophobia, which constitutes an affront to human dignity and runs counter to international human rights instruments. It strongly condemned the publication of offensive caricatures of Prophet Mohammed

(PBUH), as well as all the inappropriate remarks made about Islam and Prophet Mohamed (PBUH), under the pretext of freedom of expression and the press, and stressed the need to prevent the abuse of freedom of expression and the press for insulting Islam and other divine religions, calling upon Member States, to take all appropriate measures to consider all acts, whatever they may be, which defame Islam as heinous acts that require punishment. In this regard, the Conference called for enhanced dialogue activities to combat Islamophobia as already conducted by a number of OIC Member States, such as the initiatives implemented by Indonesia in the annual Inter-media Dialogue, since 2006 in conjunction with the Government of Norway, and the Regional Interfaith Youth Camp for the Asia-Pacific Region in 2008.

177. The Conference strongly condemned the publication of offensive, provocative, irresponsible, and blasphemous caricatures of the Prophet Mohamed (Peace Be Upon Him) in the media of some western countries. The Conference authorized the Secretary-General to constitute a Group of Experts to develop the draft of a legally-binding international instrument to promote respect for all religions and cultural values and prevent discrimination and instigation of hatred vis-à-vis the followers of any religion.

178. The Conference emphasized its strong support of the initiative of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco calling for developing an international charter that defines appropriate standards and rules for exercising the right of freedom of expression and opinion, and the obligation to respect religions symbols and sanctities as well as spiritual values and beliefs.

179. The Conference congratulated Malaysia's initiative to host two events in 2006 and 2007 in Kuala Lumpur with the objective of promoting religion and tolerance between Muslims and non-Muslims, namely the Conference on "Who Speaks for Islam/Who Speaks for the West", 10-11 February 2006, and the Forum on "Islam and the West: Bridging the Gap", on 15 June 2007, in line with the Putrajaya Declaration of the 10th OIC Summit as well as the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action, which stressed the need for the OIC and other international organizations to engage in high-level dialogue in order to promote cooperation and understanding among different cultures and religions and ethnic groups from all over the world. The Conference also paid special tribute to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, for the timely and important initiative on "Islam Hadhari" (Civilizational Islam). It also encouraged Member States to organize similar events in their respective countries. The Conference welcomed the convening of the OIC Conference on the Role of Media in the Development of Tolerance and Mutual Understanding held on 26-28 April 2007, in Baku, Azerbaijan, and expressed its support for follow-up action to that end.

180. The Conference, by recognizing the need to further institutionalize cooperation among Member States to effectively combat Islamophobia, requested for the preparation of a draft comprehensive strategy to combat Islamophobia for submission to the ICFM for consideration and adoption. It welcomed and endorsed in this regard the elements prepared by the OICGroup in New York for a strategy to combat Islamophobia, envisaging a series of specific actions by the OIC at the international and national levels. It further emphasized the need to develop legally-binding international instrument to prevent intolerance, discrimination, prejudice, and hatred on the grounds of religion and defamation of religions and to promote and ensure the respect of all religions; and, in this regard, encouraged the OIC Group in Geneva, in order to pave the way for developing such an instrument, to develop principles and ideas for inclusion in a draft universal declaration to promote understanding and tolerance between different religions, prevent defamation of all religions, and ensure their respect, to be formulated and submitted in future to the UN Human Rights Council for consideration and adoption.

181. The Conference commended the OIC Ambassadorial Groups in New York and Geneva for providing the OIC Strategy to combat Islamophobia and urged the Observatory to incorporate the same in the recommendations of its report.

182. The Conference invited the urgent attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the OIC Statement on Islamophobia adopted in New York on 29 February 2008 forwarded to him by the Chair of the OIC Group in New York on the grave concerns of the Muslim Ummah at the growing intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, insults of Islam, and cases of Islamophobia. It also requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to take immediate action as called for in the concluding paragraph of the said OIC statement.

183. The Conference expressed its grave concern and anxiety at the threat to Muslim cultural values and principles and discrimination and stereotyping of Muslims caused by the growing wave of Islamophobia. It noted that as a result, Muslims have become victims of manifestations of prejudice and hatred. The Summit strongly condemned the continuing publication of insulting caricatures and cartoons of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and expressed grave concern over the initiatives undertaken by certain radical politicians of European countries against building minarets in mosques and making documentary film defiling the Holy Quran. It also encouraged the OIC Member States to be pro-active in discouraging future activities tarnishing the image of Islam. The Conference commended, with appreciation, the initiative of State of the United Arab Emirates launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoom, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, to build a museum of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) in order to educate the world about his life and lasting achievements, and to disseminate Islam's

message of peace, compassion, and tolerance to all peoples of the world. The Conference commends the Muslim World League (WML) for the establishment of an International Centre for Advocacy and Awareness of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the creation of a global fund to this effect. It called upon Muslim States and organizations to cooperate with the League in this endeavor.

184. The Conference strongly condemned the republication of the blasphemous cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by several Danish newspapers, which it considered an outright abuse of the sanctity of freedom of expression by insulting and making a mockery of the most sacred symbols to more than 1.3 billion Muslims of the world and called on the Danish Government to condemn the republication of the cartoons and to take appropriate action against those involved in accordance with national laws and international instruments that prohibit the defamation of religious beliefs of others and provocative publications that can incite violence and unrest in society. The Conference expressed its satisfaction at the timely actions undertaken by the Observatory at the General Secretariat and the Secretary-General personally through diplomatic contacts and demarches and requested him to continue with his efforts to seek the cooperation of the international community to counter Islamophobia. The Conference congratulated the OIC Observatory under the leadership of the Secretary-General on producing its report on Islamophobia. It considered the report well-documented and that it has effectively highlighted and increased awareness on the dangerous implications of Islamophobia and encouraged the Observatory to continue with its dedicated action in countering the phenomenon. The Conference welcomed the proposal to establish the post of Special Representative of the OIC Secretary-General on Dialogue among Civilizations and instructed the General Secretariat to prepare necessary draft documents and present them to the next session of the ICFM.

185. The Conference commended the OIC Secretary-General for his on-going efforts in interacting with the media to highlight the deep concerns of the OIC and the Member States over the media campaigns against the religion of Islam and Muslims and urged him to seize all opportunities and to use all possible means to correct the misconceptions created by some foreign media.

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*Appendix 91:*


Speech 0f His Excellency Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General 0f the Organisation 0f the Islamic conference, at Columbia University

**Date:** 21/09/2008 - **View in:** Arabic | French - topic_print.asp?t_id=1419**Print**

NEW YORK - UNITED STATES 0F AMERICA
18 SEPTEMBER 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply privileged and honoured to be able to address you in this prestigious house of higher learning, Columbia University.

I would like, at the outset, to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Professor Richard Buliette, and Associate Dean Dr. Rob Garris, as well as the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) for hosting this event today, and publicizing it to the general public.
SIPA, with its leading international record in training professionals has made and could still continue to make a difference in the world, in social science research and in hands-on practice, as well as advocating human rights, protecting the environment, and securing peace at home and around the world.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to converse with you on a subject which attracts considerable attention in both the Muslim and the Western worlds.

The subject of our gathering today is "The OIC's new Charter, and its new visions and objectives, as well as its increasing role in international conflict resolution and prevention". As many here might have faint information about the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference), I thought that it will be useful to give a short introduction about this Organization and the reasons for its establishment. I also thought that it will be adequate to begin with a short glimpse on shedding light on the new Charter of the OIC which was adopted recently. I also find it irresistible to dwell on the phenomenon of the so-called Islamophobia which commands wide spread attention in the world especially and particularly in the West after the terrible and vicious crimes committed on 9/11 of 2001. Finally, I will discuss the OIC`s efforts in conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy.

Though the OIC is not a religious organization, we feel compelled on many occasions to clarify that Islam is the religion of moderation and compassion, a religion that celebrates diversity, pluralism, and recognition of the other. It recognizes and acknowledges both Christianity and Judaism and a host of other religions. Moderation in Islam: has, for millennia on end, found its expression in diverse shape and manifold meanings that have become the distinctive trait of Islamic civilizations and its particular trademark.

Islamic teachings are situated in the middle way; between divine and temporal; between what is material and what is spiritual; between individualism and personal liberty and responsibility and

accountability toward the Creator and the society. Islam is also a practical religion because it is the religion of the collectivity which means that what is good in the eyes of the consensual (or unanimous community) is also good in the eyes of the divine.

Moreover, Islam is built on the premise that relations between humans can only be governed by virtue of the balanced principles of strict equality (first in the history of humanity), and justice and fairness which abhors fanaticism and extremism. It should be pointed out that Islam is no stranger to America. It is, today, an integral part of the American religious landscape, and a visible part of the fabric of the American society.

Today 1.58 billion souls around the world embrace Islam, and at least seven millions of them reside in the United States. Islam is reckoned to be the fastest growing religion in the world. Islam with its 14 centuries of existence had a radiant history of success. It was a remarkable turning point in the history of civilization that brought about considerable changes in the domain of human endeavour. I would like, in this context, to quote Prince Charles of England who enumerated in a speech at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies some of the Islamic heritage rendered to the human civilization:

Quote: ".... we have underestimated the importance of 800 years of Muslim society and culture in Spain between the 8 and the 15 centuries. Not only did Muslim Spain gather and preserve the intellectual content of ancient Greek and Roman civilization, it also interpreted and expanded upon that civilization, and made a vital contribution of its own in so many fields of human endeavor in science, astronomy, mathematics, algebra (itself an Arabic word), law, history, medicine, pharmacology, optics, agriculture, architecture, theology, music.

Many of the trails in which Europe prides itself came to it from Muslim Spain: Diplomacy, free trade, open borders, the techniques of academic research, of anthropology, etiquette, fashion, alternative medicine, hospitals, ail came from this great city of cities." Unquote.

The Muslim Ummah, means the "community of the faithful". It is a unique bond that has no similar example under any other political or religious system in the world. It is a belonging to ideals which bring Muslims together in an eternal brotherhood lock which transcends all other consideration of allegiance or loyalties or barriers of nationhood, ethnicity, geography or language.

Over almost the last fourteen centuries, Muslims, the world over, had a "symbolic" central authority which exercised mainly loose temporal authority and considered a focal point of Muslim unity. Under these circumstances, Islam and Muslims lived their golden age with abundant prosperity, wealth and a vibrant civilization in a society that ennobled knowledge, cherished sciences, and offered a very rich legacy to human civilization.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OIC is the first Intergovernmental Organization in the history of Islam, and it is nowadays one of the largest intergovernmental organization in the world, second only to the United

Nations, with a constituency of 57 Member States and 5 Observer States. The Muslim world has a formidable geographical stretch of land extending from the Atlantic shores to the confines of China and the shores of the islands of the Philippines and Indonesia, in addition to countries in South America.

Sincere self criticism has always been a part of the Islamic traditions. In the recent history, the failing economies, the lack of good governance, the deteriorating conditions in human development in the socio economic fields, the occupation of Iraq, the situation in Aghanistan and the painful stalemate in Palestine as well as increasing tension with the Western World due to a number of reasons including the rise of Islamophobia, prompted the Muslim leaders to undertake serious rounds of self criticism, which culminated in another landmark in the Muslim world's recent history. Taking stock of their chronic failure, and the urgent need to face the stark realities of today's world, the Muslim world leaders met, at an invitation of the then Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, to elaborate a new strategy of salivation and revival for the Muslim world. Following an extra ordinary gathering of Muslim scholars and intellectuals and the efforts of the OIC General Secretariat, the new strategy took shape in an all compassing Ten-Year Programme of Action, announced by an OIC Extraordinary Summit on December 7, 2005, from the city of Mecca, the holiest shrine in Islam.

The programme centered its focus on uplifting the standard of human development in the Muslim world and in several fields of activities.

One of the major reforms that emerged from this strategy was the overhauling of the Organization's Charter, and conferring to it a new vision, objectives and principles which go in line with the prevailing universal contemporary realities and values. The Charter also gives prominence to democracy by prioritizing good governance. In this context, it asserts the rule of law, upholds and safeguards fundamental freedoms and accountability.

The vision of the new Charter gives pronounced importance to, and acknowledges the universality of human rights. Not only does it 'sanctify' these rights, but it also establishes a Permanent and Independent Commission of Human Rights to monitor, document and deal with any violation of these rights by Member States.

It espouses and totally endorses diversity. In the same vein, it exalts tolerance, compassion, equality, and actively promotes dialogue among civilizations to ensure the prevalence of peace, security and concord among all nations.

The new vision addresses also the chronic predicaments facing the Muslim world. It places great importance on the enhancement of socio-economic development in Member States with a view to empowering the Muslim world to achieve effective integration in the global economy. Moreover, the new Charter urges the popularization of knowledge in the Member States with the aim of creating the conditions conducive to the achievement of intellectual excellence, mainly in the realm of science and technology.

The Charter does not neglect the pressing social issues prevalent in the Member States, and gives due consideration to the efforts related to the promotion of the role of the family. It uplifts the

role of women to ensure their full participation in all spheres of life. It also emphasizes the importance of the sound upbringing of youth and children. In short, the new OIC Charter has sought to write the blue print for an enlightened future to the Muslim world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In introducing major reform schemes to the General Secretariat of the Organisation during the last three years, the OIC started to be visible and felt on the international stage. Its relationship with major international organizations became stronger and more effective, and its credibility became proven as an important player and a potent broker. Consequently, the OIC emerged as a trustworthy interlocutor. Presently, the OIC is seen as the unique and most trusted and authoritative spokesman for the Muslim world on the major global political issues, eminent among which are the questions of Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Somalia, Cyprus and other issues. It is in this light that the United States administration has recently come to appreciate and acknowledge OIC role, and the White House took the decision of appointing a Special Envoy to the OIC who took office and started work on consolidating relations between the U.S.A. and the Muslim world.

Since I assuming my duties at the beginning of 2005 and particularly since March this year under the new vision of the Charter, I have directed the OIC towards a two-pronged direction: moderation and modernization. In this, the OIC stands firm in rejecting and condemning all forms of fanaticism, extremism, terrorism and bigotry. It emphasizes inter-civilizational and interfaith dialogues based on mutual respect and equality among interlocutors. The OIC also defends the respect of human rights, and endeavours to promote good governance, to widen political participation, respect of the rule of law, ensuring transparency and accountability, while combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and rejecting all attempts to justify this scourge. A great deal of the efforts of the OIC is now directed toward human development in the socio-economic spheres through concrete and practical programmes, including poverty alleviation, education, science and technology, combating diseases, providing health services to newborns and mothers all around the Muslim World, elevating intra-trade among member states and elevating the status of women. Moreover, having been faced since my first year in the office, with mounting challenges of increasing negative feelings and misperceptions targeting Muslims and religion of Islam, I have endeavored to promote dialogue, tolerance, mutual understanding , mutual respect and political engagement at the international level. I have also insistently called for a Historic Reconciliation between Islam and Christianity, as was the case between Judaism and Christianity during the last century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to turn now to the phenomenon of Islamophobia. [Boer: For more on Islamophobia, go to <Misc Arts/ Islamophobia>].

Islamophobia is a new name to an old phenomenon. It is bent on demonizing Islam and its adherents, and on separating the world into rival civilizations.

The tendency to divide the world into good and evil, civilized and uncivilized, is inviting hostilities, disputes and instability. This tendency should be addressed seriously if there is to be dialogue across countries, faiths and cultures especially at this era of globalization. The recent notion of clash of civilizations only furthers stereotyping and all its pervasive evils.
We believe that all religions in the world strive to raise morally and ethically responsible citizens in every society and civilization, in order to ensure harmony and peace in the community of nations.

Diversity and plurality are an established fact in today' s global village. They represent an integral part of this century's prevalent core value.

The causes of Islamophobia are many and some of them are rooted in historical animosity. Reports of Western Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations indicate that Islamophobia in the West is so widespread that it may be more prevalent and dominant than racial abuse. Some Western media's frequent portrayal and misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims have been one of the most persistent and virulent sources of prejudice against Muslims. It is now considered by the estimate of the Alliance of Civilizations as the prime dissemination of Islamophobia in the contemporary climate, and recognized as the most serious international threat to stability.

Some scholars are also constantly presenting their biased views against Islam under the guise of scholarly presentation in their bid to set a false paradigm of knowledge against Islam. What is more alarming in this climate is the fact that Islamophobia has become increasingly tolerated as if it had been given license to gain legitimacy, acceptance and momentum to the extent that some start to see themselves on a collision course with Muslims and Islam.

A major bone of contention with the proponents of Islamophobia is the question of freedom of expression. Although all agree that any freedom is always linked to responsibility, such as respecting human rights, and avoiding any form of incitement to hatred on the basis of race or religious belief, we find that some circles tend to ignore this basic universal and moral value and accuse Muslim victims of this racial hatred, who are defending their human rights, nevertheless, of trying to stifle freedom of expression.

The collective efforts of the OIC and the member states have made an impact on the international community and have contributed towards raising global awareness of the dangerous implications of the phenomenon. Political leaders and opinion makers including academics and civil society leaders of the western world have now started to speak out against Islamophobia. The Dutch Foreign Minister in his speech at the First AoC Annual forum in Madrid in January 2008 stated and I quote, "Those in my country who call for the Koran to be banned are undermining the central principle of universal human rights. I condemn such calls in the strongest possible terms." Unquote. The United States Government also showed its sensitivity to the concerns of the OIC by its decision to avoid anti Islamic terminology in their official memos and correspondences. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe passed resolution no. 1605 (2008) at its 13th sitting on 15th April 2008 which, inter alia, called on the member states of the Council of Europe to "act strongly against discrimination in all areas and condemn and combat Islamophobia and recommended development of ethical guidelines to combat Islamophobia in

the media and in favour of cultural tolerance and understanding, in cooperation with appropriate media organizations". These are without doubt encouraging developments but are not enough to effectively address the issue of Islamophobia.

This awareness had also engendered some unfounded criticism accusing the OIC of "spreading anti-Christian bigotry". The critics escalate their attack by declaring that the UN General Assembly's resolution on defamation of religion is in "direct violation of international law, concerning the freedom of expression".

The allegation that the OIC is spreading anti-Christian bigotry cannot be more far from the truth. Islamic teachings make the believing in Christianity and the Message of Jesus Christe an integral part of the Muslim lore. Moreover, Jesus Christe in Islam is highly venerated as the word of God, Who produced many miracles and spread the culture of love and tolerance. The new testament is also recognized in Islam as sacred book of revelation.

The resolution against defamation referred to above was adopted in three successive years by the UN General Assembly and passed by comfortable majority. It strikes a balance between the freedom of expression and the inherent responsibility attached to every liberty as stipulated in the international law, and endorsed in many Western national laws.

It is clearly established that international law and in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 forbids any incitement to religious hatred. Article 20 of this Covenant stipulates that "Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law." Despite this clear stipulation, the Attorney General of Denmark failed to see in the infamous Danish Cartoons issues on Prophet Mohamed, any incitement to hatred on bases of religion or belief. The same authority in the Netherlands did the same thing in the case of the film Fitna, produced by a Member of Dutch Parliament.

Such negative or indifferent attitudes adopted by officials in certain Western countries which seem to condone acts of an Islamophobic nature, can only lead to legitimizing Islamophobia and enhancing discrimination against Muslims and exposing their well-being and safety to danger. It is alarming to see that the present campaign of dehumanizing and demonizing Muslims which, is supported by certain quarters in the West, consider Muslims as enemies.

At this point I wish to touch upon the role of politicians in this issue. What is expected from them is particularly a moral stand against provocative incitements targeting a part of their population and harming social peace with implications beyond their countries. We are not calling for Government action to jeopardize or stifle freedom of speech, which we hail and uphold as a fundamental right. However, we believe that it is the prerogative of a government to identify and react when sheer incitement to hatred, supposedly banned by international law, creep into their society under the guise of freedom of speech.

I do not go to the extent reached by the late Edward Said when he dismissed attacking Islam in the old enlightenment as a "form of cultural imperialism". But I tend to agree with him when he says that (quote) "the Orient appears in Western art and literature as something exotic, unreal,

theatrical and therefore unfounded. The orient might have been a genuine alternative to Western enlightenment, instead it is remade a decorative foil to the Western imperial project" (unquote). At this juncture I will be amiss if I did not refer to the excellent book written by my dear friend Dr. Richard W. Bulliett, in his wonderful book the case for Islamo-Christian Civilization, what better remedy than Islamo-Christian Civilization.

My frequent calls for historic reconciliation between Christianity and Islam find its echo in Dr. Bulliett's book which elucidates this issue in a more subtle and convincing way when he make an ingenious argument that Islam and Christianity should be thought of as two versions of a common socio-religious system, like orthodox Christianity and Western Christendom. In this context, he demonstrated in his narration that the two civilizations exhibit similar historical trajectories, went through the same development stages, confronted internal challenges, and traveled parallel even overlapping paths until divergences developed in the later middle ages. He also recalled that Judeo-Christian civilization is a term originally coined by Nietzsche to deride both, and it was adopted only after the World War II. Dr. Bulliett hoped to do the same by proposing an Islamo-Christian Kinship that will help find a common ground between the two great civilizations.

I think that this wise judgment will, one day, pave the road toward realizing my frequent calls for a historic reconciliation between Christianity and Islam.

I think that we have to do our utmost to educate ordinary people to conceive human civilization as a universal human heritage to which all peoples belong and should help to share and enlarge. This perception is the one most relevant to our time, and its prevalence is a condition for any worthwhile dialogue which might lead us to a reliable and lasting peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As for the role of the OIC in the difficult domain of conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution, I would like to say that our Organization is doing its best to play an important role in this direction. We have engaged many OIC Member States, or rival groups within these States to avert resorting to violence or fighting among themselves, thus preventing conflicts or resolving them.

Sometimes we use our good offices to mediation in various disputes, or send special envoys to contribute to finding peaceful solutions to a given conflict. We have also resorted to similar practices such as organizing meetings of various groups of countries or individuals to debate the best way to find solutions to some disputes.
The OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action established an Executive Committee of selected Member States to step in to settle disputes erupted among Member States, or to prevent disputes from occurring.

In this context we have convened a meeting in 2006 at the holy city of Makkah of prominent Muslim religious leaders from both the Shia and Sunni sects in Iraq to discuss the fratricide fighting that was taking place between their militant groups in the civil strife in Iraq. We have managed to convince both sides to agree on a document which stipulates that their fighting runs

counter to the teaching of Islam and cannot be condoned and should be considered a crime reprehensible under the mantle of Islam. The document was elaborated by an Affiliated Organ of our Organization in charge of Islamic jurisprudence. The two factions accepted the document and promised to popularize its contents among their followers. The net result was that the sectarian fighting in Iraq was reduced dramatically, a fact which contributed to substantially improving the security situation in Iraq. Few months ago, the OIC Baghdad Office was opened to advance and promote the Makkah Initiative on the ground in consultation with the Iraqi Government and all parties. We consider our initiative as a meaningful contribution to the national reconciliation efforts in Iraq.

We have tried another approach in Somalia to stop the civil war which started more than 16 years ago. Several OIC envoys and emissaries visited Somalia and met with the belligerent parties. However until now our efforts could not bring final peace to Somalia due to the deep-seated rancor among the different fractions and their warlords and because of the presence of foreign troops which complicate the crisis there. We intend to continue our efforts in cooperation with the international community.

In the intractable quagmire in Darfour, we were also active in trying to find a peaceful and negotiated settlement but the complexity of the situation has proven to be very difficult to remove the obstacle hindering any progress.

We have resorted to personal efforts and shuttle diplomacy to stop the fratricidal fighting between Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah to avert the fighting and bloodletting and were successful to a certain extent.

And, at the same time, we acted as mediators in the frequent disputes and conflicts between the Sudan and Chad. We have established to this end a Ministerial Committee of conflict prevention, in collaboration with other regional and international organizations and managed to score preliminary success, but the efforts are continuing to put a final end to this conflict.
We are also engaged in active effort to broker a peaceful settlement to the protracted conflict between the Government of the Philippines, and Moro National Liberation Front in the southern part of the country. My Special Envoy to the Philippines succeeded in presenting a formula for settlement which was agreed upon, and we are, presently, engaged in implementing its provisions.

We are closely following the developments in Afghanistan. We are worried that volatility and instability are on the rise. We have a principled position against suicide killings and terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and elsewhere. However, we believe that the present strategies of the international community should be reconsidered.

I also consider our initiative which resulted in the OIC-UN-EU trilateral statement aimed at calming down the street protests in the Muslim countries during the heated days in the aftermath of publication of offensive Danish caricatures, and our search for engagement with the EU institutions and EU member states for joint action as an example of OIC`s efforts of preventive diplomacy.

When we talk about the OIC`s role in conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy, I would like to highlight our efforts to rejuvenate our subsidiary organ, the International Islamic Fiqh (Jurisprudence) Academy and its initiative, under the OIC General Secretariat`s coordination, aiming at facilitating rapprochement among the Islamic sects. From Afghanistan, to Iraq and Lebanon, this effort will surely make a positive impact.

I would also like to add that we support the recent trend of intensification of regional peace and mediation initiatives, including the Saudi, Turkish and Qatari efforts on different aspects of conflicts in the Middle East and horn of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OIC under its new vision, has undergone in recent years, a series of reforms and restructuring in order to effectively respond to and counter the challenges associated with the global social-economic and political developments. Traditionally dominated by the regional conflicts affecting the OIC Member States directly or indirectly, the OIC agenda has increasingly become occupied with new kinds of threats and challenges, including, but not limited to international terrorism, religious extremism, incitement to religious hatred, underdevelopment, poverty, epidemics, food and energy crisis, effects of climate change, conflict resolution and prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation.

In all these issues, the OIC calls for partnership of the international community. In this framework, we believe that our cooperation with the United States is of crucial importance. Ensuring peace, security and stability in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Somalia, requires our dedicated efforts and cooperation as well as wise, right and just approaches. Once these problems are over, then, I do not see any obstacle in raising the level of partnership to an alliance. Naturally this long and demanding process would require the settlement of at least some of the differences between Iran and United States by utilizing diplomacy and mutually critical dialogue to the fullest extent.

Let me at this point express my pleasure to see the relations between the US and the OIC are growing stronger since the wise and commendable decision of President Bush to appoint a special envoy to the OIC. We have also appreciated, the efforts, though belated, of President Bush and those of Secretary Rice to bring about a just and lasting settlement for the question of Palestine. It is our since hope that the next administration will build upon these efforts with a sense of urgency.

The OIC is also encouraged by the endeavors initiated by the US to increase dialogue and interaction with the OIC member states. We welcome the intention of the US to accompany the OIC programs for development and the promotion of the socio-economic sector. We are particularly encouraged and place importance on the cooperation on joint projects in health services and eradication of poverty in the least developed countries.

I sincerely hope that the dedicated efforts of Special Envoy Ambassador Sada Cumber will be allowed to bear lasting fruits. That may require consideration by the next US administration of extension of this useful mechanism.

I have always believed that the United States epitomizes one of the best examples of how peoples of differing faiths and ethnic backgrounds can live, work and interact within a spirit of a unified community. We are ready to do our best to cooperate to strengthen this praiseworthy character of the US society and fostering mutual understanding with the Muslim World.
I thank you all for your attention and patience.

**See also**

- [OIC Chief meets with Senegalese and Ugandan FMs:Peace, security and knowledge-sharing in the Muslim world](#)
- [The OIC Secretary General condemns the shocking bomb blasts in Islamabad](#)
- [OIC Secretary General condemns bomb blast in Sana'a](#)
- [OIC Condemns "Anti-Islamization" Congress in Cologne](#)
- [Ihsanoglu and Ban Ki-moon discuss in New York ways to promote peace and security](#)
- [OIC delegation visits Kashmir](#)
- [OIC and GCC Secretaries General sign cooperation agreement](#)
- [OIC Secretary General participates in 63rd Session of UN General Assembly](#)
- [Participation of the OIC to the fifth ministerial meeting on the Dakar agreement between Chad and Sudan](#)
- [The Secretary General has condemned the assassination of the regional governor of Logar Province of Afghanistan](#)

*NOTE: This article is a rough draft. I leave it here to help you learn more about these people.*

### Introducing the Maguzawa
### Jan H. Boer

There is a group of Hausa people of considerable size called Maguzawa. They never became Muslim but retained their original African Traditional Religion, even though they have been heavily influenced by Islam. So here we have an indigenous Traditional community living in the midst of a sea of Muslims who are their kinsmen. They were marginalized, partially by Islam who regarded them as *kafirai* and partially due to their conservative non-progressive Animist type of culture. So far I have not been able to determine whether any kind of *dhimmi* relationship was ever established with them. On the one hand, they would not qualify, since they are not among the "people of the book." On the other hand, neither they nor their culture were destroyed. In fact, it seems they lived quite peaceably among their Muslim kinsmen. I have not read either whether or not they were ever the target of Muslim slave raiders as were the non-Hausa Traditionalists to the south. Clarke does write that even though relations were fairly amicable, Maguzawa were taxed more heavily than were Muslims and they suffered "heavier state demands made on them," a possible indication of *dhimmi* status. But being an asset as "hard workers and bold fighters," the Emir "was cautious not to alienate" them.[1]

For decades there was little awareness in the Nigerian church of these obscure and marginalized people. However, as the missionary movement expanded into the north after independence, their existence was not only noted, but there was surprise as to their numbers. They were found everywhere, especially in rural Hausaland. The churches have moved in and begun serious work among them with the result that churches have sprung up among them in many places.

All of a sudden their peace was shattered. While they remained in their Traditional Religion, they were at least tolerated by their Muslim kinsmen, but as soon as they began to convert to Christianity persecution set in. Mary Joe and Bode Opeseltan wrote an extensive

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[1] P. Clarke, 1984. P.13.

report on the situation from which we largely draw for our last set of Nigerian stories.[2] Dr. Mary Amfani-Joe is the national secretary of *TAMANI,* an organization I will introduce a few paragraphs down the line. Their story opens as follows, "A minority group of Hausa Christians called the *Maguzawas* with tentacles in Katsina, Kaduna and Kano states has for almost one decade now been the victim of organized torture, persecution and oppression." They are "treated as infidels and scums for having the 'effrontery' to practice Christianity rather than Islam." Everywhere the "*Maguzawas* are groaning under various forms of persecutions exerted by their fellow Hausas." Their "alleged sin is their resolve to embrace Christianity" and therefore they are "denied their rights and privileges including government patronage. They are also subjected to various forms of physical and psychological torture" and "to a reign of terror… they never witnessed when they were pagans…." Once they became Christians, "the Muslims rose against them, saying they should become Muslims or else they would be driven out of the land they occupy. When the new Christians of Musawa village built a church, the Muslims vandalised it. When Pastor Amedu reported this to Chief Salisu Jubril, the Chief promised to call the people to order, but, instead, he allegedly instigated his people to continue. A few years later, the church was burnt to the ground. The reason given was that it was built on land belonging to Muslims. Another form of vandalism was the destruction of their crops. Withholding government-distributed fertilizer from the Christians was also allegedly a common ploy by the same chief, though he never failed to demand their taxes. There was also physical abuse for which Christians went to court, but no details are given. However, the judge did threaten the Chief with arrest if the disturbances continued. The "strange" thing is that prior to their conversion, there had been good relationships between the two parties.

Another witness, one Mrs. Rahila Yusuf, reported the same sort of situation. She said their troubles started when they became Christians in 1985. She continued, "Immediately we became Christians, they… came and said we should move out of their land if we failed to repent. They labeled us infidels and threatened to drive us out of our lands. Every day they mock us and insult us. They have also extended the harsh treatment to our children. Before the case was filed at the…court, they would prevent us from going

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[2] Joe and Opeseltan, "Maguzawas—the Agony of Hausa Christians." *Nigerian Tribune*, 26 Nov/94, pp. 1-2. J. Boer, vol. 7, 2007, Appendix 5. The very title of the article is offensive to the Hausa Muslim, for they insist that all their people are Muslim. The thought of Christians among them is intolerable. The rest of the summary of this report follows without further reference footnotes.

to our farms and assault us." The culprits were awaiting the outcome of the court and then planned to drive the Christians away.

Another Christian witness, a ward head "Seriki Mato," said he "had been called all sorts of derogatory names like infidel and an unbeliever who did not know what he was doing…." He complained they were not getting government facilities such as clinics or schools, while the Muslims just down the road had been given a mosque and school by the government. He also objected that he did not receive his allotment of fertilizer from the government. Though there was a primary school in the village, Christians did not enroll their children because it was too dangerous for them.

A more recent development was that some Maguzawa Christians would move away to other states, while others "who could no longer bear the heat caved in and became Muslim. Seriki Mato "named Ishaya Lanto and other members…who were forcefully converted to Islam. He also told… of one Musa who… was forcefully converted… but later fled to Katsina State where he has now reverted back to Christianity.." I will not continue these eye witness accounts lest the reader become either numbed or bored.

However, I do want to share the affirmation of these developments by Prof. Ishaya Audu, one of our "fathers," as well as re-affirmation by Dr. Mary Amfani-Joe. Both of them coming from the same background, the two have been deeply involved in supporting these new Christian communities. Audu has personally taken me around some of these communities where I saw and heard some of these same things. He told Opeseltan that "the Hausa Muslims were bent on giving the world the impression that there were no Hausa Christians, adding that this was why Christians in the North came together under one umbrella to show that there are Hausa Christians." For example, Mary Joe reports that in his speech for accepting the King Faisal Award, Sheik Gumi declared that only 25 percent of Nigerians were Christian and these reside in the south, while there are no Christians in the north. This was, according to Joe, a consciously "religious-political" statement aimed at working "against the interest" of northern Christians and that thus needed to be countered. This claim, said Joe, was part of "a deliberate attempt to subjugate the Christians in the north, particularly the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, who are considered a 'shame' and 'disgrace' for belonging to the Christian religion." The more correct figure, Joe insists, is that 70 percent of the Middle Belt part of the north is Christian, while "it is a known fact"

that in the far north "there are quite a number of Christians who cannot be ignored." Joe reports that an article in a 1988 edition of *TC* put the number of Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri Christians at 7.1 million. A sidebar in the same issue of *Kutaya Forum* in which Joe's article appears puts the number of Christians in the far north at 8 percent or 2.28 million. One prominent Christian leader once put the latter at 20 million! Clearly there is little census consensus, a situation reflecting the status of all census affairs in Nigeria.

The umbrella I refer to above is called "*Tarayyar Masihiyawan Nijeriya*" (*TAMANI*[3]) or "Fellowship of the Followers of the Messiah in Nigeria." Its membership consists of Christians from three northern ethnic groups, Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, all three of which have the reputation of being very resistant to Christian conversion. That reputation, it appears, may now be undercut.[4]

The question is: Why do these Muslims persecute their kinfolk now, when they have actually climbed the Muslim hierarchical ladder from "pagan" to Christian, to the People of the Book for whom Muslims are supposed to have greater respect and a closer sense of affinity? And why did the Muslims do so little in earlier times to convert them to Islam? One possible answer is that, since they provided useful services, including paying higher taxes, the Muslim establishment elected not to disturb their relationship. A tradition of live and let live had apparently been established.

However, under colonialism, as elsewhere, the frosty relationships with the Muslim community thawed and Muslim ways began to slowly penetrate their culture. Gilliland describes their more recent relationship to the Hausa Muslims. On the surface the Maguzawa now look like Muslims. Much of their Traditional religion has been erased and they have adopted many Muslim customs. Traditional religion is of low repute among them. No one wants to be identified as a "pagan" or "*arne*." Islam is seen as progressive. Embracing it provides protection and may be the key to employment or position. They often follow Muslim funeral rites.[5] It appears they have been in a slow "semi-voluntary" slide into Islam. I believe the reason for the persecution and oppression of the new Christians is that Muslims are unhappy that the islamizing process is in danger

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[3] "*Tamani*" is also Hausa for "price" or "value," thus a doubly meaningful acronym.
[4] Joe, Nov/99. Joe and Opeseltan, 26 Nov/94.
[5] Gilliland, pp. 21-22, 37-38, 48, 73, 94, 119.

of being stopped and the people diverted to the competing religion—another front at which they are losing out to the onward march of Christians.

Converts from Islam to Christianity are increasingly concerned about a number of reports in recent months which have cited astounding statistics on conversion. It is true – and a matter for thankfulness to God – that more Muslims are now coming to Christ than at any other time in history. However, they are not converting on the vast scale alleged in some reports. These false reports, often initiated by non-Christians and then circulated by Christians, are a matter of grave concern, not just for those who love truth and accuracy, but also for the many individuals whose lives are being endangered by the publicity given to the exaggerated figures.

Muslims view apostasy from Islam as bringing shame and humiliation on the Muslim community. Publicising that there are large numbers of converts deepens the shame and loss of face. Many Muslims believe that shame is best removed by the shedding of blood and may therefore set out to kill not only the converts themselves, but also those seeking to evangelise Muslims, whether national evangelists or Western missionaries. Some may go even further and seek to get revenge and restore the honour of Islam by attacking any But in the local culture, probably more communal and communityminded, many people will simply have gone forward because they saw others doing so.

[1]*Barnabasaid*, July-Aug/2008.

Some extreme contextual models of mission, which emphasise very close identification with Islam, make it virtually impossible to distinguish converts from those who are still Muslims. Thus figures of "converts" may include many who are not really Christian believers. Sometimes reports appear to have been originated by people unaware that a historic indigenous Church exists in many Muslim majority countries. So when a large Christian congregation is seen in, for example Egypt, the observer assumes that all the worshippers must be converts from Islam.

## Deliberate disinformation

Other reasons are less innocent. When the Taliban were still in power in Afghanistan, a report circulated of huge numbers of Afghan converts from Islam to Christianity. This originated with a disgruntled Afghan refugee who had been employed by a Western NGO. When he was dismissed from his job for dishonesty he retaliated by going to a newspaper and claiming that available target they associate with the "Christian" West.

## Innocence and ignorance

Why should someone exaggerate the number of converts? There are a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is an innocent miscalculation when making estimates in a sensitive context where there can be no firm figures. For example, an estimate might have been made by asking leaders of known convert churches or convert groups how many

members are in their particular group and then adding together the answers given. The error here is that people may attend more than one church or group from time to time and thus a single individual may have been counted many times over. Owing to the need for secrecy and the reluctance to name names, the overlap between groups is not known to the researcher.

Another innocent mistake comes from cross-cultural missionaries misinterpreting phenomena which they see. For example, an "altar call" in some African contexts may result in, say, 1,000 people "going forward". Someone who grew up in the individualistic culture of the West may interpret this as 1,000 people deciding to give their lives to Christ.

large numbers of Afghan Muslims had become Christians. As he doubtless intended, the message, which was swiftly circulated around the world by delighted Christians, turned the Afghan government and people against Christian NGOs, and created great danger for the small number of genuine Afghan converts and increased risk for all Westerners in Afghanistan.

A story that six million African Muslims are becoming Christians every year resulted from claims made by Sheikh Ahmad al Katani of Libya in a televised interview on Al-Jazeera. The sheikh's aim appeared to be to alarm Muslim viewers with high figures of

Muslims leaving their faith in order to persuade them to give more generously to Islamic missionary efforts in Africa.

There has also been a very strong anti-evangelism move within Islam, aimed at preventing Christian mission work amongst Muslims. By citing large numbers of converts to Christianity, Muslims inflame Muslim public opinion against Christian evangelism. Furthermore, since the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 and the "war on terror", Muslim leaders have increasingly been arguing that President Bush's policy is to transform the Middle East into a Christian entity by Christian mission coupled with American military might. This totally erroneous linkage has created more danger for Western forces based in Muslim countries as well as for Christian missionaries, whether expatriate or national.

Sadly, there are also examples of Christians deliberately circulating inflated figures of converts. These are usually Western organisations whose financial support depends on the enthusiasm of Christians in their home countries. Some of these organisations seem to have been newly created with the specific purpose of caring for converts, without having had any previous involvement with them. It is presumably because of this that some have claimed absurdly high numbers of converts. Such figures soon become public and again inflame Muslim sensibilities. Some Muslims come to Christ

through dreams and visions. This has led to wild stories of whole villages and whole communities becoming Christians, stories which have never, to Barnabas Fund's knowledge, been substantiated.

## Coming at the worst time

It will never be possible to quantify how many lives have been lost or how many ministries damaged as a result of falsely high claims about convert numbers. But it behoves all Christians in secure and free countries to think carefully before publicising convert figures. In April 1996 the Somali Islamist group al-Itixaad al-Islami announced that they had succeeded in killing every Somali Christian in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, and would now move on to eliminating Somali Christians in Nairobi. Thankfully there are still Somali Christians in Somalia, but al-Itixaad al-Islami may yet be trying to find and kill them. Certainly, Somali converts have continued to be assassinated in Somalia, including three in April 2008 (see page 12).

Converts are increasingly concerned at the way in which An African convert from Islam to Christianity. A Libyan sheikh has claimed that there are six million such conversions in the continent each year, but this is a deliberate and dangerous exaggeration publicity in the West is creating extra danger for them. They are further concerned when some Western Christians have linked converts from Islam to the political state of Israel. Muslim propaganda is always rife with

conspiracy theories, centring on Muslim converts functioning as Zionist agents to penetrate Muslim society. The existence of the internet and email allow dangerous misinformation to be far more readily accessible than ever before. Furthermore, this all comes at a time when Islamic radicalism is on the rise and converts are as a result facing threats, violence and martyrdom on a scale unknown for many generations.

Many Muslims are coming to Christ through the faithful witness of local evangelists, local churches and local ministries. In these communities the new converts are nurtured and discipled. Others are coming to Christ through radio and television, both of which media have well developed counselling programmes to follow up enquirers and converts. Muslims also find Christ through the miraculous, often going on to ask local churches or Christian acquaintances to help them understand their new faith. The idea that new Western initiatives will deliver millions of Muslim converts who would be uncared for were it not for the new organisations fails to recognise not only the excellent work of many long-term Western missionaries and mission organisations who are serving faithfully, sensitively and unobtrusively, but also national Christian workers in the Muslim world who minister unstintingly, sometimes at the cost of their own lives.

The present "numbers game" is proving deadly. While it is good

to highlight in public discussions
the issue of Islamic law's death
sentence for apostasy, the quoting of
provocative numbers in the Western
media is not welcomed by converts.
In any case there are many secret

*Appendix 94:*

# Identifying the Enemy

# Harry der Nederlanden[1]

## *Telling our Stories*

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In every issue of *Christian Courier* we carry stories about persecution. Although we are well off, we are part of the church under the cross, and we are called to share the sufferings and help bear the burdens of our fellow believers. And even if we are the ones who write most of the books, there is much we can learn from Christians in those countries about what is fundamental.

It is good to tell those stories. It is necessary to the body of Christ, to build our sense of community.

## *Closing the Circle*

But it is not without its dangers. Many of the stories tell about persecution that comes at the hands of Muslims. These are reinforced by the stories we see on television and read in the dailies about Muslim terrorism directed against symbols of Western civilization.

These stories, too, intensify our sense of community. But not always in wholesome ways.

When we focus on stories about Christians around the world (in part because the mainstream media seldom carry these stories), are we conveying a sense that only fellow-believers matter, while others don't? Invariably, those stories of violence and persecution are told by those who are part of the suffering community, and they tend to gloss over the ethnic hatreds and crimes of their own and to magnify those of the other. In those distant Christian communities, we may assume that, as in ours, there are those who are Christian in name only and there are nasty, bone-headed Christians who do stupid things to incite conflict. That kind of complexity is seldom conveyed in our news stories.

How do we tell our stories without making the things, values and symbols that unite us supreme, and the community that this shared loved creates a closed circle? How do we do the community-building things we need to do without circling the wagons and depicting those who do not share our loves as enemies to be feared and fought?

These are the concerns about the front-page story on the school massacre in Beslan. The Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) sometimes comes close to telling such stories wholly from the viewpoint of a closed community. Christendom – the Christian faith and the civilization that has sprung from that faith – are under attack by Islam. Some Muslims may be more radical and violent than others, but all of Islam is dedicated to the extinction of Christianity. They embody the forces of error and unbelief arrayed against those of truth and faith in these the latter days.

If we tell the story in this way, we create a sense of community, but it is a dangerous and faulty sense, one rooted in an Us-Them polarity.

To avoid this false antithesis, which ultimately leads to a crusade mentality, the mainstream media avoid depicting the terrorists as primarily representatives of any race or religion.

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[1]*CC*, 27 Sep/2004. This is only the second half of the article.

But we must not shrink back from the recognition that the vast majority of terrorist attacks come from the Islamic community and are motivated not primarily by poverty or anti-imperialism (decidedly Western notions) but by a desire to establish an Islamist empire by force, by terror if necessary. However, if we see the Muslim world as nothing more than a threat – as the Beast rising up out of the east to devour us, we play into the hands of the militant Islamists. They want to precipitate that sort of confrontation between good and evil, between black and white, for the radicals see the West as the Beast – the carrier of corruption, decadence and evil. And they can make a pretty good case. We don't present a very wholesome picture.

The Islamists are a threat to us, but they are an even greater threat to the vast majority of Muslims who want only peace and a better life for their children. We need also to reach out to those people and to their moderate leaders. We may not just brand them all as part of the Enemy. That is to grant too much power to the great Archenemy. He has no ultimate power to form community, to gather the flock. He has only the power to destroy.

God is still busy gathering in his people. We live in the *not yet*, and we must, therefore, not close the circle but defer that power to God. We must distinguish between those things we love in an ultimate sense and which constitute us as God's people and those things we love in a secondary sense, as part of our culture and civilization.

We may love individual freedom, democracy, equality for women, and many more things that distinguish Western culture from Islam, and we may even fight for them. Many thousands of our countrymen died fighting for democracy against the forces of fascism. Yet, many of the things we love were not part of Christendom at one time. Democracy, humane punishment for criminals, equality for women – things we find lacking in Islam – are as much treasures stolen from the Egyptians (the Enlightenment) as they are products of Christian culture.

We must know our enemy, and he is active in our own hearts and in our own (pseudo) Christian culture as well as in Islam. We must recognize Islam for what it is and militant Islam for what it is – a great danger. But if we identify too closely with our secondary loves – our culture and civilization – then the Enemy has triumphed over us.

# Observations on the Interpretation of the Concept of Religious Freedom in Christianity and Islam

(A lecture presented at the Christian-Muslim Relations Seminar organized by the Sudan Council of Churches from October 8-13, 1984 in Khartoum.)

By J. Haafkens

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Religious Freedom has been defined as the fundamental human right guaranteeing the freedom to confess and practise one's faith without suffering any legal disadvantage, because of this, from the side of the state.  This is a definition given in a German Encyclopedia entitled "Religion in History and at Present."[1]  Another definition is found in the Declaration on Religious Freedom issued in 1965 by the Second Vatican Council: The Council declares that the human person has a right to religious liberty.  This liberty exists in that all men should be free from (should not be subject to) any compulsion from individuals or social groups, or whatever human power, so that in matters of religion, nobody would be forced to act against his conscience, nor be prevented to act, within just limits, according to his conscience, in private as well as in public, alone or associated with others.  The Council declares moreover that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the dignity of the human person itself, a dignity which is evident from the revealed word of God as well as from reason.  This right of the human person to religious liberty should be recognized on the legal level, so that it constitutes a civil right.

It is important to note that the concept of religious freedom, as a specially formulated idea, is relatively new in the history of Christianity.

In the first three centuries of its existence, Christianity lived in an often hostile environment.  In spite of the fact that the Roman Empire had religious tolerance as its policy, and allowed in general the peoples it subdued to continue to practise their religion, like for example the Jews in Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, it saw in Christianity a threat to the religious basis of the state, or a kind of atheism.  In the year 202 for example, the Emperor issued an interdiction for his subjects to become Jews or Christians, and in 250, all Christians were ordered to make sacrifices to the Emperor.  Many paid with their lives for their refusal to obey.  A Christian apologist like Tertullian (d. 222) claimed that people have a natural right to worship what they consider right, but his pleas were to no avail at the time.

In the year 313 the situation changed: Under the influence of the Emperor Constantine, who had become a Christian in 312, Christianity was put on an equal footing with other religions, and there was freedom of religion in the Empire.  However, the classical principle prevailed that it was the Emperor's duty to maintain the whole Empire united in the practice of true religion.[2]  This led in 380, under the Emperor Theodosius I, to the proclamation of Christianity as the State Religion. All subjects of the empire were now obliged to adopt the Catholic faith in the Trinity in accordance with the teaching of the Bishops of Rome and Alexandria.  All pagan cults were forbidden, and the temples closed.

Thus, a Church Father like St. Augustine (d. 430) was of the opinion that the state should use force (with the exclusion of heavy torture and the death penalty) to bring Christian heretics back to the fold.  St. Augustine saw in the words "compel people to come in" in Luke 14:23 a

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[1] R*eligion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Tubingen, 1961, vol. 5, p. 984.
[2] *Cuius regio eius religio.*

justification for a just persecution, motivated by love, in contradistinction to the unjust persecution by the unbelievers, motivated by cruelty.

The basic ideal of a Christian empire as formulated in the 4th Century, (Church and State are to work together to maintain the one true religion), was generally accepted in the West, until the 16th Century. The great medieval theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), for example, distinguished between unbelievers, heretics and apostates. As for the unbelievers, because faith cannot be forced on human beings, their cult should be tolerated, if they are many. This was particularly so with the Jews whose cult was seen as a prefiguration of the true faith. However if accepting the Christian faith is voluntary, keeping to the faith once it has been accepted is necessary and obligatory. Heresy is a crime, to be punished by death, particularly because it is a disease which may threaten many souls. Apostasy, abandoning the faith, is also forbidden and should be punished. Apostates must be even bodily compelled to return to the faith. As it is forbidden for Christians to abandon their faith, it is not permitted for unbelievers (Jews, Muslims) to preach to them.

A somewhat different tone is heard in the work of Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464), who in 1453 wrote a book on religious peace.[3] He believes that there is one truth present in the many religions of which Christianity is the most perfect.

The idea that the unity of the state requires the unity, in religious matters, of all its subjects was still prevalent in the 16th Century, the era of the reformation in Europe. Certainly, there were proposals that Catholics and Protestants, should have equal rights, but the time for this seemed not yet to be ripe. In Holland, for example Reformed Christianity became the official religion, while Catholicism was pushed to the background. In France, where Protestants had been given considerable freedom in 1598, King Louis XIV took harsh measures to impose Catholicism on everybody, in an effort to unite his country in all matters. Thus, in particular since 1685, many Protestants had to flee from France to begin a new life elsewhere. In Germany, where there were different states in one empire, each state obliged its subjects to follow one religion only, the religion of its ruler, either Catholic or Protestant.

In the 17th Century, the concept of civil rights, including the right of freedom of religion, began to gain more influence in Europe. Particularly significant were developments in Britain. In the year 1215 the King of England had granted certain privileges to the barons ruling under him, in the so-called "Great Charter of Freedoms." However, the issue of basic rights for all only came much later to the forefront. In 1638, Parliament addressed a "Petition of Rights" to the King. Somewhat later, under Cromwell, (d. 1658) the state begins to apply principles of "equality of all men" and "freedom of religion." In 1689, Parliament adopts a "Bill of Rights" in which some basic rights of all subjects are formulated. The "act of toleration" of the same year gives official recognition, in religious matters, to the dissenters, although their civil rights are still limited. Also, in 1689, John Locke (d. 1704) wrote "Letter Concerning Toleration" in which he argued that the state should leave choice of religion completely free, except for Catholicism and atheism.

The first major state however, in the West which guaranteed equal rights to all confessions and full religious freedom to all citizens was the United States of America, where these principles were applied since its independence in 1776. The basic idea behind this legislation was that all people are equal before their Creator, who has given them inalienable rights. "All men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights."

While in the U.S.A., there was an explicit reference to God, in the proclamation of human rights, this was not the case in France, where the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen"of 1789 breathed the spirit of the "Enlightenment." With the French Revolution of 1789, freedom, equality and fraternity became basic principles of the state. This implied also freedom of religion.

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[3] *De Pace Fidei.*

In the 19th Century most European nations took steps to grant full religious freedom to their citizens. Thus, in the U.K. Catholics were granted the same rights as the dissenters in 1828. Earlier, in 1791, they had been given freedom of worship. It should be noted, however, that in the first part of the 19th Century, the Vatican had serious reservations about the idea of religious freedom. The Popes at that time were greatly concerned about the influence of "liberalism" which did not seem to provide a sound basis for human society, as it could lead to relativism and indifference towards the truth. Only in 1885, Pope Leo XIII declared that states which tolerate several cults (or religions) for the purpose of a great benefit, or to avoid a great evil, are not to be condemned. Nevertheless the principle that the ideal situation would be for the state to favour Catholicism was not abandoned. In 1954 however, Pope Pius XII declared that even if the situation makes it possible, it is not self-evident that Catholics should use the powers of the modern state in their favour. In 1965, finally, at the second Vatican Council the Catholic Church gave its full official support to the principle of religious freedom.

Looking at the history of Christianity, especially in the West, we notice that except for the first few centuries the principle of the freedom of religion, as defined in the beginning of this lecture, has only been fully and consciously applied for a rather short period in recent times. The question arises: Why has it taken the Churches such a long time to accept this idea?

A careful study of the Vatican II Declaration on Religious Liberty will help us to answer this question. In reading this document, one should be aware of the fact that at the Council, a number of Fathers had serious doubts about the appropriateness of such a declaration. Their concerns reflect the traditional approach to these issues in the Church.

In answer to their questions, the Declaration affirms that God himself has made known to mankind the way by which in serving Him, man can obtain salvation and eternal bliss. "This unique true religion, we believe, subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to whom the Lord Jesus has given the mandate to make it known (to spread it) to all men. … All human beings have the *duty* to seek the truth, especially concerning God and His Church, and, when they have found it, to embrace it, and be faithful to it."[4] Thus, in answer, so to say, to critical questions from a group of conservative fathers, the Declaration reaffirms the traditional Catholic doctrine of the moral duty of individual man, and of human communities (like nations for example) regarding the truth and the one and unique Church of Christ.

In the past, the awareness of this human duty, and the concern that error should not have freedom of way, but should be stopped, have led Christians to put severe limits on the freedom of others. Gradually however, it has become clear to the Church that the above-mentioned duty concerns the *conscience* of man, and that the truth imposes itself only by strength of the truth itself, which penetrates the spirit of man in the most gentle and, at the same time, the most powerful manner.

This insight has led the Second Vatican Council to state that, even if, because of the particular circumstances in which the peoples find themselves, a special civil recognition is given in the legal order of society (that is, on the level of the law) to one specific religious community, it is necessary that at the same time for all citizens and religious communities, the right of freedom in matters of religion be recognized and respected. Thus, the legal equality of the citizens should never be violated, for religious reasons, and no discrimination should be made between them. With such a statement, we have indeed moved away from a situation in which the church wants the state to use a certain amount of force to maintain true religion in society.

Let us underline that the acceptance of the principle of religious freedom does not imply that the churches feel that the state should be indifferent in the field of religion and morality. The German Protestant theologian, Emil Brunner (d. 1965) for example, wrote in 1932: "The doctrine of the fundamental moral and religious neutrality of the state is the product of an abstract

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[4] *Dignitatis Humanae*. Compare St. Thomas Aquinas: "keeping to the faith, once it has been accepted, is necessary and obligatory."

rationalism. It forgets about the basis of the authority of the state itself. What keeps the people most strongly together is not the fact that it is useful to cooperate for certain purposes, but an awareness of responsibility. In the long run, this awareness can only grow on religious ground. Certainly, because its citizens belong to different religious communities, the state has to accept the strict limits imposed on it by the necessary recognition of the freedom of the people in this sphere of life. However, this does not mean that the state should declare itself in principle indifferent, as far as religion is concerned."[5]

We have seen that, concern for the maintenance of the truth, also as a basis for human society, the Church has been slow in recognizing the importance of the right of religious freedom for all. Let us mention some of the factors which have helped to bring about the breakthrough of this new insight. One of these is certainly a growing awareness in the world of the importance of human rights in general. This is explicitly recognized by the Second Vatican Council. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by the United Nations in 1948 is a clear sign of this development.

Another factor is that the Church has become more conscious of the way in which it came into existence. Jesus Christ was uncompromising as a witness to the truth, but he did not impose himself by force on those who contradicted him. His kingdom is established by the love through which he draws to himself all men. The apostles and the Church of the first centuries followed Christ's example in this. In fact, in the accomplishment of their mission, they did not and could not, rely on the authority of the state. A third factor which has contributed to the recognition of the wide dimensions of man's right to religious freedom is a deeper understanding of the theological truth, which had always been recognized in the Church, that faith is a voluntary act of man, which cannot be forced upon him.[6]

In concluding this sketch of the role of the concept of religious liberty in the history of the Church, especially in the West, let me say that we should be deeply grateful to God because He has given Christians and others in our time a deeper insight into the meaning of the freedom of man. The Spirit of God is still at work to teach us new things!

In the light of what has been said about Religious Freedom and Christianity, may I also make a few remarks about this concept in relationship to Islam?

My first observation is that there are striking parallels between the way in which what we now call "religious freedom" was interpreted in Christianity, as from the year 380, when it became the official religion of the Roman Empire, and in the Islamic Caliphate, which was established in 632, when Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, was succeeded by Abu-Bakr. These parallels can be explained, I think, by the fact that at that time Christianity and Islam played a similar (though not completely identical) role. Both functioned as the official religion of a great supranational state.

Let us compare, for example, the position of the Jews in the Christian Empire with the position of Jews and Christians in the Islamic Caliphate. We have already noted that in Christian Europe, Jews were allowed to practise, though discreetly, their religion, which was looked upon as a prefiguration of the true faith. Similarly, in the Caliphate, Jews and Christians were considered as People of the Book, which had been given to the Muslims in its pure and final form. They had the right to practise their religion, and were not forced to become Muslims. Both Christians and Muslims saw the followers of the earlier "revealed religions" as "protected people" who had to pay a special tax for this protection. It has been observed that the rules and prescriptions for the Jewish Community in Rome in the Middle Ages were very similar to those for the *dhimmis*, the protected people, in the Caliphate.[7]

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[5] Brunner, E. *Das Gebot und die Ordnung*, J.C.B. Mohr, Tubingen, 1932, p. 45o. English translation by O. Wyon, *The Divine Imperative*, Lutterworth, London 1937, p. 463.
[6] Compare *The Holy Qur'an*, Surah 2:256.
[7] Gardet, L. *La cite musulmane, vie sociale et politique*, J. Vrin, Paris 1954, p. 348. 2nd ed., 1961.

An interesting document defining the position of Christians in the Caliphate is the so-called "Statute of 'Umar." One of its versions has the form of a letter addressed by Christians to 'Umar, the second Caliph (634-644). In fact, the letter is generally believed to be more or less apocryphal, but reflecting actual practice in the Caliphate, in particular as from the year 750, the beginning of the Abbasid period. It says:

> *... When we have come to you ('Umar), we have asked that the lives of ourselves, our families and those who belong to our religion be spared, and that we will have the right to keep our properties on the following condition: to pay a tribute and remain in our state of humiliation (cf. S. 9:29 of the Qur'an); to stop no Muslim from entering our Churches by day and night, and from staying there, we being responsible for his maintenance as we provide him with food for three days, while we open the doors of our Churches for him;to ring church bells only inside the Churches, and with moderation, and not to sing our liturgical chants loudly; not to hide there, nor in any of our homes, a spy for our enemies; not to build Churches, monasteries, hermitages and cells, neither to reconstruct those that have been destroyed; not to assemble in a quarter inhabited by Muslims, neither to assemble in their presence; not to display idolatry, neither to incite to it; not to expose a cross on our churches, neither in streets or markets frequented by Muslims; not to read the Qur'an, neither to teach it to our children; not to prevent any of our relatives to convert to Islam, if he wishes to do so; not to cut our hair in front; to put a special belt round our waist; to keep our religion; not to be like Muslims in our dress, our attitude, the animals we ride, or the seals we use; not to use their titles; to honour and respect them; to remain standing respectfully before them when they come across us; to show the way, wherever they intend to go; not to light fires, when somebody has died, in a street where a Muslim lives; not to cry loudly at our funerals; not to keep a slave who had earlier belonged to a Muslim; we solemnly promise to keep to these conditions in our own name and in the name of our co-religionists; he who does not keep to them has no right whatsoever to protection.[8]*

As said earlier, these rules are very similar to those applied by Christians, to Jews in Europe, in the Middle Ages. Let us also note that both Christians and Muslims felt at that time that it was legitimate to establish Christian, respectively Muslim rule over other lands (lands of the unbelievers) by military means. Christians thought here especially of former Christian territories, for example the Holy Land. As we have seen, this did not mean, in general, that Muslims, respectively Christians, in such conquered lands would be forced to change their religion. Another parallel between Christianity and Islam, at the time, was that, while both allowed "unbelievers" to practise their religion, they maintained also that Christians, respectively Muslims were not to interpret their faith according to their conscience, differently from the generally accepted view. Heresy was formally forbidden, just as it was forbidden to abandon the faith completely, and it was felt that the use of force against persons guilty of these crimes was completely legitimate.

Thus the famous Persian mystic al-Hallaj was publicly executed in Baghdad in the year 922, having been found guilty of heresy. We know also that even in the 16th Century, the time of the Reformation, many Christians in Europe were executed by the authorities, on the accusation of heresy.

Having seen these parallels in the understanding of religious freedom in the Muslim and Christian Communities, in the past, we have to underline that, just as Christianity, in Islam also such traditional views could not easily or lightly be abandoned. In fact, until now, many Muslims in Africa study a compendium of Islamic law according to the school of Malik which, when

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[8] Tritton, A.S. *The Caliphs and their non-Muslim subjects,* O.U.P., London 1930, p. 5 ff.

treating the subject of protected people, very much maintains the type of regulations we find in the earlier mentioned Treaty of 'Umar.[9]

In modern Islamic literature, one can also find strong affirmations of the need to apply today in society the classical principles of Islam. An author like Sayyid Qutb, for example, who belonged to the Muslim Brethren in Egypt, and was executed in 1966, accused of conspiracy to overthrow the government and is widely read today, states that it is the duty of Muslims to overthrow idolatrous governments, if necessary even in certain circumstances, by way of armed struggle, in order to create conditions in which human beings will be free to live as true Muslims (though they are not forced to embrace Islam). Such conditions do only exist, he affirms, in a state which fully recognizes the supreme authority of divine law, as revealed in the Qur'an.[10] Let us note, however, that Sayyid Qutb also declares that a society which is renewed and really living according to Islam ought to work out for itself a new system of legislation, based on the principles provided by the revelation, according to the new and unforeseeable problems it encounters.[11] This seems to leave the way open for an interpretation of Islamic law which is more in accordance with present day understanding of the religious liberty of man than the prescriptions we find in the classical law books.

Just as in Christianity, we observe in Islam a tendency to turn to its early history, to its sources, to redefine the approach to questions of human rights, etc.

In a number of publications, for example, special attention is paid to passages in the Qur'an in which the dignity of man is emphasized, like S. 4:1; 17:70; 49:13, and which are understood to refer to all human beings without distinction. Instead of considering the "Statute of 'Umar" as a central document for the definition of the place of Christians in Muslim Society, some authors state that this statute regards only a specific situation in the past, where Christians had been fighting against Islam. Instead, they underline the importance of the treaty which the Prophet Muhammad concluded with the Christians of Najran. This treaty guarantees those Christians the protection of the Muslim Community in exchange, mainly, for the payment of a reasonable tax, without the humiliating conditions of the Treaty of 'Umar.[12]

A former General Secretary of the Arab League, 'Abd-al-Rahman Azzam, in his book *The Eternal Message of Muhammad*, gives prominence to quite a number of pacts and treaties, concluded by the Prophet and his successors in which the relationship of the Muslim Community with others appears in a rather different light than in the well-known law books written in the Middle Ages. He mentions, for example, the early "Pact of Yathrib" or "Constitution of Medina" which, he affirms, guaranteed freedom of belief and freedom of preaching to the members of the Pact (Muslims, Jews and Polytheists), despite the diversity of their beliefs.[13]

It is evident that, at present, a certain evolution can be observed in the Muslim world, regarding the interpretation of the right to religious freedom. In quite a few cases, this has led to an explicit affirmation of the dignity and the "rights of the 'Protected People'" in terms which are certainly much more positive than the "Treaty of 'Umar." Such an affirmation does not always imply, however, the "People of the Book" and the Muslims have the same rights. In the works of authors like Rashid Rida and Hasan al-Banna from Egypt, for example, the understanding appears to be that the rights and duties of Muslims and of "Protected People" are not identical. Each Community has, so to say, its own inviolable rights.[14] In fact, it is clear that a variety of

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[9] *Al-Mukhasar*, compiled by Khalil b. Ishaq (d. 1365)

[10] Qutb, S. *Jalons sur la route de l'Islam*, Paris 1968, p. 70.

[11] Delanoue, G. "al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun" in Vol. 3, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. E.J. Brill, Leiden 1971, p. 1070.

[12] Gardet. L. *Op. cit.,* p. 145. B. Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, English translation by A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, O.U.P., London 1955, pp. 270-277.

[13] Azzam, A. A. al-R, *The Eternal Message of Muhammad*, New English Library, London 1964. Watt, W.M. *Muhammad at Medina*, Clarenden Press, Oxford 1956, pp. 221-228.

[14] Gardet, L. *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

interpretations is given to the right of religious freedom in the Muslim world today. We hope and pray that the evolution we have noticed, in the course of time, both in Christianity and Islam, not only in the understanding of the right to religious freedom, but of human rights in general, will be a continuous one, so that the dignity of each and every human being, created, as we believe, in the image of God, will be effectively recognized everywhere and at all times.

*Appendix 96:*

## OIC 10 year plan outlined

**Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia- SPA-Dulkedah,6 1426- December,8 2005(IINA)**

**Based on the views and recommendations of scholars and intellectuals, convinced of the potential for the Muslim Ummah to achieve its renaissance, and in order to take practical steps towards strengthening the bonds of Islamic solidarity, achieve unity of ranks, and project the true image and noble values of Islam, a Ten-Year program of Action has been developed, which reviews the most prominent challenges facing the Muslim world today, as well as ways and means to address them in an objective and realistic way in order to serve as a practicable and workable program for all OIC member states.**

**In the intellectual and political fields, there are major issues, such as establishing the values of moderation and tolerance, combating extremism, violence and terrorism, countering Islamophobia, achieving solidarity and cooperation among member states, conflict prevention, the question of Palestine, the rights of Muslim minorities and communities, and rejecting unilateral sanctions. All of these are issues which require a renewed commitment to be addressed through effective strategies.**
**In the economic and scientific fields, the Ummah needs to achieve higher levels of development and prosperity, given its abundant economic resources and capacities. Priority must be given to enhancing economic cooperation, intra-OIC trade, alleviating poverty in OIC member states, particularly in conflict-affected areas, and addressing issues related to globalization, economic liberalization, environment, and science and technology.**

**As for education and culture, there is an urgent need to tackle the spread of illiteracy and low standards of education at all levels as well as a need to redress ideological deviation. In the social field, it is imperative to focus on the rights of women, children and the family.**

**In implementing the new vision and goals for the Muslim world, the role of the OIC is central, which requires its reform in a way that meets the hopes and aspirations of the Ummah in the 21st century.**

**To achieve this new vision and mission for a brighter, more prosperous and dignified future for the Ummah, we, the Kings and Heads of State of**

**the OIC member states, decide to adopt the following Ten-Year Program of Action, with a mid-term review, for immediate implementation.**

**1. Intellectual and political issues**

**I. Political Will**

**1. Demonstrate the necessary political will in order to translate the anticipated new vision into concrete reality and call upon the Secretary General to take necessary steps to submit practical proposals to the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.**

**2. Urge member states to fully implement the provisions of the OIC charter and resolutions.**

**II. Solidarity, joint Islamic action**

**1. Demonstrate strong commitment and credibility in Joint Islamic Action by effective implementation of OIC resolutions, and limit the adoption of resolutions to those that can be practically implemented. In this context, the Secretary General should be empowered to fully play his role in following up the implementation of all OIC resolutions.**

**2. Affirm commitment to Islamic solidarity among the OIC member states vis-à-vis the challenges and threats faced or experienced by the Muslim Ummah, and endeavor to develop a legal framework to define member states duties and obligations in this regard.**

**3. Participate and coordinate effectively in all regional and international forums, in order to protect and promote the collective interests of the Muslim Ummah, including UN reform, expanding the Security Council membership, and extending the necessary support to candidatures of OIC member states to international and regional organizations.**

**4. Continue to support the issue of Al Quds Al Sharif as a central cause of the OIC and the Muslim Ummah, and support the struggle of Muslim peoples to safeguard their legitimate rights.**

**III. Moderation in Islam**

**1. Endeavor to spread the correct ideas about Islam as a religion of moderation and tolerance in order to fortify Muslims against extremism and narrow-mindedness.**

**2. Condemn extremism in all its forms and manifestations, as it contradicts Islamic and human values; and address its political,**

economic, social, and cultural root-causes, which are to be faced with rationality, persuasion, and good counsel.

3. Emphasize the inter-civilizational dialogue, based on mutual respect and understanding, and equality are prerequisites for international peace and security, peaceful co-existence, and participation in developing the mechanism for that dialogue.

4. Encourage inter-religious dialogue and underline common values and denominators.

5. Ensure the OIC s participation as a proactive partner in the dialogue among civilizations and religions, as well as in initiatives and efforts exerted in this regard.

6. Utilize the different mass media in order to serve and defend the causes of the Muslim Ummah, promote the noble principles and values of Islam, and correct misconceptions about it.

7. Strive for the teaching of Islamic education, culture, civilization, and the jurisprudence and literature of difference; call on member states to co-operate amongst themselves in order to develop balanced educational curricula that promote values of tolerance, human rights, openness, and understanding of other religions and cultures; reject fanaticism and extremism, and establish pride in the Islamic identity.

IV. The Islamic Fiqh Academy (IFA)

1. Reform the Islamic Fiqh Academy to make it the supreme jurisprudential authority for the Muslim Ummah, adopt competence and jurisprudential, scholarly, and professional aptitude as criteria for the membership of the IFA; and mandate the OIC Secretary-General to convene eminent persons to select the working group that will conduct the detailed study to develop the IFA s work in accordance with the following objectives:

a. Coordinate religious ruling 9fatwa) authorities in the Muslim world.

b. Combat religious and sectarian extremism, refrain from accusing Islamic schools of heresy, emphasize dialogue among them, and strengthen balance, moderation, and tolerance.

c. Refute fatwas that take Muslims away from the parameters and constants of their religion and its established schools.

V. Combating terrorism

**1. Emphasize the condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, and reject any justification or rationalization for it, consider it as a global phenomenon that is not connected with any religion, race, color, or country, and distinguish it from the legitimate resistance to foreign occupation, which does not sanction the killing of innocent people.**

**2. Introduce comprehensive qualitative changes to national laws and legislations in order to criminalize all terrorist practices as well as all practices to support, finance, or instigate terrorism.**

**3. Affirm commitment to the OIC convention on combating terrorism participate actively in international counter-terrorism efforts, and endeavor to implement the recommendations of the International Conference on Combating Terrorism, held in Riyadh in February 2005, including the establishment of an International Center for Combating Terrorism, as well as the recommendations of the Special Meeting of OIC Foreign Ministers on Terrorism, held in Kuala Lumpur in April 2002.**

**4. Support efforts to develop an International Code of Conduct to Combat Terrorism.**

**VI. Combating Islamophobia**

**1. Emphasize the responsibility of the international community, including all governments, to ensure respect for all religions and combat their defamation.**

**2. Affirm the need to counter Islamophobia, through establishing an observatory at the OIC General Secretariat to monitor all forms of Islamophobia, issue an annual report thereon, and ensure cooperation with international Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) in the West in order to counter Islamophobia.**

**3. Endeavor to have the United Nations adopt an international resolution to counter Islamophobia, and call upon all States to enact laws to counter it, including deterrent punishments.**

**4. Initiate a structured and sustained dialogue with the parties concerned in order to project the true values of Islam and empower Muslim countries to help in the war against extremism and terrorism.**

**VII. Human Rights**

**1. Seriously endeavor to enlarge the scope of political participation,**

ensure equality, public liberties, social justice, transparency, and accountability, and eliminate corruption in the OIC member states.

2. Call upon the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers to consider the possibility of establishing an independent permanent body to promote human rights in the member states, in accordance with the provisions of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.

3. Mandate the OIC general secretariat to cooperate with other international and regional organizations to protect the rights of Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states, and promote close cooperation with the governments of the states hosting Muslim communities.

VIII. Palestine and occupied Arab territories

1. Make all efforts to end the Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan, and the rest of the occupied Lebanese territories, and extend effective support for the Palestinian people s right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

2. Maintain a united stand on the comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian question according to OIC resolutions, UN resolutions (242, 338, 1515 and UN General Assembly Resolution 194), the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Roadmap, in concert and consultation with the UN, the Quartet, and other stakeholders, such as to make full withdrawal as a prerequisite for establishing normal relations with Israel, and for providing the OIC with a greater role in establishing peace.

3. Support the efforts of Al-Quds Committee in protecting the Palestinian presence in Al-Quds and safeguarding the city of Al-Quds heritage and Arab and Islamic identity, affirm the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque and its facilities against any violations, counter the policy of judaization of the Holy City, and support the Palestinian institutions in Al-Quds and establish the University of Al-Aqsa.

4. Extend full support to the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to negotiate for the inalienable Palestinian rights and extend necessary assistance to ensure control of all Palestinian territories, international crossings, reopen Gaza airport and seaport, and connect Gaza with the West Bank in order to ensure free movement of the Palestinians.

5. Work together wit the international community to compel Israel to stop and dismantle its settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories

and the occupied Syrian Golan; remove the racist separation wall built inside the Palestinian territories, including within and around the city of Al-Quads, in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

IX. Conflict resolution and peace building

1. Enhance cooperation among the OIC member states and between the OIC and international and regional organizations in order to protect the common rights and interests of the member states in conflict resolution and in peacekeeping and confidence building.

2. Strengthen the role of the OIC in confidence-building, peacekeeping and conflict resolution in the Muslim world.

X. Reform of the OIC

1. Reform the OIC through restructuring, and consider changing its name, review its Charter and activities and provide it with highly qualified manpower, in such a manner as to promote its role, reactivate its institutions and strengthen its relations with NGOs in the OIC member states; empower the secretary-general to discharge his duties and provide him with the necessary powers and sufficient flexibility and the resources that enable him to carry out the tasks assigned to him.

2. Establish a mechanism for the follow-up of resolutions by creating an Executive Body, comprising and the summit and Ministerial Troikas the OIC host country, and the General Secretariat. The Member State concerned should be invited to participate in the deliberations of these meetings.

3. Call for strengthening all OIC specialized and affiliated organs in order to play their aspired role, and reinforce coordination with the General Secretariat, and request it to review the activities of these organs and dissolve those that prove to be inefficient.

4. Mandate the Secretary General to prepare a study to strengthen the role of Islamic Solidarity Fund and develop Fund and develop it, and submit the study to the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

5. Urge Member States to pay in full and on time their mandatory contributions to the General Secretariat and Subsidiary Organs, in accordance with relevant resolutions, in order to enable Member States to avail themselves of the facilities and services offered by OIC subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions.

**2. Development, social economic and scientific issues**

**i-Economic Cooperation**

**Call upon the Member States to sign and ratify all existing OIC trade and economic agreements, and to Implement the provisions of the relevant OIC Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation among OIC Member State.**

**. Mandate COMCEC to promote measures to expand the scope of intra-OIC trade, and to consider the possibility of establishing a Free Trade Zone between the Member State in order to achieve greater economic integration to raise it to a percentage of 20% of the overall trade volume during the period covered by the plan.**

**Promote endeavors for institutionalized and enhanced cooperation between OIC and regional and international institutions working in the economic and commercial fields.**

**Support OIC Member States in their efforts to accede to the World trade Organization (WTO), and promote concerted positions between the member States within the WTO.**

**Call upon the OIC Member States to facilitate the freedom of movement of businessmen and investors among them, and conduct a feasibility study on the Draft Makkah Visa Agreement for Businessmen proposed by the Islamic Chamber for Commerce and Industry.**

**Support expanding electronic commerce among the OIC Member States and call on the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry to strengthen its activities in the field of data and expertise exchanges between chambers of commerce of the member States.**

**Call upon the Member States to coordinate their environmental for a so as to prevent any adverse effects of such policies on their economic development.**

**II. Supporting the Islamic Development Bank**

**Consider achieving development programmes, eliminating illiteracy for both genders, eradicating diseases and epidemics, particularly Polio and AIDS, and combating poverty and unemployment, as urgent strategic objectives of he Muslim Ummah; strive also to mobilize all available resources in order to achieve these objectives by establishing an IDB special fund. As a concrete expression of the unity and interdependence of the Muslim World, each OIC Member State should allocate an annual**

**percentage of its budget, according to its financial resources, however little it may be. The IDB Board of Governors should be entrusted to implement the above proposals.**

**Commission the IDB Board of Governors to consider making a substantial increase in the Bank s authorized, subscribed, and paid-up capital, so as to enable it to strengthen its role in providing financial support and technical assistance to OIC member States, and strengthen the Islamic Corporation for Trade Finance recently established within the IDB**

**Urge the IDB to develop its mechanisms and programmes aimed at cooperation with the private sector and to consider streamlining and activating its decision-making process.**

**Urge the IDB and its institutions to study and explore investment opportunities and intra-OIC t4rade, and to conduct other feasibility studies to provide the necessary information to develop0 and promote joint ventures.**

**III. Social solidarity in the face of natural disasters**

**Islam advocates solidarity with, and assistance to all the needy without discrimination, which requires the Islamic States to avoid and adopt a clear strategy on Islamic relief action and support the trend towards cooperation and coordination between individual relief efforts of Islamic States and Islamic civil society institutions on the one hand, and between those of international civil society institutions and organizations on the other hand.**

**IV. Supporting development and poverty alleviation in Africa.**

**Promote activities aimed at achieving economic and social development in African countries, including supporting industrialization, energizing trade and investment, transferring technology, alleviating their debt burden and poverty, and eradicating diseases; welcome the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).**

**Call upon the Member States to poverty in the Least-Developed Member States of the OIC.**

**Support the efforts of the Low-income OIC Members States to find effective ways and mechanisms to alleviate their external debt burden. Urge international specialized institutions and organizations to exert greater efforts to alleviate poverty in the Least- Developed Member States and assist Muslim societies, the refugees and displaced in the OIC**

Member States, and Muslim Minorities and Communities in non-OIC Member States to contribute to the World Fund for Solidarity and Combating Poverty.

**V. Higher Education, Science and Technology.**

**Effectively improve and reform higher education institutions and curricula, link postgraduate studies to the comprehensive development plans of the Islamic World. At the same time, priority should be given to science and technology and facilitating academic interaction and exchange of knowledge among the academic institutions of Members States.**

**Urge the member States to strive for quality education that promotes creativity, innovation, and research and development.**

**Assimilate highly-qualified Muslims within the Muslim World, develop a comprehensive strategy in order to utilize their competencies and prevent brain migration phenomenon.**

**Call upon Islamic countries to encourage research and development programmes, taking into account that the global percentage of this activity is 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and request Member States to ensure that their individual contribution is not inferior to half of this percentage.**

**Study feasibility of creating an OIC Award for Outstanding Scientific Achievements by Muslim scientists.**

**Encourage public and private national research institution to invest I technology capacity-building.**

**Review the performance of the OIC-affiliated universities so as to improve their effectiveness and efficiency, and call for participation in the two Waqfs (Endowments) dedicated t the two universities in Niger and Uganda.**

**Urge the IDB to further enhance its programme of scholarships for outstanding students and HI-Tech specializations aimed at developing the scientific, technical, and research capabilities of scientists and researchers in the Members States.**

**VI. Right of Women, Children, and the Family in the Muslim World.**

**Strengthen laws aimed at enhancing the advancement of women in Muslim societies in economic, cultural, social, and political fields, in**

accordance with Islamic values of justice and equality: and aimed also at protecting women from all forms of violence and discrimination and adhering to the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Di8scrimination against Women.

Give special attention to women s education and female literacy.

Expedite developing The Covenant on the Rights of Women in Islam , in accordance with Resolution NO. 60/27-P and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.

Strive to provide free, compulsory, and quality primary education for all children.

Strength laws aimed at preserving the rights of children, enjoying the highest possible health levels, taking effective measures in order to eradicate poliomyelitis and protect them from all forms of violence and exploitation

Encourage the Member States to sign and ratify the OIC Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam, the United Nations Deceleration on the Rights of the Child in Islam, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its annexed Optional Protocols, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its

Optional Protocol with regard to the Girl Child.

Call upon the OIC to contribute towards projecting Islam as a religion that guarantees full protection of women s rights and encourages their participation in all walks of life.

Accord necessary attention to the family as the principal nucleus of the Muslim society, exert all possible efforts, at all levels, to face up to the contemporary social challenges confronting the Muslim family and affecting its cohesion, on the basis of Islamic values.

## VII. Mass Media

Call upon TV channels and the mass media to deal with in International mass media effectively in order to enable the Muslim world to express its perspective on international developments.

Call on the mass media in Member States, including satellite channels, to agree on a Code of Ethics that caters for diversity and pluralism and safeguards the Ummah s values and interests.

Mandate the Secretary-General too prepare a report to evaluate the current situation of IINA, ISBO, and the OIC information Development; consider ways and means to activate the role and mechanisms of the media within the framework of the OIC System; and submit proposals, in this regards, to the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers for consideration.

**VIII. Cultural Exchange among Member States**

**1. Accord attention to Arabic as the language of Qur an develop programmes for translation between the languages of the Muslim Ummah, and implement programs of cultural exchanges among the OIC Member States, including Observer States**

# Elizabeth Nmadu:
# The Struggles of a Village Girl to Keep her Faith

*Today's Challenge*
**Number 4, 1992**

The time was approaching one a.m. It was pitch dark. And except for the occasional hoots of an owl every now and again, dead silence prevailed everywhere over this little Nupe village in Niger State.

It was no time for a 20-year old girl to be on the road, but that was the time Elizabeth Sode Nmadu had to make her escape. She had a choice – to flee into the eerie night damning possible consequences, or to remain behind and have her dignity and womanhood assaulted and abused the following day. She chose to run, had to run.

That was not an easy choice either. Her captor, a renowned witch doctor had been warned of the possibility of her escape, but he chose not to lock her in because he was sure she could not escape successfully. According to him, there were spirits guarding the village who would chase her back if she attempted an escape. Nobody, the medicine man asserted, had fled successfully from him before. He had in fact warned Elizabeth right from day one not to try, but after being held for six months, Elizabeth knew she had to run this night.

Why was she running? It had been a long struggle even up to that point. Her father, a Muslim, wanted her to marry a Muslim man. But Elizabeth, now a Christian, would not hear of it. She was not even prepared for marriage yet, and she wouldn't want to marry a man outside her faith. These were the basic issues, but the details of her struggle to keep her faith are gory and hair-splitting.

Elizabeth Sode Nmadu hails from Mawokpan near Tsaragi in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. She had quite an interesting background. Her father, Alhaji Nmadu, was once a Christian and a Catechist but converted to Islam in the 1970s. Her mother is also a Muslim. Elizabeth was, however, brought up by an auntie, one Madam Pategi, who is also a Muslim, but whose children are Christians, because she too was once in the faith. Through her guardian's children therefore, she started to go to church. Sometime in 1988, she made a definite commitment to the Lord through the ministry of Pastor Elijah Saba, a pastor of the United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA).

When Elizabeth's father noticed that she was inclined towards the Christian faith, he withdrew her from primary school and betrothed her to a Muslim by name Babadoko, a man she said she didn't even know. She objected to such an arrangement, but her father, Alhaji Nmadu, arranged a wedding ceremony without her consent and forced her to her purported husband's house. According to reports, the dad took about N6,000 as dowry, none of which Elizabeth knew about. Attempts to have the man consummate the relationship by force were however unsuccessful. So her father changed strategy.

Having failed through physical force and intimidation, he now took the girl to a native doctor at a village near Kpaki in Niger State, to induce her to comply by the aid of occult powers. According to Elizabeth's account, this native doctor gave her all types of concoctions to drink, including Arabic inscriptions washed off from slates, all in attempts to change her mind and accept sexual relations voluntarily with her "husband." She said she drank whatever she was given after praying over it in Jesus' name in the presence of the native doctor. Her convictions grew stronger.

After about six months of trying in vain to change her, with the consent of her father, the native doctor now thought to resort to his last card. That would be to force her to have sex with the man she didn't want to marry. ….

Word filtered to Elizabeth on a Thursday that she would undergo this ordeal the very next day, and that it would be repeated until she got pregnant. …

That Thursday night, she requested some Christian girls in that village to escort her to her first hideout about four kilometres away. …

… Her plan was to run to Minna to seek refuge and support from a preacher who hails from her area and whom she knew vaguely. Very early Saturday morning Elizabeth trekked far from Kpaki village and hid in a bush until she got a bus to Bida, on her way to Minna.

Now Elizabeth had never been to Minna before, didn't have this preacher's address and didn't even know his name properly. She only knew him by the name …

… She found someone who directed her to Rev Paul Tsado, a popular Nupe preacher based in Minna. This was May 1991.

The next working day, Rev. Tsado took Elizabeth to the Social Welfare Office in Minna requesting their help. The Social Welfare Department agreed but also requested Rev. Tsado to keep custody of the girl until they could make necessary contacts with her people.

According to reliable accounts the Welfare people sent for her dad who refused to come.  However, when the traditional ruler of the area, the Etsu Tsaragi heard about the case, he sent a written message to the Niger Welfare authorities requesting that the girl be released to him.  This was complied with and Rev. Tsado said he took Elizabeth personally to the Etsu.  When the traditional ruler heard the details of what had transpired, he summoned the parents from their village and instructed them to allow their daughter freedom of choice with respect to religion and marriage.  He then handed her back to the parents.

But when they got home, the story started all over again, only this time with more brutal treatment and torture.  She was forced back to the "husband's" house.  There, they gave her religious concoctions.  The strongest of such concoctions, she said, was mixed with urine.  That was supposed to be the most potent and she was compelled to drink it.  She complied, but demanded to be allowed to first pray over it, which they obliged.  No harm came to her.

As the last resort, she was locked up in a room with the man for him to have sex with her by all means.  But she resisted and struggled all through the night. …

It was early on Sunday morning.  Elizabeth escaped again and this time ran to Ilorin.  She came across a good samaritan there who arranged to give her custody and support her to test her case in court.

…

*Appendix 98:*

# We Are Being Persecuted Because of our Faith

by Richard Abban[1]
(Ghanaian Christian in Potiskum)

***Today's Challenge:*** We are here to find out the correct version about what led to the burning of churches in Potiskum. And we felt it is necessary to hear from you, since your daughter has been linked to the cause of the crisis; can you therefore, tell us precisely what happened?

**Mr. Richard Abban:** Our daughter's name is Kate, and we are her parents. I am Richard Abban and my wife is Victoria Abban.

What actually happened is that, on the 13th of July, 1994, we saw a picture when my wife was cleaning up the bedroom. My wife who spotted the picture in Kate's box called my attention to it. She brought it to me and said, "See what Kate is doing!"

So I asked her to call Kate. When Kate came, I asked her who was the boy they were together in the picture? ...

I advised her to wait to get educated, get a good profession, and then I can give her out in marriage, and that it was only through this way that God will bless her. It was after this discussion that she apologised to us and promised not to do that again.

However on Saturday which was 16th July, 1994 my wife went to the market and left Kate at home doing some washings. But when my wife returned from the market, she discovered that Kate was not at home. ... And not only that, her wrappers and other clothing's that we had procured for her in preparation to send her back to our country, were all gone. The mother on this discovery told me about it.

Our investigation of this discovery revealed that Kate had packed her things and passed them through this window in this room (pointing at a window), to a Muslim woman in the next compound, and who in turn, took this clothing to another nearby compound for her. Kate was later to leave the house for the compound where her belongings were taken to. She was kept in that compound up to the evening of that day.

While we were looking for Kate, the woman, whose compound she was hidden

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1*TC,* 1/95, pp. 16-21.

in, by the name Sabuwa Hadiza Eskida took Kate to a Koranic Malam by the name of Malam Hassan. ...

We were not able to trace the whereabouts of Kate until Monday, when a man came and met my children at home, while we were away, and told my eldest son that Kate had been in his house since Saturday. So he had come to inform us about it, and that Kate had indicated her intention to become a Muslim.

The man also said Kate had told him that because of her decision to become a Muslim, we her parents had threatened to kill her. But then, on our return, we got this information from our son, but the man did not leave his name or contact address. However, based on the description of the man by our children, we eventually traced him. We got to know that he was an imam in one of the nearby mosques here and also by the Tsohon Kasuwa.

... The man I delegated went to the house, but was told that the Malam had travelled, and had left instructions that no "Jupiter" should be allowed to take Kate away from his house. So, when I received this information, I decided that it would be better to wait for the Malam; since he had earlier voluntarily called to see me over the issue, it indicated his readiness to discuss with me. And so, we resolved to wait for him to return.

Having waited from that Monday till Saturday without hearing from the Malam, I then asked the man I had asked to represent me to check back again. The man at last met the Malam who promised he was going to see me that Saturday evening.

On that Saturday evening around 4:30 P.M. the Malam eventually showed up; in the company of about seven people that came to my house was Jibrin Janko. They told me that my daughter Kate had said she wanted to become a Muslim and that I had threatened to kill her.

I told them in response that what they were saying was not true as my daughter does not want to become a Muslim. I rather said her problem stems from the fact that we rebuked her about engaging in promiscuous life which will not mean well to her. I showed the picture of Kate and a boy posing together and asked them whether that was how Muslim girls behave. And I also asked them whether they would accept their daughters to engage in activities as portrayed in the picture. They responded by saying "No!" In fact, the picture brought arguments among them.

So I told them that my daughter was only looking for a place to stay to enable her to have the liberty of indulging in such promiscuous activities and not actually that she really wanted to be a Muslim. I also told them that it is unfortunate that they are capitalising on this to claim that she wants to be a Muslim without them questioning the sincerity in her decision.

At the end of our discussion, they requested that I give them one week to go and investigate the matter.  I told them it was not possible because I cannot see how they will continue to keep my daughter when they were individuals and not a legalised institution.

However, after intense disagreement, I accepted that they have the one week to carry out whatever investigation they wanted on the matter.  But then I told them that they should understand that they are also fathers and parents, and that I expect them not to be part of the problem, but a solution to it.  I then advised that they should know that my daughter was misbehaving and that if they will come out with a solution to that I will be very much happy.  They left with a promise that they were going to bring the girl on 30th July, 1994.

On that 30th they came.  They were about 8 people in all and were without my daughter.  So I asked them about Kate and reminded them that they promised they were to bring her that day.  They could not give me any satisfactory explanation as to why they didn't bring her along.  So I told them that they've forced me into taking the case to the police, since they were no longer interested in sincerely looking into the problem.

I reported the matter to the police that my daughter had been kidnapped by them and the police subsequently summoned them at the police station.  Kate was also ordered by the police to be brought to the station.  In fact you need to be at the police station to see the atmosphere then.  The people were so furious.  They took over the police station and were shouting all over.  Yet we were only two at the police station, myself and my wife.

In fact, they were looking so aggressive even to the point of wanting to engage the policeman in a fight.  The Divisional Police Officer (DPO) who was not in the station at the time went there and later came and went into his office.  The people later followed him to his office and had a lengthy discussion with him, details of which no one told me.

After a while, I told the police at the counter that I also wanted to see the DPO. The message was passed over to him, but he refused to see my wife and me. However we decided to force our way into his office, and on getting in there, he, instead of listening to our own side of the story, rained insults on us for being "irresponsible" parents.  In fact, the way he spoke to us, I was never happy at all. I never expected that he could behave this way to us.

At the end of the day at the police station, a police sergeant brought somebody, and created an impression in us that the person was from Social Welfare.  They then said we should go back and call back at the police station the following Monday, which was 1st August.  But I then noticed that the police allowed the other people to take our daughter away.  I asked the DPO where our daughter

was being taken to, and he rather insulted me by saying that I should not think that I am the one to teach him his job. So I kept quiet and we left the police station.

On the appointed Monday we went to the police station, but the DPO was not on seat. However, the Divisional Crime Officer (DCO) was there. The DCO told me that the issue was very complicated since it involves a foreigner and all that. But I replied that there was nothing that is complicated in the case, as it was a straight forward case in that the girl in question is my daughter, and I am the complainant in the case. So since the girl has been brought to the police station, she should be handed over to me.

But the DCO said there were other issues involved like the issue of religion and that the girl said she was not ready to come to us, her parents. I then said if it is true that the girl said she was not ready to come to us, her parents, then she should be told that she should put that down in writing, since we were not allowed to have access to her. The police were arguing that since the girl was 19 years old, she has the right under the law to decide her destiny. But I told them that I am not a Nigerian but a Ghanaian, and that under Ghanaian law, a person can only be considered an adult if he/she is 21 years. For this reason, let the girl put it in writing that she has decided to disown us, her parents.

At this point the DCO became very apprehensive. I explained to him that if the girl dies in Nigeria, I am expected to carry her death certificate home to tell my people. If on the other hand, she gets married here with my own consent, I am expected to take a marriage certificate to my people, and now since she has decided to leave us, the parents, prematurely she needs to put that in writing so that if I get home, I will be placed in a better position to explain things to my people. They reason why I really needed this note is because, if I get back to my country without any proof about the whereabouts of my daughter, my people will think that I went to Nigeria to do something evil with my daughter who was the only and the oldest of my children.

The DCO, having listened to my explanations, then said we should go and then come back again anytime, and that my daughter will go and think over it, while I should also go and think over the issue. Still she was given back to these people. She was placed under the custody of Malam Hassan without the consent of us, the parents. We were then asked to come back on the 16th of August, 1994.

When we went back to the police station on that day, the DCO took us to the DPO's office. There, the DPO asked me whether I know Malam Hassan and I told him "No!" He then asked Malam Hassan whether he knows the Malam and me also said "No!"

The DPO then asked me whether I had anything against Malam Hassan and I

told him "Yes." I told him that since the beginning of the case of my daughter, the Malam has been very aggressive in his approach to the issue. And that my kind approach to the issue was made possible by God and the desire to avoid confrontation with them.

But then I told him that I do not have anything to do with Malam Hassan even though he had changed the name of my own daughter to Fatima Hassan, changed her religion, and changed her way of dressing, and even kept her with him without my consent. Despite these I still maintain that I did not want to have anything to do with him. And that all that I know is my daughter. At this point, the DPO said the girl was to be charged to court for incitement and disturbance of public peace.

On that 16th my daughter was charged to court for incitement and disturbance at the Magistrate Court here in Potiskum. The magistrate was not on seat at the time police took her to court. So the police prosecutor then said since the girl was charged to court for such an offense, she has to be remanded in the custody of Social Welfare. However, Malam Hassan cut in to say that this can never happen as this girl is now being treated this way because she is a Muslim. He was shouting all over the place and was saying "Yau za a yi tashi hankali."

But we were taken to another nearby Alkali Court. On getting there, Malam Hassan was still shouting and the alkali could not help it but call him to find out what was happening. He told the alkali that because of Islam, the girl was being harassed and that she has converted to Islam. I took the pains and explained everything to the alkali, who then said we should come back on the 24th August, 1994, and that he will look into the issue, as it was not a serious problem.

However on the 24th August, when we were asked to report back in court, we were told that the alkali has been transferred. I was shocked, because if the alkali knew he had been transferred, why then did he say we should come to court on that day?

Despite this, we were asked to go and report back on the 21st September, my daughter was still with Malam Hassan, and I still could not complain. The way this case was being handled, I knew within me that these people had some ulterior motives in all they were doing. So I resolved to take things easy and just follow them and see what they are up to.

On getting home I discovered the date given to us was too far, and I decided to call at the police station. I told them I was dissatisfied with the way they were handling the issue. The DCO could not give me any positive response, but rather tactfully left the police station. At this stage I knew that the police were trying not to be involved in the case and that was why they pushed it to court. So I left for home.

However on the 29th of August, 1994 I was called back to the police station and was told that the case has been withdrawn from the Alkali Court to the Upper Area Court here in Potiskum.  I was given only a short notice, but I quickly responded by getting to the court.  On getting there, I could not see anybody, but was told that Malam Hassan had already come to the court and had seen the judge in his chambers.  So I also walked in the chamber, met the judge and explained everything to him.  The judge then told me that his court has no jurisdiction to hear the case and that he was referring it back to the police.  So you can see how they were toying around and frustrating me.  So this implied that no tentative date had now been fixed for the case.  So I went back home.

On the 31st August, 1994 I met the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) at the Bank of the North here in Potiskum.  He told me they've been looking for me in connection with my daughter's case.  He told me they had a meeting and it centered around my daughter who said she wanted to become a Muslim.  So he asked me why I cannot allow her to become a Muslim.  I responded by restating the whole episode that led to her leaving home.  I also told him how her behaviour was going to affect the family if that issue was not resolved rightly and properly.  At this point a policeman appeared to tell me that a new date has now been fixed for September 5, 1994 at the same Upper Area Court where the judge said he had no jurisdiction to hear the case.

However on September 4th this unfortunate incident of burning of churches in Potiskum occurred, and since then we've not appeared in court.  And my daughter is still with them.  We have been summoned by Immigration and the Commissioner of Police has called us; we've given statements and we are still waiting to hear from them.

# THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR A MATURE AFRICAN CHURCH

**presented at the 50ᵗʰ Year Anniversary Celebration
of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Bukuru
on 13ᵗʰ February 2009
by Professor Danny McCain**

## Introduction

Education is transferring knowledge, attitudes and wisdom from one person to another person. Theological education is transferring religious or spiritual knowledge, attitudes and wisdom to another person. The task of theological educational institutions is to transfer the collective knowledge of God and the things related to God from one generation to the next.

Theological education has been taking place ever since the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve obviously passed on to their children and subsequent generations their knowledge about God. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and their descendants primarily transferred their understanding of God orally. However, starting with Moses, this information became written down and from that point theological education began to include written documents.

Jesus' model of theological education was simply the traditional mentoring type of education. Jesus invited 12 of his students to live with him for three years. They went everywhere he went and absorbed his knowledge and wisdom simply from being around him. The disciples used a similar strategy for passing on the theological truths that they had learned from Jesus. Barnabas learned from Peter and the other disciples. Barnabas was then able to teach some things to Paul who worked with him. Later, Paul invited Silas, Timothy and Luke to follow him and learn from him. Paul and Peter and James and other New Testament leaders also used the method they had learned from Moses. They wrote down the things that they had learned from Jesus and the things that they had learned from one another. Thus the theological truths of the New Testament era were preserved in a written form.

In Ephesus, we see an attempt at a more formal type of theological education. Paul was forced to leave the synagogue in Ephesus, *"so Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus"* (Acts 19:9b). The Western text of Acts says Paul met in this school from 11:00 AM to 4:00 every afternoon, when the school would have normally taken an afternoon siesta.[1] Paul apparently used this time to teach the new converts and prepare them to continue spreading the gospel and leading new believers. This was an amazingly successful school because within two years *"all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord"* (19:10).

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[1] Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1975, p. 285

Theological education has continued all throughout church history. We are Christians today after the pattern of the early church because our spiritual fathers successfully passed theological and spiritual truths to the subsequent generations who passed them on to us.

Theological education is now common in Africa. There are over 550 theological institutions in Nigeria alone.[2] When missionaries came to Africa in the 19th century, once they had made converts, they started schools to prepare the next generation of Christians for the tasks before them. When the missionaries left Africa, the replacement church leaders also felt strongly that there must be theological education in order for the church to be strong.

## The African Church in Transition

The African church is experiencing transition in at least two ways. First, the African church is breaking free more and more from the bodies and cultures that created it. For example, the Anglican Church no longer bows down and accepts everything that comes from Canterbury. The Anglican Communion in Africa is standing on its own and, in fact, leading those portions of the Anglican Communion that are wanting to maintain a commitment to traditional orthodoxy, even in the face of opposition from the western branches of the church.

Second, the church in Africa is in a transition from being a young church to being a mature church. John addresses his first epistle to three different kinds of believers:

> *I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven . . . I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children . . . I write to you, fathers . . . I write to you, young men . . .* (1 John 2:12-14).

Paul mentions here three categories of Christian believers: children, young men and fathers. Although one cannot be absolutely sure John is deliberately referring to three stages of the Christian life, this is indeed the normal progression in life and it also appears to be the normal progression in our spiritual life.[3]

I believe churches pass through similar stages. When they are first planted they are infant churches and, like infants, are dependent upon those who started them. These are first-generation churches. All of the churches Paul wrote to were first generation churches, having been planted only one to fifteen years earlier. Normally, as churches develop, they become stronger, more independent and productive. Second generation churches are stronger than first generation churches because their leaders and members have had the advantage of being reared in the Christian faith. Eventually churches reach a stage of development that they can be said to be mature churches, no longer dependent upon the parent bodies but having a warm and healthy relationship with them. These would be the third or fourth generation churches.

The modern church in Africa is basically a third or fourth generation church.[4] The first of the organizations that eventually made up TEKAN churches started working in Nigeria in

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[2] Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS) has 550 Nigerian theological institutions on its mailing list.

[3] We are *"born again,"* (John 3:3, 7; 1 Peter 1:23) implying that, immediately after our conversion, we are *"children"* (1 Corinthians 14:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:7; Hebrews 5:13). However, we *"grow up"* (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 2:3; 2 Peter 3:18). We become strong enough to do the Lord's work (Romans 16:12; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:12) but eventually we reach a level of maturity and respect that is parallel with fatherhood (1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 2: 11; 1 John 2:13, 14). At that point we have reached a level of spiritual maturity that might be called Christian adulthood.

1904. However, it was not until the 1930's that there was significant growth.[5] These facts suggest that African Christianity is well beyond its infancy. In fact, it has been a "young" church for some time and is now entering the stage where it can be said to be a mature church —a "father" church. This is not to imply that the African church has "arrived" or "peaked" or even reached an ideal stage of development any more than a young married father has "arrived" or achieved his ultimate success in life. However, it does mean that there is a level of stability and completeness that characterizes the church and, like a young father, it is even strong enough to help the Christian bodies that originally gave birth to it.

## A New Phase of Theological Education

Education must always be targeted. We do not teach a child in primary school like we teach a university student or *vice versa*. Each school and, in fact, each lecture must be targeted toward the persons who are going to receive that education. Since this is true, all theological education must also be targeted. What does that suggest for the next generation of theological education in Africa and particularly, in Nigeria?

The first theological education in Africa was designed to teach the basic elements of the faith to new believers—teaching them what it meant to be true Christians.[6] The next generation of theological education was designed to prepare new Christians for expansion. This phase of instruction included a heavy emphasis on evangelism and church growth and particularly trained evangelists. This period of theological education has also been successful. The story of the growth of the church in Africa has been phenomenal, perhaps the most successful church growth story in the history of Christianity.

These kinds of theological education continue but the dominant form of theological education has changed its focus again and is primarily designed for the training of leaders who will minister to the church itself, particularly pastors and teachers. These changing emphases have been gradual and perhaps hardly noticed as our theological institutions have naturally adapted to meet the changing needs of the church.

I believe the church in Africa has entered or is entering a new phase of theological education. It will obviously continue with its teaching of the basic truths of Christianity and will also continue with its stress on church growth, exegetical and theological skills and pastoral and ecclesiastical leadership. However, the church in Africa has another significant task now. Not only must it make sure that the individual members of the church are genuine followers of Jesus but it is now time for the church to start exercising more positive and wholesome influence on the culture itself. In short, it is now the task of the African Church to Christianize its culture. It is time to accelerate the change from a worldview that is part Christian, part western, and part traditional African culture to a Christian world view that is Biblical, comprehensive, holistic and African. In other words, it is time for the Christian leaders to target not just those members in their churches and those people they wish to

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[4] Obviously parts of the church in Egypt and Ethiopia were planted in the first century and contain one of the oldest branches of Christianity in the world. Also even in the modern African church, there are some sections that have been in existence longer than four generations and some shorter. However, when all of this is averaged together, the church, particularly in Nigeria, is basically a third or fourth generation church.

[5] Peter Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa*, Africa Christian Textbooks, Bukuru, 1977, pp. 343-344

[6] There is no attempt made in this paper to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the early missionary-sponsored theological education. For some insight on this, see Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1964, pp. 516ff. A two-word summary of Neill's evaluation of missionary education was that it was "gravely inadequate" (p. 519).

become members but target the whole community in which they live to attempt to exert wholesome Christian influence over it and give it positive direction.

During his ministry, Jesus engaged the whole community, including Jews and Gentiles, men and women, adults and children, sympathizers and non-sympathizers. He became involved in many activities that go beyond what would traditionally be thought of as religious. Jesus raised the dead (John 11:43-44); he fed the hungry (Matthew 14:15-21); he counseled the confused (John 3:1-21; 4:7-30); he assisted with income generation (John 21:1-6; 11); he helped pay taxes (Matthew 17:27); he relieved the embarrassment of the disgraced (John 2:1-10); he defended the abused (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; John 2:13-17); he assisted the homeless (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20); he became friends with the rejected (Matthew 9:10-13; 11:19); and he even spent time with children (Matthew 19:13-15).

Jesus' example suggests that as the church matures and becomes more established in the society, the Christian leader must assume a greater role than just overseeing the religious affairs of the church. And if this is true, then theological education must be adapted to make sure that the church is fulfilling those responsibilities. No theological institution in Africa would want to go back only to that first generation kind of theological education—of teaching only the basic elements of Christianity. Neither should we be satisfied to limit ourselves to the second generation type of theological education—preparing evangelists or even the third generation—preparing pastors and church leaders.[7] Theological education has and continues to fulfill those responsibilities. It has brought the church to the point it is quite successful but there is a new task ahead of us now—the Christianizing of our culture and we must adapt our theological education to meet that important need.

## Changing Focus of Theological Education

Where does theological education in Africa go from here? What must we do with theological education during this next generation that we have not done in the past? Fortunately, anticipating the issues that I raise in this paper, many seminaries and other theological institutions are already making a number of changes in their curriculum and methodology. I will now outline some of those essential changes that need to be made or accelerated in our theological institutions to meet the needs of a mature African church.

**Theological education must develop a more holistic view of Christian leadership.**

The African Church has successfully developed a wholesome and holistic view of ministry that I believe is healthy and Biblical. Fortunately, the church does not restrict its view of ministry only to religious things. The African church is involved in many social and community responsibilities. I do not have much to add to that. However, I believe what we must work to clarify and develop is a more holistic view of Christian leadership.

The current view of Christian leadership was formulated in a time when the church was trying to grow and to establish itself as the most important part of every individual Christian's life. Therefore, we have preached to our people; we have counseled them; we have provided support to them in times of trouble and have even been there to help them

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[7] The generations referred to in this paper are more properly phases and not necessarily specific time periods representing the average life cycle of individuals. Some parts of the body of Christ probably passed through these three phases in less than three chronological generations and some probably took longer.

celebrate. During the next phases of our theological education we must develop leaders that will not only continue those things but help transform the society itself.

I believe the modern African view of Christian leadership was formulated by people who had a secular orientation. African societies have never separated their religion from their society at large. Rather their religious responsibilities, celebrations and taboos were as much part of their lives as their work, their family, the chieftaincy or any other part of society. However, the missionaries that planted the church in Africa were largely from the West and had been influenced by secularism which separates society into the religious and non-religious realms. The missionaries passed onto the first African Christian leaders a philosophy of life and a philosophy leadership that were also influenced by secularism. For example, this worldview either ignored political governance or conceded it to others. Politics was considered a cesspool of sinful activity and Christians should not get mixed up in it.

In addition, the early missionaries inadvertently promoted a secular hierarchy of leadership. When they got intelligent and promising converts, they trained them for "Christian" leadership which involved some aspect of church work. The early missionary schools were designed to teach people to read the Bible and prepare young people for teaching and other Christian ministries not for "secular" leadership. It is my guess that few missionaries ever realized how incredibly successful they were being and that some of their students would someday be the rulers of their respective communities, states, provinces and even countries. From their point of view, the best that they could do was to train a generation of Christians to be honorable and successful leaders of the church.

Was that enough? Have we fulfilled our responsibility to the church and the community when we have trained our graduates to be good pastors and good Bible teachers and good Bible translators and good evangelists and missionaries? The church in Africa has done that quite well. However, I do not believe that is all that God is calling the church to do. Our next generation of Christian leaders must be genuine community leaders who are not just concerned about the church but reflect God's concern for the community at large.

In the past if one of our pastors strayed into politics, we often commiserated with one another over the downfall of this brother. We admitted to ourselves that somehow we had failed and we talked in quiet terms about how this person had yielded to the temptation of the world and stooped to go into politics. However, is that really a wholesome Christian attitude?

- Should we not be training our students to be community leaders?
- Should not our pastors be concerned about all the issues that affect their people, including politics, business, entertainment, education and every other part of society?
- Should not our pastors and Christian leaders be interested in making sure that Jesus is Lord over the culture and community as well as individuals?

Sometimes our Christian leaders are indeed viewed as community leaders. They do get involved in things that affect the community as a whole. Unfortunately, that is often accidental and almost viewed as exceptional. However, with the maturing of the African church, our seminaries and other theological institutions must prepare our students to be community leaders intentionally. Thus, our theological institutions must develop and teach a more complete and Biblical understanding of all the diverse parts of society.

The US Civil Rights movement is a good model of wholesome and aggressive Christian leadership. Nearly all of the African American civil rights leaders in the 1950's and 1960's were religious leaders. However, they were also community leaders. Martin Luther King, Jr, Ralph David Abernathy, and Andrew Young were probably the three most well-known leaders of the civil rights movement. They were all trained ministers. They understood that the injustices of the American society at that time were negatively affecting their churches and society as a whole, even the white community. They fasted and prayed and preached and conducted Bible studies and sang about these social injustices but they did more than that. They organized themselves and actively opposed the injustices in the society.

- They taught their people about the US Constitution and civic responsibility.
- They registered people to vote.
- They boycotted businesses that discriminated on the basis of race.
- They brought litigation against municipalities that retained unconstitutional laws.

And these pastors were enormously successful. In fact, they were so successful that today, an African American is the president of the United States of America. I can assure you without any fear of contradiction that that would have never happened without these American black preachers who understand that they had a responsibility not just to the people within the four walls of their church but a responsibility to the society at large.

I am not advocating for a Christian state. I think the Middle Ages and even the post-reformation period in Europe demonstrate that mixing up church and state affairs too much creates many kinds of problems. I also recognize that the New Testament itself acknowledges political leaders that are non-Christians and demands that we have proper respect for them. However, I am advocating that we must be salt and light in the culture (Matthew 5:13-14). The great Baptist pastor, Vance Havner, said, "Salt never did any good in a salt shaker." Our Christian leaders must move beyond the four walls of our church buildings and make a deliberate effort to positively impact our communities. Non-Christians have nothing to fear from a Christian-dominated and Christian-influenced culture because true Christianity will build and strengthen a culture that is honest, transparent, prosperous, just and fair to all.

If what I have advocated is correct, how will this affect our church and theological education in the future? I believe we must have a greater focus on the wholesome influence Christianity can have on society. We must take the strengths of our faith and make sure the society is positively influenced by them. What are some of these Christian convictions?

- We must have a greater focus on honesty and integrity. This will address the issue of corruption in society.
- We must have a greater focus on sexual purity. This will address the issue of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS.
- We must have a greater focus on business and economic principles. This will address the issues of poverty and unemployment.
- We must have a greater focus on living in a pluralistic society. This will address the issue of ethnic competition and violence.
- We must have a greater focus on governance. This will address the issue of expenditures for public projects and the overall direction of society.

Our seminaries in the future must be proactive in responding to these things.

- Seminaries must include more courses on governance and law.
- Seminaries must include more courses on business and economics.
- Seminaries must include more courses on social and community issues.

If we develop a more holistic view of Christian leadership, we will need to develop a more comprehensive form of theological education. Therefore, all theological institutions must examine their academic curricula and extra-curricula activities to make sure that they are preparing their students to be holistic Christian leaders for a mature African church.

## Theological education must develop a greater spirit of cooperation and unity.

Globalization has become a common word in the international community. Because of advances in transportation and communication, the world is "shrinking" and the individual cultures are interacting with and being affected by one another more. Globalization increases the influence one part of the world has on the other part of the world. Whenever there is a plane crash in any part of the world, other parts of the world know about it in a few minutes. However, globalism goes far beyond just news about the other parts of the world. As we have seen in the last several months, the economy of one country is inseparably tied to that of other nations. Therefore, there is a greater emphasis in the international community to understand the cultures and economies and religions of the other part of the world.[8] There is only one earth and all people must share that earth. Therefore, the wise leaders in one nation or one part of the world are going to try to understand and develop more wholesome relationships with other parts of the world.

Interestingly, Christianity is experiencing its own form of globalization. Due to many of the same issues such as improved communication and transportation, it is much easier for one part of the church to interact with and influence Christianity in another part of the world.

What should be the practical result of this growing knowledge of and interaction with and interdependence upon each other? I think we should take advantage of this phenomenon to improve one of the major concerns Jesus had during his last night on this earth. He prayed that his disciples would be *"one as we are one"* (John 17:11). Unfortunately, this part of Jesus' prayer has not been answered very well. The church throughout history has often been divided by doctrine, practice, tradition, language, class and race.

In light of the growing emphasis on globalization—one part being affected by all, is this not a good time to help finally answer Jesus' prayer for unity? Is it not time to get beyond the fears and petty jealousies that sometimes characterize the church and take a more selfless look at our ministry? Would a greater focus on unity not describe the maturing of the church?

The creation of *Tarayya Eclesioyin Kristi a Sudan* (TEKAS)[9] later modified to *Tarayya Eclesioyin Kristi a Nigeria* (TEKAN) was an excellent example of Christian unity. The founders of TEKAN were willing to set aside their minor differences and work together for the common good. Has TEKAN weakened any of the original churches? I think not.

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[8] A negative illustration of this is the ongoing war on terror that is being lead by the US. This war was launched with only a limited understanding of the Islamic and Arabic worlds. Thus significant mistakes were made in its planning and implementation due in part to the predominantly mono-cultural, mono- religious and America-first perspective of the American decision makers.

[9] Edmund P. T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, being part of Ogbu Kalu (editor), *Christianity in West Africa: The Nigerian Story*, Daystar Press, Ibadan, 1978, p. 170

In fact, the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), is a product of that cooperation. The question is this: Is it time to go beyond that? It is time for the evangelical churches to come together in some greater application of unity and cooperation?

TCNN has led the way in helping to encourage unity in theological education.

- TCNN has opened up its journal, *TCNN Research Bulletin*, for all theological scholars in the area to contribute.
- TCNN hosted Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS) in its early days and thus encouraged the production and distribution of textbooks for other Nigerian schools.
- TCNN has hosted the Jos-Bukuru Theological Society for many years, a forum that has given scholars and academics from all theological institutions an opportunity to share their research and experiences together.
- TCNN has recently hosted the annual conference of the National Association of Biblical Studies (NABIS).

All of these are positive steps in the right direction. However, I believe that in light of the globalization of the world and Jesus' prayer for unity, it is time for our seminaries to consider additional ways that we can help one another go beyond what we have done in the past. Would it not help answer Jesus' prayer for unity among his followers if our local seminaries were willing to share resource persons? Would it not be useful for someone from one seminary who really understands some technical aspect of theology to give lectures in several different sister institutions without jealousy or fear of loss?

And, if we really wanted to get creative, could we not do other things?

- Is it time for us to consider doing joint promotion exercises with fellow seminaries to insure uniformity and professionalism in our staff?
- Is it time for us to consider doing occasional joint convocation exercises and other celebrations together?
- Is it time for us to create a mechanism whereby students could take "for credit" courses at other seminaries?
- Is it time to create a strong coalition or consortium of evangelical seminaries that will serve the educational community as the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) has served the missions community? Perhaps we could call it the Nigeria Evangelical Theological Education Association (NETEA).

I am going to add one additional thought here—a stress on one area of cooperation that I think that our theological educational institutions should especially consider.

Pentecostalism is a branch of evangelicalism that has come to Nigeria to stay. Although it has been part of Nigerian Christianity in some sense of the word for at least 80 years,[10] it received a fresh infusion in the early 70's and has continued to exercise a growing influence ever since. Because Pentecostal churches have primarily grown at the expense of evangelical and mainline churches, there has been much resentment toward Pentecostalism and often a spirit of competition from non-Pentecostal churches. These have been fueled by doctrinal differences and practices that can be quite significant.

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[10] The Assemblies of God entered Nigeria in 1930 but they began working with 32 existing indigenous bodies that had experienced at least some of the Pentecostal phenomenon. See Faulk, p. 347

However, the objective observer would have to admit that, in many ways, Pentecostalism has been good for the church in Africa.

- It has infused enthusiasm into the church.
- It has helped to recapture the attention of the younger generation.
- It has enabled Africans to worship in a more authentically African manner.
- It has helped to bring an appreciation of the supernatural back to the African church.
- It has taken up the challenge of missions and is filling in many of the gaps that the more mainstream evangelical churches have not been able to fill.

However, Pentecostalism has had its weaknesses. There has often been more stress on ecstatic utterances than exegesis and more emphasis on good feelings than good theology. Unfortunately, advanced theological education has lagged behind in Pentecostal circles. Fortunately, that is changing. Pentecostals are eager to catch us. They are ready to learn the theological sciences from those who have practiced them for many years. Therefore, I believe it is time for mainstream evangelical Christianity to open wide its theological education doors to Pentecostal students and assist Pentecostals in other ways:

- We should not just tolerate them. We should embrace them.
- We should make every effort to prepare them to serve their own constituents.
- We should force them to think but not assume that any "intelligent" student will embrace the host's views of the baptism of the Holy Spirit or other doctrines.
- We should allow and encourage our lecturers to teach and supervise in their seminaries and Bible colleges.

Let us work hard to make sure that the mature African church answers Jesus' prayer for unity among his followers.

## Theological education must develop a greater emphasis on excellence and professionalism.

Africa has made good progress in developing her theological institutions in a very utilitarian manner. We have stretched our theological education funds as far as possible. We have been able to do more on less money. That is commendable and Biblical. However, in learning to "get by" we have sometimes excused sloppiness and carelessness in ourselves and our institutions. Because we have not had enough funding to do all that needed to be done, we have sometimes allowed our standards to slip and this has at times encouraged a rather unprofessional look and feel about our theological education.

This is not a call for us to spend money lavishly or irresponsibly. However, I believe that our seminary campuses should be centres of excellence, efficiency and aesthetics. They should be the most attractive facilities in the community. We must pay more attention to what the visual image of our campuses are saying about our Christianity. And we must take reasonable steps to address this need.

- We must plant more flowers.
- We must paint our aging buildings.
- We must teach our people to maintain things better.
- We must create an atmosphere of reverence and beauty on campus.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians and gave two verses that should characterize our theological education:

- *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him* (3:17)
- *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men* (3:23).

All of our seminaries and Bible colleges are Christian organizations. We must remember that all that we do in the name of theological education has the name of Jesus on it. And all that we do is a public testimony about our attitude toward Jesus Christ. Colossians 3:23 was written specifically to slaves. If slaves were to work with all their hearts for their earthly masters, how much more should we who are servants of God work with all of our hearts in training the next generation of leaders that will represent Jesus?

Our institutions must make a deliberate effort to refocus our attention on ways that we can reflect the excellence of God.

- We must keep time better than everyone else and, in so doing, teach our people the importance of time.
- We must encourage our staff to always be well prepared—prepared for every lecture and every chapel sermon and every public or private presentation.
- We must encourage our people to dress well—dress professionally and look like we are leaders and not be too casual about God's work.
- We must work on our English grammar and make sure we speak and write properly.
- We must make sure that we understand plagiarism and copyright laws and not excuse ourselves of unprofessional and unethical behavior because "we are in Africa."

We must raise our standards to the point that we are upholding the highest standards possible. In fact, our standards should be so high that the universities and other tertiary institutions should be coming to study us and understand how we can do things so well. God is a God of excellence. May that excellence be reflected in our theological education!

**Theological education must address the specific issues of a mature church.**

As was demonstrated earlier, the church in Nigeria has reached or is reaching a mature status as a church. Therefore, the issues in the church today are different than they were 50 years ago when the church was much younger and less developed. What are the issues of a third and fourth generation church? There are three specific "mature" issues that I believe the African church must address today.[11] And if the church is going to address them, then the theological institutions must address them as well.

*Governance*

It may be impossible to explain all the reasons why the early missionaries did what they did and did not do certain things. One thing is certainly true. Most missionaries did not

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[11] In a paper I presented to the Theological Education in Africa Conference, Jos, Nigeria on 6 June 2008, I outlined four additional contemporary issues beyond the three presented in this paper. These include: HIV/AIDS, corruption, pornography and secularism. This is obviously not an exhaustive list.

prepare their converts very well for governance.[12] Perhaps it was because of the colonial government under whom they worked, the missionaries never anticipated any kind of self-rule by their converts. Perhaps they did not want their people spoiled from too many influences from outside[13] such as politics or perhaps there were other reasons why the missionaries ignored this important part of life. However, the whole area of civil service and governance was largely overlooked by the early missionaries. This carried over to the early Christian leaders who also tended to overlook these areas. However, the ongoing march of political and social development across Africa did not overlook these issues and, starting in the 1950's, Africans began occupying senior political and governmental offices. There have been some outstanding exceptions but, as a general rule, many African "Christian" political leaders have not performed well. Is it because Africans were incapable of governing as some racist observers have maintained? That is obviously not true. Is it because the colonial government left them with nothing to govern as some African nationalists insist? This does not appear to be the truth either. However, it does seem indisputable that the colonial government and perhaps to a lesser extent, the missionary community did not provide the future rulers of Africa with good preparation for civil and governmental leadership.

We in African can continue to complain about this oversight (or deliberate policy) but the responsibility for governance is now squarely in the hands of Africans. And because the church is such a significant force in the society, I believe the church must take up the responsibility to prepare its members for civil service and governance.

There have been some efforts by the church to address the issue of governance. The Africa Forum on Religion and Governance (AFREG) has cooperated with the national office of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in preparing a one-page document known as the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance.[14] Four Bible studies have also been prepared to help the church teach this document. CAN has sponsored training workshops in how to use this material for pastors in several of Nigeria's states. These documents and training are a significant step in the right direction. However, since the thought leaders of the church often are found in our theological institutions, should not our seminaries and religion departments be the primary ones to address the issue of Christians in governance?

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[12] See Jotham Maza Kangdim, "The Old Testament and the Politico-Ethical Question: A Case Study of the Nigerian Christian," *WAYA Journal of General Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, August 2004; Kafanchan, Kaduna State, p. 22. The article argues that missionaries, because of secularism, did not prepare their converts for governance.

[13] Crampton, p. 168

[14] The following is the second of the four paragraphs of the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance:
*We recognize that governance is an honourable service to humanity. Thus, we believe Christians should actively seek public office and reflect the beliefs of their faith in their public service as much as in their private lives. We insist that our politicians should be completely honest and fair in the fulfilment of their duties. This means that:*

- *They must not make promises that they know they cannot fulfil.*
- *They must take nothing from the government for their personal use other than what has been legitimately approved.*
- *They must not use their offices to give unfair favours to relatives, friends or others.*
- *They must not give or accept bribes, favours, positions, honours or any other benefit that would compromise fairness in fulfilling their duties.*
- *They must seek the prayers and advice of the Body of Christ and regularly report to its leaders their roles in government.*

*We insist that only those persons with records of excellence in their private lives should be selected for public service and that integrity, efficiency, and good management characterize all public servants.*

In reviewing 13 copies of the *TCNN Review Bulletin*, representing 43 articles, I have found only 2 articles related to this topic.[15] I think that we can and must do better than that.

Are we fulfilling our responsibilities as custodians of the collective wisdom and knowledge of the church if we ignore issues of governance? I think not. I believe that a course or seminar should be prepared so that every seminary graduate has a good understanding of the Christian's responsibility in governance. In addition, our African theological conferences should commission papers to be presented on this issue and our journals should encourage submissions related to Christianity and governance.

### *Responding to Violence*

Perhaps the biggest point of tension in Africa is the tension over religion. Most of Northern Africa follows Islam whereas most of Sub-Saharan Africa follows Christianity. Where these two meet, there is often tension. Nigeria is the place in Africa where this tension has often boiled over into violence. And because Jos is the point in Nigeria where the Muslim South meets the Christian South, Jos has become a real point of tension and violence. When religious tension is mixed with traditional ethnic quarrels and political disputes, this makes fertile soil for burning and killing and destruction.

Unfortunately, the church has not always responded to this violence in a Biblical way or even in a consistent manner. When there is no teaching and training about any specific problem, people will tend to respond to that problem the way that their traditional world view taught them. This means that Christians have often responded to violence with violence, which is contrary to the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 5:38-39; 43-47; Romans 12:20).

Martin Luther King, Jr. who has already been referred to in this paper, has something to teach us about this problem as well. As an African American, he clearly saw the injustices of the various branches of the US government. However, as a Christian pastor, he also understood Jesus' teachings about violence. Therefore, he encouraged and trained his followers to practice non-violent civil disobedience. For example, he would encourage them to deliberate break one of the segregationist laws, knowing that they would be arrested and probably beaten by the local white policemen. Thus, he trained them how to respond. He staged mock violence and mock arrests and required the participants in his programmes to go through these role-playing exercises. He understood that if someone hits you, the natural reaction is to hit back. However, he also understood that to hit back was contrary to the teachings of Jesus and would also be counterproductive in that particular environment.

Martin Luther King and his non-violent approach to social upheavals have something to teach us in Africa. Our theologians and our senior church leaders must seriously examine the teachings of the New Testament and create a consensus about how they apply to the church in Africa and Nigeria at this particular time in history. And our seminaries and Bible colleges must create courses and seminars and practical training that will prepare our next generation of Christian leaders in the best way to respond to violence and aggression. If we do not do this, our graduates who become our future church leaders will to continue to respond to violence the way their traditional world view has taught them.

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[15] These included Pandang Yamsat, "A Christian Concept of Politics," Number 28, April 1995, and P. Ostien and J. D. Gamaliel, "The Law of Separation of Religion and State in the United States: A Model for Nigeria," Number 37, March 2002.

### *Environmental Issues*

Africa is blessed by God with a wonderful climate, an abundance of natural resources and a beautiful environment. God has made Africa beautiful. Unfortunately, we humans have made Africa ugly.

- We have polluted the lakes and rivers.
- We have littered our roads and communities with refuse.
- We have made our air unhealthy with our environmental practices.
- We have wasted our natural resources including our beautiful African animals.

In the early days, when the church was simply struggling to establish a toehold on the continent and when traditional practices did not contribute so much to this kind of pollution, the church was largely silent about environmental issues. That was probably excusable. However, the church can no longer afford to be silent about these things. The mature church must address the Christian responsibility to the environment.

The Bible teaches us that everything was created by God (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1) and thus belongs to God (Exodus 19:5b; Psalm 24:1; 50:10). The Bible further implies that all of us share the resources of the world and we must make every effort to share them equitably. The *Nigeria Covenant* says this:

> We believe that public assets including church property and the environment are a trust given to us to be used for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind. Therefore, we pledge not to exploit, abuse, steal, misuse or mismanage any of these public assets.[16]

Does not a mature view of Christian theology recognize that because the earth belongs to God we must treat it with dignity and respect and use its resources efficiently and conscientiously? Is it not time for our theologians and theological institutions to place the care of God's earth near the top of our priority list? The care of God's universe, which is the home to all humanity, surely deserves major attention and perhaps a separate course in our theological institutions as well as special focus in our conferences and journals.

## Theological education must use a greater variety of educational tools.

It is not only the curriculum that must adjusted to meet the needs of the adult church in Africa. The structure of our theological education must continue to develop to meet the needs of the twenty-first century church. What will some of those adjustments look like?

### *Modular Education*

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[16] The Commentary on the *Nigeria Covenant* explains further:

*The whole earth is jointly owned by all the peoples of the earth. Therefore, resources which are jointly shared by others must be carefully preserved and protected so as to maximize their usefulness and to insure their distribution as equally as possible. For example, all people must breathe the same air. Therefore, it is wrong for one person to pollute the air that thousands of others must breathe. . . To protect the purity and safety of water for the whole community, rivers and other water sources must not be contaminated. The unnecessary destruction of tropical rain forests, the wanton killing of endangered wildlife, and the exploitation of mineral and petroleum resources are further examples of poor stewardship.* from *Nigeria Covenant*; Commentary on Paragraph 7; p. 15

One technique some African seminaries are using is modular education. Instead of students taking six or eight courses simultaneously, they take them one at a time. Instead of lecturers teaching three or four courses at a time, they teach only one intensive course several hours a day for several days in a row. This approach to education has several advantages:

- It enables the student and staff to concentrate on one topic at a time.
- It enables the seminary to engage outside visiting lecturers and specialists whom the seminary could not otherwise employ.
- It exposes the students to more people, thus providing a more well-rounded education.
- It makes part-time and in-service education much more possible.
- It avoids providing housing and other long-term benefits for these visiting lecturers.

Obviously, there are some courses, like language courses, where it is difficult if not impossible to conduct a modular type education. However, sponsoring short intensive courses is a model of education that many seminaries are using successfully at the present time. Even if an institution does not choose to adopt a full modular timetable, it should be flexible enough to sponsor specialized modular courses from time to time.

### *In-Service Education*

In 1994, International Institute for Christian Studies conducted a feasibility study to determine how the organization could best assist the teaching of Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) in the public schools in Nigeria. The overwhelming answer was the need for in-service training. Many teachers had been teaching 15 or 20 years without upgrading their education. This study led to the creation of a four-week in-service training programme known as the Professional Certificate in Christian Education (PCCE). I believe a similar study among churches and pastors would demonstrate a similar need among church leaders.

The primary focus of our theological institutions is on training new pastors and church leaders. However, should we also not be concerned about those pastors and other church leaders who have been in the field for many years without updating their theological education? Denominations or the departments of education within various denominations have often organized such training. However, is it not time for theological institutions to think about in-service education as a regular and normal part of their ministry?

- In-service education keeps practitioners current in their disciplines.
- In-service education keeps practitioners in touch with colleagues in other institutions.
- In-service education provides opportunities to practitioners to bounce their questions and frustrations off of experienced people.
- In-service education helps resource persons to receive real-live feedback from the field which enables them to enrich their regular classes.

Let us not ignore the thousands of church leaders who are out in the field, crying for our help.

### *Second-Career Education*

One of the phenomena that the modern world is experiencing is that people are living longer and healthier which means they have more years of profitable service. Therefore, many are spending their retirement years in Christian ministry. Some are even taking an early retirement or even changing careers in mid-life in order to go into Christian ministry.

This suggests that in the future our seminaries are going to have more older students and many of those students will have had vast personal experience. Thus, our seminaries must anticipate and prepare for this accordingly. We need to develop special tracks whereby we can exempt certain courses for mature students. We also need prepare special courses for them that are tailored to their needs and problems and career goals. We need to also figure out ways to take advantage of their expertise and experience while on campus to challenge and address the needs of the rest of the student body.

### Information Technology Education

For many reasons, Africa was slow in entering the technological age. However, Africa is catching up fast. Our universities and other tertiary institutions have made a great effort in preparing her students to be computer literate.

Our seminaries must not lag behind in this area.

- We must make sure that all students have a basic working knowledge of computers.
- We must insist that our lecturers learn how to use computers, the Internet and other electronic educational and communication devices.
- We must make sure that our libraries have electronic resources and that our library staff are well trained and keep current in IT research.
- We must make sure that our academic and financial records have access to appropriate electronic hardware and software to do their jobs.

In addition to using technology, our seminaries and Bible colleges must consider ways of using computers and computer technology in instruction. The Internet is a vast source of material. We need to teach our students how to use it. Teaching courses on line is a very common practice even with seminaries in the western world. This is something that we must be developing in Africa. Using web sites and blogs and face book and other technology to help develop and present a Christian message from a mature church to all who need it, must become one of the priorities of contemporary African theological education.

### Culturally Sensitive Education

Nearly all of the original theological education in Africa was started by non-Africans. Naturally the kinds of institutions they created reflected their own backgrounds and cultures. Exegesis and Biblical theology is or should be done the same anywhere in the world. However, practical or professional courses must be taught so that the application will be culturally appropriate. Ever since Africans took over the education of these kinds of courses from the expatriates, these kinds of practical courses have become more and more contextualized. However, it is time that Africans make an even more deliberate effort to evaluate the practical and professional courses to make sure that they are using culturally relevant approaches. Africa has a deep well of traditional culture. It must not be ignored when it comes to Christian ministry. Here are two specific examples.

Counseling is one of the most important responsibilities of pastors. Much of counseling in the western world uses the non-directive kind of counseling in which the counselor only asks questions and guides the counselee in drawing out the answers from within. The counselor seldom gives personal opinions. This is not a form of counseling that

has been used very much in Africa. African counselors listen to and ask question but then make specific suggestions and the counselees often simply obey what they have been advised to do, especially when that advice comes from an older or respected person. Counseling, like other forms of communication, takes into consideration human nature but counseling is also culture specific. Therefore, the counseling courses in our theological educations must make sure that they are not just a reflection of western counseling philosophy but are indeed using appropriate traditional African counseling techniques and practices.

Second, many of our homiletics textbooks come from the West which has its own styles of communication. In our homiletics and communication classes, there should be some attempt to understand and strengthen traditional African communication styles. These include techniques like singing, drama, story telling and proverbs. Every African preacher should be encouraged to utilize and improve those techniques of communication that have been used by Africans for centuries.

A mature church requires more advanced educational and professional techniques. Theological education in Africa must respond positively to that requirement.

### Theological education must make sure its students and staff keep warm hearts.

We get some insight into the issue of second, third and fourth generation churches from the seven churches in the Book of Revelation. This book was written about 60 years into the church age. That means that some parts of the church were third and fourth generation Christians at that time though most of these seven churches were probably second and third generation Christians. In Revelation, John presents some thoughts that Jesus himself had about seven of the churches in Asia Minor. It is interested that three of these seven second or third generation churches in the Book of Revelation exhibited similar problems.

- Ephesus had lost its first love (2:4).
- Sardis was spiritually dead (3:1).
- Laodicea was spiritually lukewarm—neither cold nor hot (3:15).

These are all spiritual problems that imply some kind of spiritual degeneration. If three of the seven churches faced serious spiritual problems as they approached the third and fourth generation of Christendom, it is likely that that is going to happen to other churches passing from the third to the fourth generation, including the churches in Africa.

Therefore, there is a great need in our seminaries and other theological institutions to stress personal spiritual formation. If we turn out good exegetes and good theologians and good preachers and good administrators but they are not also godly people, we will create churches like Ephesus, Sardis and Laodicea. Therefore, we must make sure that our theological education includes those personal spiritual exercises such as worship, prayer and personal Bible study. Our chapel services must not be just routine events that give our students a break from their normal academic engagements. They should be warm and engaging and should receive the most careful planning and implementation. Let us not contribute to the popular myth that serious academic study will result in spiritual deadness.

## Conclusion

The church in Africa has reached an advanced level of spiritual and organizational maturity. It now stands tall and strong as a mature church. However, this has serious implications. It means those of us involved in theological education must reevaluate how we are preparing the next generation of Christian leaders. Will our theological education continue to mature along with the church as a whole or will we continue to provide third generation training for a fourth generation church?

*Appendix 100:*

# Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance

## Study Guide[1]

## (Teacher's Edition)

[1]The Creed itself is reproduced fully in an inset at the end of chapter 5.

# Christian Association of Nigeria

# Preface

The return to civil rule in 1999 came rather suddenly. Though it was an answer to much prayer, many Christians did not have enough time to prepare for it. As a result, we were plunged into government without much reflection. Such reflection should have included what government is, what the roles of those in government and those being governed are. It would also have included how we identify, select, support and hold accountable those who rule us. Unfortunately, we did not prepare properly because we seemed to have been rushed into the new situation.

This rush left us reacting to whatever we felt were the errors and mistakes of those who were actually ruling us. Such reactions have not brought the hoped for change. Many parts of the nation seem to continue its slide along the path marked by corruption, violence, disease and poverty.

The time has now come to pause from the rush and reflect. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) is leading this reflection through the publication of the *Nigerian Christian Creed on Governance*. This is a statement of what Christians believe should be their role in government. This creed is based on what the Bible teaches.

In order to help Nigerian Christians understand the creed, the Christian Association of Nigeria is now publishing the Creed and this helpful Study Guide. As the name suggests, it is a guide for studying the *Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance*. It is expected that it will be studied in groups so that the participants will benefit from one another's views. Like the creed itself, the Study Guide is based on the scriptures.

It is our prayer that this study will lead to much repentance and transformation among Christians. We trust the Lord that as a result, politics and governance in Nigeria will begin to improve along the lines taught in the Holy Bible. When this happens, the country will be lifted high because of the righteousness that will result in the lives of those who put what this creed teaches into practice. "*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*" (Pr 14:34).

# Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance

*We, the Christians of Nigeria, believe that government is ordained by God to provide justice and security for its people, encourage and facilitate development, and protect and manage its resources. Since government is an agent of God, it must always be respected, supported and obeyed, unless it conflicts with the Law of God. We believe, therefore, that Christians must actively participate in the political process to ensure that government is just, transparent and efficient.*

*We recognize that governance is an honourable service to humanity. Thus, we believe Christians should actively seek public office and reflect the beliefs of their faith in their public service as much as in their private lives. We insist that our politicians should be completely honest and fair in the fulfilment of their duties. This means that:*

- *They must not make promises that they know they cannot fulfil.*
- *They must take nothing from the government for their personal use other than what has been legitimately approved.*
- *They must not use their offices to give unfair favours to relatives, friends or others.*
- *They must not give or accept bribes, favours, positions, honours or any other benefit that would compromise fairness in fulfilling their duties.*
- *They must seek the prayers and advice of the Body of Christ and regularly report to its leaders their roles in government.*

*We insist that only those persons with records of excellence in their private lives should be selected for public service and*

*that integrity, efficiency, and good management characterize all public servants.*

*We, the governed, acknowledge our responsibilities in governance as well. It is our duty to register and vote in all elections. We can have even greater influence in government by joining and actively participating in political parties.*

- *We must support and encourage our most honourable and competent leaders to seek public office.*
- *We must provide our elected representatives with our opinions about public issues.*
- *We must pray for and submit ourselves to the authority of our rulers.*
- *We must pay taxes so that government can fulfil its rightful responsibilities.*
- *We must refuse to allow ourselves to develop improper expectations from those government employees close to us. This means that we must reject the commonly held view that when "our people" occupy key positions, it is time for us to "get our slice of the national cake."*

*We, the Christians of Nigeria recognize that in the past, we have not always played our expected roles as "salt and light" in governance. We admit that many Christian public servants have joined in corruption and added to inefficiency in government. We collectively repent of these failures and ask God to forgive us. We commit ourselves to promote the most honest, just and efficient government possible. We will respect, support and defend all honourable people who occupy public offices, regardless of religion, gender, place of origin, or political affiliation. We will demand accountability and transparency of all public office holders, especially those who are part of the Christian faith. We will seek to have a*

*government that glorifies God. In the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## Lesson 1 – Biblical Understanding of Governance

*We, the Christians of Nigeria, believe that government has been ordained by God to provide justice and security for its people, encourage development and protect and manage its resources. Since government is an agent of God, it must be respected, supported and obeyed, unless it conflicts with the Law of God. We believe, therefore, that Christians must actively participate in the political process to ensure that government is just, transparent and efficient.*

### Lesson Objectives

1. To understand that government is a creation of God.
2. To understand the responsibilities outlined in the Bible about the nature and purpose of government
3. To understand the Biblical expectations regarding the general responsibilities of citizens to government.

### Introduction

Many people often see government as "others". When they think of the government, they exclude themselves from the picture. Therefore, though people feel free to criticize the shortcomings of the government, they often do not see that they have any direct role in improving the situation. However, The Bible does teach that Christians must be involved in every part of life including the government.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, we read that amazing promise of God,

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their*

*wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Though this verse particularly addressed the people of Israel, it demonstrates that God is concerned about nations and that God responds to the prayers of His people for the health of their nations. One may argue that this Scripture cannot apply here because not all Nigerians are Christians. However, when we remember the promise of God to Abraham to spare the people of Sodom if only ten righteous people were found (Ge 18:16-32), we believe that God will indeed spare and even bless a nation because of the righteousness of the believers. This is a clear indication that Christians need to intervene to ensure good governance in Nigeria.

## Definition of Government

Government is the organization which protects, provides services and supervises the affairs of a group of people who are organized into a legally identifiable body. Here in Nigeria, there are three tires of government, the Federal, the state and the local governments respectively. In general, each of these is made up of three branches. At the federal level, the executive branch consists of the President, his cabinet and the appointed officials who work closely with him. The federal government also includes the National Assembly, which makes the laws, and the judicial body that interprets and adjudicates on them. State and local government includes all elected officials such as governors, legislators, judges, local government politicians and the appointees who work for them. In a broader sense, the government includes all those who are employed by the government including those in the civil, judicial, military and other public services.

## Types of Governments

Many different types of government are described in the Bible. The type of government that we practice in Nigeria is democratic federalism. However, there is no particular type of government that is specifically ordained by God for all people. A theocracy or direct rule by God would obviously be the most desirable form of government. However, in a theocracy people have to interpret the voice of God and human beings are always capable of mistakes. So it is impossible to have a pure theocracy. In the Old Testament God allowed for a monarchy but there were several other forms of government that functioned in that time period as well. Note these examples:

- Theocracy – government by God (Ex 19:3-8; Dt 26:16-19; 29:1-13; Jdg 8:23; 1Sa 8:6-7; 10:19; 12:12; Isa 33:22).
- Patriarchy – government by a family head (Ge 27:29, 37).
- Monarchy – government by a king; Note these examples: Pharaoh (Ex 1:8-22; 2:23, etc.); Israel under Saul (1Sa 10:24-25; 11:14-15 and David (2Sa 5:1-4). Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar (Da 1:10; 2:5-13; 3:1-6 5:18-19); Persia under Xerxes (Est 1:1-4, 11-12; 19-22; 3:6-15); Herod (Mk 6:17-20, 27-28).
- Municipality – government by a council of elders (Dt 19:11-12; 21:2-8; Jos 20:4; Ru 4:2-11).
- Democracy – government by elected officials (See grassroots level democracies in Dt 1:13-15; Jos 9:11).

Jesus and his disciples lived in Palestine, a political entity being governed by a weak Jewish government that was under the domination of the Roman government. Christianity spread into various city states and other local or regional governments, all of which were under the direct control of Rome. The Roman government was an empire (a form of monarchy), which was a strong central government that had many smaller nations under its control. The government was often harsh on the governed and

generally ruled people for the interest of Rome, not the people's interest. It was this type of government to which Paul and Peter declared that Christians should be subject (Ro 13:1; 1Pe 2:13).

The Bible says *"there is no authority except that which God has established"* (Ro 13:1). It further states that God *"sets up kings and deposes them"* (Da 2:21). That means that God is somehow involved in the selection of governments good or bad. Bad governments may be a part of God's judgement upon people (Isa 7:17-20; Eze 22:1-5, 13-16; Am 9:8-10). Good governments may arise as a response to the prayers of God's people (2Ch 7:14). These thoughts should cause believers to do two things. First, we should regularly pray for our nation, asking God to give us good leaders. Second, we should recognise that God is in control of all things and will even use bad rulers to accomplish His will (Ro 8:28).

Assyria and Babylon were barbaric and repressive nations. They took the Israelites into captivity and caused immense sufferings. However, some good things resulted from these bad governments. First, the Babylonian Captivity forever cured the Israelites of idolatry. Second, the dispersion of the Israelites all over the Mediterranean world was a part of the preparation for the coming of Christ. As the early missionaries moved from place to place they found pockets of Jews who were always willing to give them a place to stay and to listen to the new message they were presenting. This means that even if one has a bad government, God is still in control of things and can use that government to accomplish His will.

The issue of the best political form of government does not arise in the Bible. What is clear is that the issue of government is ordained by God and that God can use any kind of government to accomplish His purposes. Therefore, the appropriate form of

government for any individual nation must be determined by other factors.

## Responsibilities of Government

What does a government do? What are the basic responsibilities of government? What is the purpose of government? Though there are many opinions about this issue, there is general agreement that government exists for the promotion of the well being of all in society. By nature, each individual seeks his or her own personal well-being. In order to optimise that well being, most people are willing to submit themselves to regulations made on behalf of the entire society. Those persons who are specifically selected to make or supervise the observance of such regulations constitute the government.

## 1. Provide Infrastructure for Development

One responsibility of government is to provide the necessary infrastructures and facilities for people to be able to live healthy, productive and successful lives. For example, private individuals cannot provide roads to all the places they will need to go. It is not realistic for private individuals to provide all of the schools, clinics, and other facilities that serve the general public. Therefore, government must help to create and maintain those facilities and programmes that will be used by all of the people. In the same context referred to above, the Apostle Paul wrote, *"For he* (government) *is God's servant to do you good"* (**Rom. 13:4a).** In other words, one of the basic responsibilities of any government is to provide those good things that will lead to a better life.

An example of this is when Joseph was serving in the Egyptian government. During the years of plenty, he supervised the collection and storage of the grain so that there would be food

available during the famine years (Ge 41:46-49, 53-57). Very few private individuals would have been able to store enough for themselves for the seven years of famine but government was able to do so successfully.

## 2. Manage Resources

A second important responsibility of government is to manage the natural and human resources that God has given to us. In fact, this was one of the first responsibilities that God gave to humanity at creation. God said, *"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground"* (Ge 1:26, 28). Later, when God gave Moses the Law, he gave specific instructions about the way natural resources should be treated even during a time of war:

> *When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees of the field people, that you should besiege them? However, you may cut down trees that you know are not fruit trees and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls* (Dt 20:19-20).

Each human being has a responsibility to take care of the part of the earth in which he or she lives. However, because of the government's supervision of all areas of life, it has the greater responsibility to preserve, protect and manage natural resources. For example, government must pass and enforce laws that relate to polluting the air and polluting the public water resources. The Nigerian government must recognize that the oil reserves will not last forever. Therefore, they must be used judiciously and protected as much as possible for future generations.

## 3. Provide Law and Order

One of the important responsibilities of government is the maintenance of law and order. Peter declares that kings and governors are *"sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right"* (1Pe 2:13-14). Paul adds that government's responsibility is *"to bring punishment on the wrongdoer"* (Ro 13:4). In a society where there are many people, there must be rules and laws to govern that society and there must be some entity that has the responsibility to make and enforce those rules.

## 4. Implement Justice

A related responsibility of government is to provide justice in society. Paul declares, *"For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you"* (Ro 13:3). Justice is simply doing the right thing. It is refusing to do the wrong thing and refusing to allow others to do wrong. Justice in government means that laws are enforced fairly and opportunities are made available equally. It means that there is to be no discrimination against any citizen based upon religion, race, gender or ethnic background. For example, it is wrong for a government official to bypass the normal contract process in order to award a contract to a friend or relative. It is wrong for some people in society to be imprisoned for their offences while others who had done the same things go free because they either know someone in authority or they bribed their way to freedom.

## Responsibilities to Government

This topic will be developed in more detail in a later lesson. However, the citizens of a country have a responsibility to honour those who are political leaders (Ro 13:7; 1Pe 2:17), submit to the authority of the proper constituted government (Ro 13:1, 5) and participate in the political process. For example, Jesus said *"everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded"* (Lk 12:48). In a democracy such as Nigeria, every citizen has been given the right to have input into the government. This is done by giving counsel and opinions to elected officials, registering and voting, and holding public servants accountable for their actions.

Christians must resist the temptation to view government as an enemy that must be resisted, manipulated or ignored. Although government agents sometimes overstep their boundaries and abuse their offices, government has been given many noble and honourable responsibilities and there are many people who fulfil those responsibilities in an honourable fashion.

## Characteristics of Good Government

The issue of good governance must be an area of serious concern for all Christians. Good governance is two primarily dimensional.

### Efficient Administration

The first characteristic of a good government is efficient administration. Governmental activities must be carried out in a predictable, economic and just manner. In addition, no matter how good and honest and noble the political officers may be, if they are not effective administrators, the people will not have good government.

- There is good governance when the needs and well-being of the citizens are taken care of.
- There is good government when the needs people cannot provide for themselves are supplied through government intervention.
- There is good government when there is a healthy infrastructure that enables people to travel, communicate, receive an education, have sufficient food and security, and enjoy opportunities to develop themselves and their communities.
- There is good government when the judicial system handles cases efficiently and fairly.
- There is good government when people are protected from violence, ill-health and discrimination.

## Ethical Administration

Second, good governance relates to the manner in which the officials do their work. Good government means that all discussions, interactions and decisions are carried out in the highest ethical manner. It is counter-productive to seek the well-being of the people by taking away the basic rights of the people through improper means. For example, it is wrong for government agents such as policemen or customs officers to harass and abuse innocent travellers in the guise of protecting the nation from armed robbers and smugglers. It is wrong for government officials to use government money to build their personal houses, entertain their private guests and provide themselves with other goods and services in the guise of serving the people. Governments must therefore be humane, fair and just while striving to promote the well being of all in society.

Unfortunately, not all governments are characterized by these qualities. What are some examples of bad government?

- There is poor government when resources are wasted or stolen by those who hold them in trust on behalf of the people.
- There is poor government when government officials have to receive bribes before they perform their official duties.
- There is poor government when contracts are awarded to those who do not deserve them.
- There is poor government when government employs "ghost workers" who steal the money that should be used for legitimate government functions.
- There is poor government when there is lawlessness and indiscipline in the society.
- There is poor government when governmental officers live in opulent wealth while the masses live in abject poverty.

**Efficient and Ethical Administrators**

How can one have good government? The only way to have good government is to have good people who govern. Good government is simply having good people govern. What are the characteristics of those "good people" who run governments?

**1. Good public servants represent the interests of their people.**

Most of the countries in the world today are based upon some form of democracy which means they are ultimately ruled by the citizens themselves. This is done through elected representatives who will attempt to understand and implement the will of the people. Unfortunately, some politicians only interact with the people at election time. However, the good politician is the one

who stays in touch with his constituents. The wise man declared in Proverbs 11:14: *"For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure."* Obviously, politicians will hear many conflicting voices from their constituents. However, it is when they get multiple opinions from the grassroots that they are likely to make the best decisions.

### 2. Good public servants provide appropriate services to their people.

After Solomon died, Rehoboam was crowned king. He consulted the elders for advice. These older men, who had served his father for a long time and gained a lot of wisdom, said, *"If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favourable answer, they will always be your servants"* (1Ki 12:7). What did these wise old men mean? Was Rehoboam to set aside his royal robes and serve their food or wash their feet? No, they were advising that King Rehoboam, as the person leading the government, should ensure that the government was serving the people—that the government was providing those goods and services to the people that would make their lives easier and more fulfilling. Unfortunately Rehoboam did not listen to this wise counsel. He laid an oppressive yoke on the people and lost most of his kingdom.

This is wise advice for any government today. Those in positions of responsibility should always remember that they are "public *servants*." Therefore, they are to serve the people.

### 3. Good public servants use government resources wisely.

Public officials are the ones responsible to see that the combined assets of the nation, which are jointly owned by all the people of that nation, are fairly and efficiently used. Jesus told

several stories about "stewards." These were servants who managed the households or the businesses of their masters. The assets they managed were not their own. The characteristic of a good steward was that he worked hard to protect and improve the assets of his master and did not take advantage of his situation to enrich himself (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27). All public servants then, must remember that they are called to be good stewards of the resources of the nation, and to always be reminded that those assets do not belong to them but to all the people.

### 4. Good public servants avoid arrogant treatment of their constituents.

As wise as Solomon was in many ways, he was apparently a harsh and demanding ruler (1Ki 12:4; 2Ch 10:4). This was not unusual. Pharaoh was a harsh taskmaster to the Israelites when they lived in Egypt (Ex 1:11-14). Ahab was a bully who was willing to use his position to steal from the common people (1Ki 21:1-25) Herod the Great was a ruthless violent king (Mt 2:16) and his sons Archelaus (Mt 2:22) and Antipas (Mt 14:3-12) followed in his footsteps.

On the other hand, we have examples of very good rulers described in the Bible. David was concerned about the citizens in his nation (2Sa 24:17). He would not use his position to get special favours for himself (23:16-17) and was even willing to forgive the offences of his citizens (19:16-23). Nehemiah worked on the wall with all the other workers (Ne 4:23; 5:16) and ate the same food everyone else ate (5:14-15). Daniel was perhaps the most outstanding government official in the Bible. His fellow public servants, who sometimes felt threatened by him, *"could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent"* (Da 6:4). These rulers demonstrated kindness and compassion and were happy to identify themselves with the common people.

## Conclusion

Christians should always show interest in those who govern them and in how they are governed. Through praying, participating in the political process, knowing and insisting on their rights, as well as keeping the laws and serving others, they should influence the performance of government. If true Christians participate in government, it will be good governance.

## Study Questions

1. Give a definition of government. Describe several types of government that are found in the Bible.
2. List four specific responsibilities of government and give scriptures to support them. Give specific examples of those responsibilities in our nation.
3. What are the two major characteristics of good governance? Give specific examples of good governance in our nation. Give specific examples of poor governance in our nation.
4. Describe some examples of good ethics in government. Describe some examples of bad ethics in government.
5. Give three examples of good public servants in the Bible. Give three examples of bad public servants in the Bible.

## Lesson 2 – Responsibilities of Public Servants

*We recognize that governance is an honourable service to humanity. Thus, we believe Christians should actively seek public office and reflect the beliefs of their faith in their public service as much as in their private lives. We insist that our politicians should be completely honest and fair in the fulfilment of their duties. This means that*

- *They must not make promises that they know they cannot fulfil.*
- *They must take nothing from the government for their personal use other than what has been legitimately approved.*
- *They must not use their offices to give unfair favours to relatives, friends or others.*
- *They must not give or accept bribes, favours, positions, honours or any other benefit that would compromise fairness in fulfilling their duties.*
- *They must seek the prayers and advice of the Body of Christ and regularly report to its leaders their roles in government.*

*We insist that only those persons with records of excellence in their private lives should be selected for public service and that integrity, efficiency, and good management characterize all public servants.*

## Lesson Objectives

1. To understand the Biblical responsibilities of public servants.
2. To outline Christian expectations of public servants.
3. To recognize our responsibility to encourage honourable people to seek public office.

4. To articulate and warn against the abuses of public office.
5. To encourage Christians to demand excellence of public officials.

## Introduction

Should Christians be involved in politics or public service? Is politics so "dirty" that Christians should have nothing to do with it?

Those who argue against the participation of Christians in active politics usually point out that many Christians who become politicians tend to backslide from righteous living. They also state that the Body of Christ suffers disrepute as a result of such bad examples. However, are these good enough reasons for Christians to isolate themselves from the political process.

## Reasons why Christians Should Be in Public Service

## 1. Serving in Government Is Supported in Scripture.

One of the early revelations of God found in the Bible is the promise that God was going to create a great nation through Abraham (Ge 12:1-2). After that, many, if not most of the major characters in the Old Testament were political leaders. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all patriarchs, which means that they were the heads of a patriarchal form of government. Joseph served like a prime minister in Egypt. Moses was the leader of the people of Israel in what could be considered a theocratic form of government. Joshua was a military leader and the successor of Moses. All of the judges were regional military leaders who also served as regional political leaders. Samuel was not a political leader but was the one who initiated the monarchy in Israel by anointing Saul as the first king. The rest of the Old Testament is

filled with kings like David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Ahab and dozens of others. Daniel, who is perhaps the most "unstained" character in the Old Testament, was a top government official in a foreign country and above reproach. Nehemiah was an outstanding governor. Of course, the Old Testament was filled with priests and prophets but no one can deny the significant number of "saints" involved in government.

In addition to these examples, there are many teachings in the Bible about government and political leaders. We are told not to curse or speak evil about rulers (Ex 22:28). The Bible states God raises up leaders and puts down leaders (Da 2:21; Jn 19:11; Ro 13:1). Isaiah tells us that the king of Assyria was God's *razor* (7:20) and King Cyrus was God's *"shepherd"* (44:28) and *"anointed"* (45:1). The Book of Proverbs gives us specific information about good and bad rulers:

- A king loves a wise servant (14:35).
- A king speaks as an oracle of God (16:10).
- A wise king does not tolerate the wicked (20:26).
- The king's throne is made secure through love and loyalty (20:28).
- A ruler is persuaded through patience (25:15).
- An oppressive ruler is like a driving rain that ruins crops (28:3).
- A tyrannical ruler lacks judgment (28:16).
- A king gives stability to his nation through justice (29:4).
- A king secures his throne for himself through treating the poor fairly (29:14).

With this amount of Biblical information devoted to governance, one can be assured that God is pleased when His servants seek and serve in political offices.

## 2. Serving in Government Is Our God-Given Responsibility.

God does not call every person to be a public servant. However, He does call the Body of Christ as a whole to be engaged with the world. Jesus declared that His followers would be *"the salt of the world"* (Mt 5:13) and *"the light of the world"* (5:14). These metaphors imply engagement in every part of society. Salt does no good if it remains in the salt bag. The Lord described to David the importance of a righteous ruler: *"When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth"* (2Sa 23:3-4). The followers of Christ are people of righteousness. Therefore, if we want to have a righteous society, we must make sure there are righteous people in government.

If Christians do not participate in the political process, they lose representation in decisions that will affect them. In addition, for Christians not to participate in the political process is to leave the government in the hands of unrighteous people. Such a situation could spell tragedy for the nation. James says *"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins"* (4:17).

## 3. Serving in Government Is a Privilege.

Government service is not only a responsibility, it is a privilege. People in public office get to meet many people and make many friends which is one of the privileges of life (Ecc 4:9-12). Government officials get to learn more about society than most people and learning is a great privilege (Pr 25:2). Government officials are able to influence society more than ordinary people and that too is a privilege (Da 2:49). Public servants normally receive honour and respect and that usually makes one feel good (Ro 13:7).

## 4. Righteous Public Servants Make a Better Nation.

The true followers of Jesus are honest, fair, compassionate, humble and hard-working people. These are the qualities necessary for good governance. The wise man declared, *"When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan"* (Pr 29:2). Therefore, those Christians who possess positive ethical qualities should be encouraged to volunteer for public service. An American proverb says "The only thing needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Government is a big responsibility with many assets. If godly people do not take up their responsibility to serve in government, ungodly people are going to do so and they are going to misuse the assets of the nation.

### Characteristics of Good Public Servants

What are the marks of a good public servant? Interestingly, a group of public servants came to John the Baptist and asked him a similar question. John outlined two essential qualities of those who serve the public.

## 1. Good Public Servants Are Honest.

The tax collectors asked John what they should do. John replied, *"Don't collect any more than you are required to do"* (Lk 3:13). The soldiers asked a similar question and John replied, *"Don't extort money"* (3:14). Tax-collectors throughout history have sometimes added their "share" onto the taxes that were demanded by government. It is wrong for a civil servant to force a person to pay not only his taxes but also to add something extra before he will give a proper tax clearance certificate. Soldiers are equally notorious for extortion. They are even more dangerous because they carry arms. It is immoral and cowardly for soldiers and policemen to intimidate unarmed

innocent civilians and demand that they provide them with "kola." If it was wrong in the days of John the Baptist, it is wrong today.

Unfortunately, there is so much corruption in the public service. Extortion, bribery and stealing are often considered normal. Anyone who tries to live by Christian principles risks swimming against the tide. Such a person often suffers greatly. The Bible deals with such problems by reminding us that suffering for what is right is a part of what it means to be a Christian (2Ti 3:12; 1Pe 2:18-21; 4:12-16). It is a privilege to suffer for doing right and, in fact, is a way that we identify with Christ (Ro 8:17; Php 3:10).

Honesty not only deals with property, it also deals with our words. To be honest means to always speak the truth. One of the Ten Commandments says, *"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour"* (Ex 20:16). Lying and deception are consistently condemned in Scripture (Pr 14:5; 24:28; Jn 8:44; Col 3:9). Public officials must resist the temptation to shade the truth to get into office or stay in office or accomplish the things they want to do in office. One specific temptation that public officials face is the tendency to promise more than they can produce. The Mosaic Law held that vows were so important that 15 verses were devoted to keeping oaths (Nu 30:1-15). The psalmist asked the question, *"LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?"* (15:1) and then partially answered the question four verses later: "(he) *who keeps his oath even when it hurts"* (15:4).

Honesty is a part of integrity, which is the part of character that enables a person to make right decisions and reject wrong decisions. To be the kind of public servant that will honour God, one has to be completely honest.

### 2. Good Public Servants are Content with their Wages.

A second thing John said to the soldiers was *"be content with your pay"* (Lk 3:14). Having a love for material things is one of the biggest reasons why soldiers and others try to extort money. The solution to this problem is to live by faith (Mt 6:33; Php 4:19). Testimonies abound of people who sought God's kingdom and His righteousness before their own individual needs, and who had their needs supernaturally supplied. Paul wrote:

> *I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength* (Php 4:11-13).

Most people know that the pay for public employees is rather mediocre. If a person cannot live on the salary and benefits paid by the government, he or she should seek other employment. Once you become a public servant, John's demand is that you must be content.

In addition to these two qualities outlined by John the Baptist, there are a number of other things that should characterize those who serve the public.

### 3. Good Public Servants View Themselves as Servants of Others.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of good public officials is that they view themselves as servants to their constituents. When Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, became

king, he invited the old men and the young men to advise him about the way he should rule his kingdom. The old men who had lived long, gave him very good advice. *"If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favourable answer, they will always be your servants"* (1Ki 12:7). Rehoboam chose to follow the advice of the young men who said, *"Tell these people . . . My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it heavier"* (1Ki 12:10-11). Rehoboam decided that he would rather have his people serve him than serve them. The result was that ten of the twelve tribes rebelled against him and formed a new nation. Thus, his failure to serve the people devastated the kingdom.

To serve was Jesus' definition of leadership. True leaders regard as their primary concern the welfare of others rather than their own comfort and prestige. Jesus is the perfect model of a servant leader. In fact He said about Himself, *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"* (Mk 10:45). The implication of Jesus being our exemplary leader is that we do what He wishes, what He does and we follow His example (Php 2:5-8).

Whenever public officials view their jobs more as positions of honour than positions of service, they have ceased to be true leaders and have become opportunists. When leaders focus more on privileges than responsibilities they have lost the right to lead others.

## 4. Good Public Servants Work Hard to Accomplish Their Goals.

A good leader is always a hard worker. When God chose Saul as the first king of Israel, He chose a man who was busy (1Sa 9:1-10:8). When God chose Nehemiah to be the re-builder

and governor of Jerusalem, He chose a man who already had a responsible job in the royal palace (Ne 1:11). When Jesus selected His disciples, He found men who knew how to work. Peter and Andrew were busy fishing (Mt 4:18-20). James and John were repairing nets (Mt 4:21-22). Matthew was busy collecting taxes. Paul's rule of life was, *"If a man will not work, he shall not eat"* (2Th 3:10b).

Jesus told a story about a man who had three servants with whom he left possessions and money. While he was gone, two worked hard to increase the assets but one was either fearful or lazy and did nothing. Jesus commended the hard workers and condemned the lazy man (Mt 25:14-30). The goal of leaders is not to become such big men that others will do all their work for them. The goal of leaders is to work very hard so they can help lift up the people under their leadership. Their work may be of a different kind than those working under them but they are to be just as busy and use just as much energy as their workers.

## 5. Good Public Servants Take Advice from Others.

Though God gives the ability to make good decisions to political leaders, no public servant knows so much that he or she does not need the advice of wise people. Proverbs 11:14 declares, *"For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure."* The Bible is full of accounts of government officials who sought and took advice from others. Pharaoh took advice from Joseph (Ge 41:9-40). Moses took advice from his father-in-law (Ex 18:13-27). King Belteshazzar took advice from Daniel (Da 4:27). The Sanhedrin heeded the wise counsel given by Gamaliel (Ac 5:34-40). Unfortunately, there are also examples of leaders who received and followed bad advice in the Bible. As mentioned earlier, Rehoboam followed the rash advice of the young men rather than the wise advice of the old men (1Ki 12:10). Ahab listened to the voice of his wife who

encouraged him to be dishonest and unjust (1Ki 21:4-16). On the other hand, Pilate refused to take the good advice given to him by his wife (Mt 27:19).

One of the qualities of wise officials is that they actively seek advice of honourable people and they have the courage and humility to follow it. Those who refuse to listen to the opinions of others will fall victim to their own weaknesses, for no one knows everything.

## 6. Good Public Servants Are Accountable for Their Actions.

Weak leaders attempt to shift the blame to others when something goes wrong. Adam blamed Eve for his actions (Ge 3:12). Esau blamed the loss of his birthright on his brother (27:36). Saul blamed his disobedience on his soldiers (1Sa 15:15). However, David took responsibility for his own sin and requested that he alone be judged (2Sa 24:17). Jonah said *"it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you"* (Jonah 1:12). People of character are always willing to take responsibility for their actions.

Not only should public servants take full responsibility for their mistakes and failures, they should make themselves accountable to their constituents. When they were contesting for office, they made certain promises. The good public servant is going to eventually ask his constituents to evaluate how successful he or she has been.

## 7. Good Public Servants Are Excellent in Their Professions.

Daniel was such an outstanding public servant because *"an excellent spirit was found in him"* (Da 6:3 KJV). To be a good public servant, it is not good enough just to be honest and faithful; one must also be competent and efficient. There is no

substitute for being good at what you do. There are two verses in Colossians that describe the attitude that Christian public servants need to have in their work:

- 3: 17: *"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*
- 3:23: *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."*

If public servants do all that they do in the name of Jesus and with all their hearts, they are going to be good examples for others to follow. Peter declared, *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps"* (1Pe 2:21). The Apostle Paul declared, *"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ"* (1Co 11:1). When public servants are willing to make the same sacrifices that their constituents make, it is easy to support such people.

During one of England's many wars, two armies fought a very bloody battle. One of the armies was led by a king who stayed safely in the rear, directing his soldiers to strategic places and observing the action from a hillside which overlooked the battlefield. The other army was led by a king named William who personally led his men in the battle. He mixed his own blood with theirs. He took all the risks that they took. He observed all of the horror of war from the front lines and his effort proved to be successful. He defeated the other army. After the conquered army had surrendered, one of the defeated soldiers shouted over to the conquering enemy, "Give us your king and we will fight you all over again." The enemy recognized that the opposing army had won because of the selfless leadership of their king.

## Temptations of Public Servants

Because leaders are given great honour and because they often have access to material things, leaders face special kinds of temptations.

### 1. Public Servants Are Tempted to Use Their Positions to Feed Their Pride.

A great danger that public servants face is pride—the desire to be admired and respected. Political leaders enjoy being treated better than the average person. Part of the reward of leadership is the special honours that are given. However, the Bible tells us that God hates pride (Pr 8:13). James wrote, *"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"* (4:6). Pride causes men and women to act foolishly and leads to shame. Proverbs 11:2 says, *"When pride comes then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."* Public servants often make decisions to make themselves look important in the eyes of their subordinates and their friends and family members. Political leaders are often guilty of two social sins in order to make themselves look good.

### Nepotism

Nepotism is giving unfair preference to one's relatives in the distribution of public positions, favours or property. One of the most important qualities of any leader is fairness and justice. He or she must treat all constituents fairly. However, when one gives special consideration to family members, he or she is guilty of nepotism. When a local government chairman gives a contract to his "brother' even when a better qualified contractor is available, he is guilty of nepotism. It is often argued by immature and selfish people, "We need to get our own share while our brother is on the seat." This is a good example of carnal and worldly thinking.

**Tribalism**

Tribalism is giving unfair preference to members of one's own tribe or ethnic group in the distribution of public resources. Tribalism is extending the special favours beyond one's family to one's ethnic group. An old proverb says, "Blood is thicker than water." That means that we always feel closer to our own people than we do to another group of people. That is normal. However, the Bible has decreed that there is neither *"Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Gal 3:28). Justice means that leaders must be totally objective in their decisions. If someone from a different ethnic group is better qualified than someone from their own, they should give the job to the person of the other tribe. To deny a person a promotion because he or she is not from the right tribe or the right religion, is a great injustice and contrary to the teachings and practice of Christ.

God does not give positions of leadership and responsibility to exalt the leader but to enable that leader to serve his or her people. God warns, *"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Pr 16:18). Belshazzar was a very proud Persian king who controlled every part of the world he knew. However, Daniel had the sad responsibility to tell him, *"God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end . . . You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting"* (Da 5:26-27). That same night, the king was slain and another took his place. Those who only want positions of leadership to build up pride will be disappointed.

2. **Public Servants Are Tempted To Use Their Positions To Add to Their Possessions.**

Because public servants frequently supervise the distribution of money and other assets, they are tempted to divert some of these things to their personal benefit. Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, were guilty of this. Ahab wanted to take possession of a certain field. The owner refused to sell it to him. Therefore, Jezebel used Ahab's office as the king to acquire the field through illegal means (1Ki 21:1-16). The desire to have the field was motivated by selfish materialism. Ahab then misused his position as king to fulfil that desire. Unfortunately, Ahab is not the only person who has misused his position of leadership or authority to get something that did not belong to him.

The masses in Nigeria are not poor because the nation is poor. Nigeria is rich in terms of natural and human resources. However, very often the benefits from these resources do not get to their rightful owners, the citizens of Nigeria. They are stolen or diverted in some other way from their rightful owners to become the property of the leaders and managers who supervise their distribution. Many beautiful homes have been built through money given by the government to build a school or repair a road or purchase new equipment.

James warned rich people, many of whom would have been public servants, against taking advantage of the masses to build up their own possessions:

*Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter* (Jas 5:4-5).

Public servants must resist the temptation to enrich themselves at the expense of the people they are serving.

### 3. Public Servants Are Tempted to Use Their Positions to Enhance Their Power.

Whenever people get into positions of authority, they usually do not want to give up that position. Africa has had too many examples of "President-for-life"—men who became heads of state usually through the military and then refused to step down at the end of their term, even when they had to manipulate the people and the government to do so. This position feeds their pride; it makes them comfortable; it sets them apart from the common people. Therefore, leaders are tempted to lie, cheat, steal, threaten and even kill to keep that position of power. However, one must always remember that God *"changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them"* (Da 2:21).

### Examples of Godly People in Government

There are two outstanding examples of public servants in the Old Testament. The first was Nehemiah who became the governor of Judea and successfully rebuilt the walls and established security for the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah was characterized by courage, good organization, hard work, selflessness, discipline and compassion. The second example was Daniel who was actually an alien who served in strategic positions in a foreign government. Daniel is known for his honesty, competence, willingness to suffer for righteousness, faith and leadership. These two men provide some key qualities that are necessary for one to be successful in government. Christian politicians must share these same qualities. The must:

- They must maintain a meaningful Christian relationship at all times.
- They must possess an ability to practice righteousness under pressure.

- They must practice mutual open accountability with a body of believers.
- They must be prepared to suffer for the sake of the truth and righteousness.
- They must know for sure that God has called them to be involved in politics.
- They must have people pray for them while they seek and occupy public office.
- They must be prepared to lose their positions rather than to compromise their faith.

## Conclusion

Nehemiah and Daniel are outstanding examples of high level public servants who worked for non-Israelite governments. Esther is a wonderful example of a "first lady" who feared God and used her influence to promote justice in the kingdom. God is calling people today to follow the example of these outstanding Biblical characters. Christians are actually the most suited people in society for public service. They have the grace of God that enables them to live righteous and selfless lives. We believe that God is raising up a new generation of Nehemiahs and Daniels and Esthers in Nigeria today. If God places you in such a position, will you respond as they did?

Nigeria and the rest of the world need good political leaders who:

- Are servants.
- Cannot be bought.
- Know how to say no.
- Are larger than their jobs.
- Rank character above wealth.
- Do not hesitate to take chances.
- Will not compromise with injustice.

- Possess inner strength and will power.
- Will not lose their individuality in a crowd.
- Will be honest in small things as in great things.
- Will not "do it" because everybody else is "doing it."
- Are not afraid to stand for the truth when it is unpopular.
- Have ambitions not limited to their personal selfish desires.

## Study Questions

1. What are some of the reasons people often give for Christians not participating in politics?
2. Give Biblical evidence supporting Christians actively participating in politics and governance.
3. List characteristics of good public servants. Give Biblical evidence to support these characteristics.
4. What are some temptations of public servants? Give specific examples from our nation.
5. Give reasons why Nehemiah and Daniel were good public servants. What can we learn from them?

# Lesson 3 – Responsibilities of the Governed

*We, the governed, acknowledge our responsibilities in governance as well. It is our duty to register and vote in all elections. We can have even greater influence in government by joining and actively participating in political parties.*

- *We must support and encourage our most honourable and competent leaders to seek public office.*
- *We must provide our elected representatives with our opinions about public issues.*
- *We must pray for and submit ourselves to the authority of our rulers.*
- *We must pay taxes so that government can fulfil its rightful responsibilities.*
- *We must refuse to allow ourselves to develop improper expectations from those government employees close to us. This means that we must reject the commonly held view that when "our people" occupy key positions, it is time for us to "get our slice of the national cake."*

## Lesson Objectives

6. To recognize the God-ordained responsibilities of citizens to their governments.
7. To encourage Christians to participate in the political process.
8. To identify the wrong expectations of the governed and warn against them.

## Introduction

The vast majority of the people in the world are not nor will they ever be public servants. These are the people who either enjoy or endure the actions of their government officials. Does

the Bible have anything to say to this large group of people who are the governed? What are the specific roles that individual Christians should play in the government?

## Role of the Governed

Someone once said, "God must have loved the common people. That is why He made so many of them." As certainly as God made leaders to lead the followers, He has also made followers to follow the leaders. As certainly as God made public servants to run the government, He has also made people who make up the general public to be governed. Both of them have important roles.

When God gave the law to the nation of Israel through Moses, it was a comprehensive document. It addressed most of the major areas of life of the common people, including property rights (Nu 27:8; 33:54; Lev 25:23, 33; Dt 19:14), marriage laws (Ex 22:16-17; Dt 20:7 24:5), business principles (Lev 19:35-36; Dt 25:13-16), criminal laws (Ex 22:1-4, 13-16; Lev 6:1-7; Nu 35:9-31), interpersonal relationships (Ex 21:35-36; 22:5-15, 21-27); and certainly the individual and collective responsibilities to God (Ex 20:3-7; 22:28; 34:10-14; Dt 8:19-20; 12:4-7). The giving of the law itself was a recognition of the needs and responsibilities of the common people.

However, in addition to these general guidelines which help to control behaviour in communal living, the Bible outlines some specific responsibilities of the people toward their government.

## Responsibilities of the Governed

## 1. Submit to Government.

Perhaps the most basic responsibility a citizen has toward its government is to submit to and obey properly constituted government authorities. The Apostle Paul declares, *"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established"* (Ro 13:1, 5). Near the end of his life, when Paul was writing to pastors about their responsibilities, he wrote, *"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good"* (Tit 3:1). The Apostle Peter says almost the same thing:

> *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right* (1Pe 2:13-14).

These commands are valid whether the existing governmental authority is good or bad. It is common knowledge that the Roman authorities in New Testament times were tyrannical and yet these were the very authorities to which Paul demanded submission.

Are there any limitations to this requirement? Are there times when it would be appropriate to disobey a governmental authority? Yes, there are such times. If a government makes specific laws that are contrary to the laws of God, Christians must choose to disobey the government. When the Sanhedrin attempted to keep Peter from preaching about Jesus, he declared, *"We must obey God rather than men!"* (Ac 4:18-20; 5:29). As was the case with the three Hebrew young men (Da 3), whenever Christians have to disobey the government, they should be prepared to suffer the consequences. In doing so, we gain the blessings of God (1Pe 3:14).

## 2. Pray for Government.

One of the important roles of Christians in ensuring good governance is prayer. It is God who selects those in authority (Ro 13:1). Therefore, if Christians pray, God may choose to put in place people who will govern well. This prayer should be ongoing in nature (1Th 5:17). The tendency is for Christians to pray only when there is an oppressive, inefficient or corrupt government in office. We should pray always for those in authority (Ezra 6:10; Ps 72:15; 1Ti 2:1-2) as much as we are to pray for the right people to get into office. When Nehemiah heard about the awful conditions of his home government in Jerusalem, he started praying (Ne 1:4-11) and God heard his prayer.

God is concerned about His people on this earth and, therefore, He is concerned about the government that is placed over them. That means that He will be sensitive to the prayers of those who cry night and day for the health of their land (2Ch 7:14).

## 3. Pay Taxes.

Another responsibility of citizens is to pay the taxes that they owe to the government. Jesus demonstrated the importance of paying taxes by saying that we should render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar (Mt 22:16-22) and also encouraged Peter to seek for money to pay his taxes (Mt 17:24-27). Paul declares that government is God's servant and that is the reason we are to pay taxes to it (Ro 13:6). There is no example in the Bible when God's people are told to refuse to pay their taxes, even when the government was wicked and unjust. Few if any enjoy paying taxes. However, no government can function and fulfil the responsibilities that God has called it to do without money and that money comes from taxes its citizens pay.

## 4. Serve Government.

Two groups of civil servants came to John the Baptist and asked what they should do. To the tax collectors, John said, *"Don't collect any more than you are required to"* (Lk 3:13). The implication was that collecting taxes for the government was a legitimate job as long as there was not extortion or other forms of corruption involved. If collecting taxes is legitimate, then other forms of government work are also legitimate where the government employee is utilizing that tax money.

To the soldiers, John said, *"Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay"* (3:14). For those who have arms, like soldiers and policemen, it is easy to intimidate the common people and force them to pay illegal "taxes." This is clearly condemned by John. In addition, it is the common practice of practically all civil servants and other employees to complain about wages. John's advice was to learn to be content with what you have.

In neither case did Jesus tell these public servants to leave government service. Rather they were encouraged to serve the government well. King David, Nehemiah and Daniel are all outstanding examples of people who were top public servants of government. However, it is also necessary for others to serve. For example, some Christians will need to serve in the military and police force since one of the duties of government is to *"bring punishment on the wrongdoer"* (Ro 13:4). When Cornelius brought his family to Christ, he was not instructed to leave his service with the Roman army. Those who are given employment in government should serve honestly, faithfully and cheerfully.

## 5. Participate in the Political Process

Certainly not everyone can work for the government. However, everyone can have input. In a democracy, the people have a voice and some authority in government by participating in the political process. There is no example of Christians registering and voting in the Bible because there was no example of a democratic government in Bible times. However, Christians are told that they have a responsibility to use all assets that have been given to them. Jesus said, *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked"* (Lk 12:48). This means that if you have been given the opportunity to vote, which is something of value, you are expected to use it wisely. Therefore, Christians should register and vote.

In a democracy, citizens also have the right to share their opinions with their elected representatives. This is a right that should also be used conscientiously. In the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist is a good example of a person who took advantage of his right to criticize public officials (Mk 6:18). He did so at a great personal cost on his part. But he was not the only person in the New Testament who took advantage of that right.

Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten and thrown in prison in Philippi. The next day, the authorities discovered that they had done nothing worthy of imprisonment and also that they were Roman citizens. They sent word that the prisoners could be released. However, Paul refused to leave. He told those who had been sent to him, *"They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out"* (Ac 16:37). This caused real alarm among the officials because they knew they had violated the law and knew that they could be held accountable for their

actions. The behaviour of Paul and Silas in that situation indicates that Christians should know their rights as citizens. In this case, Paul resorted to a mild form of civil disobedience to ensure that these government officials respect their rights and the rights of others who would potentially be abused by the same officials.

## Sins of the Governed

We often complain about the faults and sins of those who govern us. However, we who are governed are also guilty of our own mistakes and failures.

### Wrong Expectations

The Bible says that *"the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil"* (1Ti 6:10a). It is almost as if Paul knew our contemporary situation for he added to that statement, *"Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs"* (6:10b). One of the biggest misunderstandings of the governed is that often they share with the politicians the same idea that government resources are to be used for personal benefit. Therefore, when their relatives or friends come into public office, these people often put pressure on "their" elected officials to use their offices to get them contracts or appointments or other benefits.

This is improper. Public servants have a responsibility to dispense government contracts and other benefits equally and fairly. It is unethical for a government official to use his or her position to give a relative or friend an advantage over someone else. To use one's influence to get an advantage for someone else is the same as using money to get an advantage and that is bribery. Therefore, Christians must resist the temptation to pressure their relatives in government for special favours.

**Low Expectations**

Another problem that the governed often have is a low expectation of government officials. We often assume that all public officials are corrupt and that they are going to follow their illegal and self-centred ways, regardless of what we do. It is certainly easy to fall into this way of thinking. However, we must not allow ourselves to be trapped into such thinking.

A good illustration of a person who refused to be intimidated by a politician was the lady from Tekoa whom Joab recruited to speak to King David about his son, Absalom. Had she been like the typical person she would have reasoned that the king would not listen to a person like her. However, she was willing to take the initiative and give good advice to David and refused to take no for an answer. And she eventually convinced David to bring his son, Absalom, back from exile (2Sa 14:1-21).

In the early 1960's, the State of Alabama in the USA had "segregation" laws which officially separated the races. For example, whites were allowed to sit in the front of the bus while blacks were required to sit in the back. If the white section filled up, the next seat became designated as a white seat also. One day a young African-American lady got on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama and sat on the fourth seat, the first of the seats designated for blacks. Eventually the white section filled up so the bus driver asked her to get up and move further back so the next white person could have her seat. She refused. The bus driver threatened to call the police but she still refused to move. Eventually she was arrested and taken to jail. That night, a black preacher organized a boycott of the busses of Montgomery, Alabama and the next day, all the white-owned busses were empty. The two principal characters in this story were Rosa Parks, the young black lady and the Rev. Martin Luther King,

Jr., a 26-year-old pastor. These people were not public servants nor were they "big people" in society. They were ordinary citizens who refused to have low expectations of government. Their actions inspired others to resist unjust laws and their combined resistance eventually changed the laws of the State of Alabama and the USA. These people refused to accept the corruption and evil in government and sincerely believed they could do something about it.

## Little Support

Being a politician is a tough assignment. There is often a lot of pressure to compromise or to make wrong decisions. When the pressure only comes from one side and our politicians receive little support and encouragement from the Church or other good people, it is easy to simply succumb to the pressure. However, God expects us to support those who are doing the right thing. Although this verse was given for a broader purpose, it certainly supports this point: *"And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone"* (1Th 5:14).

The Book of Ezra tells the story about the trouble that was brought upon the land as a result of the sin of the people in intermarrying with the local population, contrary to the will of God. Ezra the priest was so broken-hearted about this, that he wept and confessed the sin of the people before God. One Shecaniah said to him, *"Let it be done according to the Law. Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it"* (Ezra 10:3-4). Although Ezra was not a political figure, he was a leader who needed the support of the people to encourage him to do the right thing. He got the support he needed.

## Little Accountability

Because we have so little expectations of our government officials, we often refuse to hold our elected officials accountable for their actions. We often overlook raw corruption that involves bribery, extortion, embezzlement and other forms of dishonest financial practices. In addition, we often fail to challenge our politicians for their lack of professionalism and waste due to incompetence. In a democracy, all politicians are answerable to the people. So the people have a right and responsibility to demand accountability of all politicians. If they refuse to be accountable, the electorate has the right to remove them from office during the next election.

One of the saddest examples of lack of accountability in the Bible is the story of Eli and his sons. Eli was a priest, but in some ways, he functioned like a political leader, since he was a very public figure who served the nation Israel, a nation that claimed to be ruled by God. Eli was a pious man himself but he allowed his sons to become wicked (1Sa 2:12), greedy (2:15), contemptible (2:17), and immoral (2:22) without calling them to order or demanding any kind of accountability of them until it was too late (2:23-25; 3:13). The result was that they became more and more corrupt until God eventually allowed his judgement to fall on them and they were killed in battle (4:11). In addition, Eli himself died (4:18) and the Ark of the Covenant was captured (4:11) and removed from Israel for several years. There was much suffering in the land because of the sinful lifestyles of public servants who were not restrained.

Although citizens do not have unlimited power, we have more power than most of us use in calling to order those public servants who represent us in government. Many politicians are members of our families and residents of our villages and members of our church. We must not be intimidated by them. We must demand high morals from them and equally high

performance and we must hold them accountable when they do not produce those things.

## Conclusion

Just as God has standards for those who govern, He also has standards for those who are governed. If those who govern go astray, they will lead the people astray. However, if the governed also go astray, it does not matter how good their leaders are, they still will not enjoy God's blessings and favour. God is calling Christian citizens to take their responsibilities as those who are governed as seriously as those who govern.

## Study Questions

1. List some of the laws given in the Old Testament that have corresponding laws in our nation.
2. Explain the responsibilities that we have toward government. Give Biblical evidence to support these responsibilities.
3. Should we submit to bad governments? Give reasons. Should we submit to laws that contradict God's laws? Explain.
4. List some of the ways we can serve government.
5. What are some of the "sins" of the governed? Explain.

# Lesson 4 – Confession and Commitment

*We, the Christians of Nigeria recognize that in the past, we have not always played our expected roles as "salt and light" in governance. We admit that many Christian public servants have joined in corruption and added to inefficiency in government. We collectively repent of these failures and ask God to forgive us. We commit ourselves to promote the most honest, just and efficient government possible. We will respect, support and defend all honourable people who occupy public offices, regardless of religion, gender, place of origin, or political affiliation. We will demand accountability and transparency of all public office holders, especially those who are part of the Christian faith. We will seek to have a government that glorifies God. In the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## Objectives

1. To recognize, confess and repent of our past failures in governance.
2. To declare our public support for all honourable people serving in public offices.
3. To recognize and commit ourselves to demanding accountability and transparency of public officer holders.
4. To seek to bring honour to God in our governance.

## Introduction

Christianity is a religion based upon high moral standards and truth. Unfortunately, we Christians do not always meet up to those high standards. When we fail, truth demands that we recognize and admit our failures and change. Thus, confession and repentance are essential elements of the Christian faith.

## Importance of Confession

We will examine two important kinds of confession.

## Private Confession

The wise man declared, *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy"* (Pr 28:13). This suggests that it is important for God's people to live by God's high ethical standards. When we fail to do that it is important to acknowledge that error. John underscored this point when he said, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1Jn 1:9).

This truth is illustrated by the Apostle Paul. When he was defending himself before the Jewish Sanhedrin, someone instructed a bystander to strike Paul in the face. He said to the person, *"God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"* (Ac 23:3). Paul was informed that the person he had rebuked was the high priest. Paul quickly said, *"Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"* Paul was willing to admit his fault so that truth would not be compromised.

When we err from the truth, either in word and deed, we should not attempt to cover it up or to justify it. We should quickly acknowledge it. God is a God of forgiveness and human beings are also generally quite forgiving whenever there is an admission of wrong doing.

## Public Confession

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Public confession involves admitting one's error in a public manner. The general principle is that when there has been public sin, there should be public confession. In addition, when there has been group sin, someone needs to confess that sin on behalf of the group. Jeremiah was a prophet of God and, as such, was a holy man. However, when Israel sinned, he identified with them and felt that he, in some way, had contributed to their rebellion against God. It was this confession that caused him to pray, *"Let us lie down in our shame, and let our disgrace cover us. We have sinned against the LORD our God, both we and our fathers; from our youth till this day we have not obeyed the LORD our God"* (Jeremiah 3:25). He later prayed, *"Although our sins testify against us, O LORD, do something for the sake of your name. For our backsliding is great; we have sinned against you"* (14:7). Daniel, an equally great man of God, confessed the corporate sins of his people in a similar way:

*O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land* (Daniel 9:4-6; see also 9:8, 11, 14-15, 20).

Jeremiah and Daniel illustrate that nations or communities or other groups can be guilty of corporate sin and where there is such, there must be corporate confession and repentance. This kind of confession is done in a public place and though it may be done by one person, the implication is that this confession is on behalf of all of the people. This is the kind of prayer that is meant in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14:

*When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

God is calling for families and communities and churches and even the nation to declare a solemn assembly to confess the public and corporate sins we have committed. It is when people repent that God can forgive and release His blessings on them.

## Importance of Commitment

Just as it is important to publicly acknowledge when one has erred, it is also important to make public statements and commitments about future events. We call these vows or oaths. A vow is a public declaration about what one commits himself to doing. Perhaps the most well-known public declaration is the marriage covenant. This is a public proclamation that the man and woman will fulfil the laws of the marriage contract and their personal commitments to one another. Public vows are also given when a person is ordained into the ministry and even when a person accepts an office in the church. All public servants also make public oaths whenever they assume office.

The Bible takes oaths and vows very seriously. God even bound Himself by oaths (Ge 24:7; Ex 13:11; Nu 11:12; 14:16; Dt 4:31). Therefore, He expects us to take our oaths seriously. The Mosaic Law declared, *"When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said"* (Nu 30:2). The next 13 verses give specific instructions about oaths. Psalm 15 describes the person who is qualified to dwell in the Lord's sanctuary and live on His holy hill. One characteristic of that

person is that he is one *"who keeps his oath even when it hurts"* (15:4).

Why are oaths and public commitments important? There are several reasons.

First, they state very clearly what one is promising to do. Vows are usually quite specific. They outline exactly what one plans to do. Therefore, a vow becomes something of a sacred goal that one commits to reach.

Second, they provide greater motivation for fulfilment. If we make a secret commitment, we are less likely to fulfil that commitment than if we made it publicly. There is something about a public declaration that gives individuals the extra incentive to complete what they said that they would do.

Third, public vows and oaths encourage accountability. When we stand before God and a number of other people to declare what we intend to do, our honour and reputation are at stake if we refuse to fulfil our commitments. Public vows are an invitation to all who hear them to challenge us when they see us failing to commit those vows.

## Components of the Commitment

In the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance, there are several qualities that are mentioned to which the Christian community commits itself.

### Honesty

One of the essential characteristics of all honourable public servants is honesty. Public servants are elected or appointed to protect the interests of those they represent. Because these

persons work with property and assets that do not belong to them, they must be absolutely honest. The Apostle Paul declared, *"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful"* (1Co 4:2). Whenever people convert the assets of the community to their own use, they are stealing from that community. One of the fundamental truths of Christianity and, in fact, all religions, is contained in one of the Ten Commandments: *"You shall not steal"* (Ex 20:15). This simple command is expanded throughout the Bible. Many of the rulers of Israel and Judah were corrupt leaders who received warnings and later the judgement of God. For example, the Lord spoke through the prophet Habakkuk,

> *Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! . . . Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left will plunder you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them. Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!* (2:6, 8-9)

Public servants who violate the trust committed to them by diverting money and other assets to personal use are no better than common criminals who steal in the market or the car park. The Creed states that such behaviour is not acceptable for Christians and we will not tolerate such in our public servants.

**Justice**

Justice is an all encompassing word that refers to providing fair treatment, equal opportunities and responsibilities for all persons. Justice is somewhere near the centre of all ethical requirements. Justice is demanded all throughout the Bible. For example, the Law is summarized in this simple statement:

*"Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you"* (Dt 16:20).

Some applications of justice in government are commanded in the preceding verses:

*Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous* (16:18-19).

Anything that would cause judges or other government officials to be preferential in their treatment of certain persons is unjust. Note these key verses that relate to justice:

- Psalm 82:3: *Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.*
- Proverbs 21:3: *To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.*
- Proverbs 29:4: *By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.*
- Proverbs 29:14: *If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure.*
- Isaiah 56:1: *This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed."*

In both the Old and New Testaments, justice is elevated to one of the three most important qualities demanded of God's people.

- Micah 6:8: *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

- Matthew 23:23: *Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

What are examples of injustice in government? Injustice occurs when public servants:

- Take kickbacks from contracts.
- Give priority in contracts to friends.
- Demand bribes to perform a service.
- Fail to enforce laws because of bribes.
- Divert government money to personal use.
- Deny the rights of people because of ethnicity.

We as Christians must help our public servants understand justice. We must commit ourselves to being just in all our dealings and insist on justice in others.

**Efficiency**

Efficiency is doing one's work in a professional, competent and skilful manner. It is using resources to their maximum advantage. It is avoiding waste of resources, energy and time. It is summarized by the word excellent.

Being skilful in one's work is commended throughout the Bible. There are examples of people who were skilful in hunting (Ge 25:27), sowing (Ex 28:3), weaving (Ex 28:8; 35:25-26), building (Ex 31:3; 36:1), cutting timber (1Ki 5:6; 2Ch 2:8), metal work (1Ki 7:14; 1Ch 22:15), singing (1Ch 15:22; 25:7; Ps 33:3), military weapons (2Ch 26:15), seamanship (Eze 27:8), and trading (Eze 28:5). All of these skilled persons knew how to

do their jobs in such a way as to conserve the most energy, resources and time and yet produce an excellent service or product. Paul outlines two important qualities that should characterize all children of God. We are to do all things *"in the name of the Lord Jesus"* (Col 3:17) and *"with all of your heart"* (3:23). If we and our public servants do our work with that kind of motivation, we will work efficiently and successfully and will be characterized by excellence.

The opposite of efficiency is slothfulness and waste. The wise man declared, *"One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys"* (Pr 18:9). To avoid waste, one must plan wisely (Pr 6:6-8). Joseph, a public servant, did not waste the abundant harvest of the first seven years but preserved it properly so that there would be food in times of famine (Ge 41:34-36; 47-49; 54-57). Even Jesus illustrates this important principle. When He fed the multitude and there was food left over, Jesus required His disciples to gather it up and said, *"Let nothing be wasted"* (Jn 6:12).

Public servants must not only be honest, they must be competent. Inefficiency and waste bring the same result as stealing. Both deprive the people of what belongs to them.

**Accountability**

Accountability means that we must give an answer for the duties and assets that have been given to us. Students are accountable when they take their examinations. Their scores reflect whether or not they have studied and learned what they have been taught.

God gives us many blessings in this life. However, God also requires us to be accountable for those blessings. Jesus said, *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of*

*judgment for every careless word they have spoken"* (Mt 12:36). The Apostle Paul echoed the same truth: *"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God"* (Ro 14:12). Peter adds his support, saying that the wicked *"will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead"* (1Pe 4:5). These verses confirm that God will demand accountability of everyone some time in the future.

In addition, God expects us to hold one another accountable for our actions as well. The Old Testament prophets thundered against sin and corruption in high places (1Sa 15:23; 2Sa 12:7-10; 1Ki 14:7-11; 16:1-4; 18:18; 2Ch 12:5; 16:9; Da 5:23). John the Baptist rebuked Herod for taking his brother's wife (Mk 6:18). Paul demanded that believers hold responsible those who had departed from the truth by being immoral (1Co 5:4-5), going to law against one another (6:1-8), quarrelling among themselves (Php 4:2-3), and being lazy (2Th 3:6-15). Certainly those Christians who serve as public servants must also be held accountable for the way that they fulfil their church and government responsibilities.

## Transparency

Transparency means that things must be done openly and honestly. There must be no attempt to hide one's plans or cover up one's actions. Transparency is especially important when one is serving the public. If a private businessman wants to conceal his plans and his budget that is his business. However, because public servants ultimately answer to the people, their statements, deeds and expenditures must be available to the public. Obviously, there may be some exceptions such as security matters. However, as a general rule, democracy is built upon openness and transparency.

Concealing things is the characteristic of evil. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they attempted to hide from God (Ge 3:8). Ananias and Saphira attempted to cover up their deceitful actions (Ac 5:1-11). Isaiah declared *"Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, 'Who sees us? Who will know?'"* (Isa 29:15). Attempting to conceal things either from God or others is wicked but bringing things out in the open is godly (Pr 28:13).

Politicians and all others who are stewards of the resources of others must do their work and live their lives in the most transparent manner possible.

### A Nation that Brings Glory to God

On His last night on this earth Jesus prayed to the Father, *"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began"* (Jn 17:4-5). Jesus was testifying that His work had brought glory to God. In a similar way, we believe that all that we as God's children do, either brings glory to God or brings embarrassment to God. The principles outlined in these lessons reflect God's will for governance. We believe that if we fulfil those principles we will also be able to testify with Jesus, "We have brought you glory on earth by doing the work of governance you gave us to do. And now, Father, glorify our nation in your presence with the glory you had with the Father before the world began."

### "In the Name of Jesus"

What does it mean when we do something "in the name of Jesus?" It means we are doing things in the authority and with the power of Jesus. None of us is capable of perfectly living up

to the standards of the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance. However, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can live by these commitments. Doing things in the name of someone else is like a lower level government official who goes to represent the head of state at a function. In his own right he may not have much money and may not be well-known or highly respected. However, when he goes to a function in the name of the head of state, he is given the highest seat of honour. And when he speaks, his words are received not as if they came from the one who actually spoke them but as from the one in whose name they were given. Thus, to pledge to keep the creed in the name of Jesus means we will do so with the power of Jesus.

## Conclusion

God is calling for a moral and spiritual revival in Nigeria. One of the manifestations of that will be when we have a moral and spiritual turnaround in the governance of Nigeria. We believe that living by the principles described in the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance will be a significant step in the right direction to achieve that goal.

## Study Questions

1. Give Biblical reasons why confession is important? How is confession related to truth?
2. Explain some of the differences between private and public confession. Give examples of times when either one would be appropriate or inappropriate.
3. When would it be appropriate to confess sins on behalf of a larger group? Give Biblical support for your answer.
4. List and explain reasons why public commitment is important for all Christians and particularly public servants.

5.  Give examples of public servants who demonstrate the characteristics of honesty, justice, efficiency, accountability and transparency.

## Suggestions for Teaching

Good teaching involves good planning and using effective educational methods. No teacher should stand up and bore students for 45 minutes just lecturing. In a typical 45 minute class, the good teacher should use at least three different methods. This will create variety and interest in the class. It will appeal to more students since not every student learns best from the same methods. It will make the class more lively and interesting and it will enable students to learn better.

The following are some methods that can be used in teaching the Creed.

## B. Lecture Method
1. Definition: A lecture occurs when one communicates information to a group of people for the purpose of instruction. It is primarily a one-way communication, with a minimum of feedback from the listeners.
2. Advantages
   • A lecture takes advantage of the teacher's knowledge and experience.
   • A lecture helps to guarantee accuracy in presentation.
   • A lecture is the quickest way to communicate orally large amounts of information to students.
3. Limitations
   • A lecture can be tedious and boring.
   • Students can quickly loose interest.
   • A lecture takes little creativity and does not stretch the teacher's creativity.
4. Recommendation: It is likely that at least part of every lesson of the Creed will be presented, using the lecture

method. However, the good teacher will also incorporate other methods into the presentation.

## C. Discovery Method

1.  Definition: The student looks for specific thoughts, ideas and information, usually using a specific text.
2.  Example: The teacher can list on the blackboard or present orally in class a list of scriptures and ask students to look them up and discover a particular truth in those verses.
3.  Advantages
    *   This method gets the student involved in the learning. Active learning is nearly always better than passive learning.
    *   Reading a passage interactively usually creates more interest in the lesson.
    *   The enhanced concentration students will have while looking for a specific answer or topic will often help them to discover things they were not looking for.
    *   Discovering truth in a passage is more personally rewarding than having the teacher present the same truth.
4.  Demonstration
    *   Students will be given the verses from the "Types of Government" section in Lesson 1.
    *   The students will look up the verses and attempt to discover or identify the type of government that is found in each of these verses.
    *   Students may not know the technical name for the type of government but they should be able to describe it.
    *   The teacher will ask various students to give their answers. The teacher will then confirm or restate the correct answer.

## D. Discussion Method

1. Definition: A discussion takes place when two or more people exchange ideas. In a teaching session, a discussion involves two or more people having a guided conversation about a specific topic, concept or question.

2. Advantages
   • A discussion forces more students to become active and less passive in the teaching.
   • Discussions encourage students to think by giving them a chance to articulate their ideas.
   • Discussions demonstrate that people view the same truth from many different points of view.

3. Types of Discussions
   • Class Discussion. This is an exchange of ideas between the teacher and the whole classroom. Students remain in their normal desks and usually raise their hands to indicate that they want to speak. A good discussion is when students are not only directing their comments to the teacher but toward one another.
   • Small Group Discussion. This is an exchange of ideas between three to five students. The teacher normally will require the students to divide themselves into groups of three to five. The students will then discuss the specific topic among themselves without further input from the teacher. In this way, there can be many small group discussions going on at the same time. At the end of the discussion period, someone in each group can represent the group by giving a report of the discussion to the whole class. The teacher guides and supplements the details from the reports.

4. Characteristics of Discussions
   • Good discussions are not just informal discussions about any topic. They are normally guided by pre-arranged questions. In the classroom

discussion, the teacher can control the discussion well by keeping the focus on the topic. In the small group discussion it is more difficult to do that.

• Discussions are designed to get as many people involved as possible. Some people will learn better in discussion than from lectures or other styles of teaching.

• Discussions are not designed so much to solicit right or wrong answers as to encourage thought and participation by students.

5. Demonstration: In Lesson 2, the teacher could hold a discussion based upon the question, "What are the characteristics of a good public servant?" Obviously, the characteristics supplied in the lesson could be easily written on the board or given in a lecture. However, most of the points that are found in the lesson will likely be presented by students as well. For example, it is likely that some student is going to state that one of the characteristics of a good public servant is "honesty." The good teacher can then use the question and answer method to draw out additional thoughts about what it means to be an honest politician. In a small group discussion, the teacher can easily encourage the groups to discuss what it means to be an honest politician. This would perhaps be a little less structured and would help to make the "honesty" point very practical.

## E. Brainstorming Method

1. Definition: Students are encouraged to contribute suggestions, techniques, plans, answers and other information that have not been discussed before. This methodology is best used when there are no or few pre-arranged objective answers—when the teacher is trying to come up with something truly unique.

2. Advantages

• This method challenges the creativity of students.

- This method encourages people to think not just process information.
- This method appeals to some students that do not like other kinds of learning.
- This method will often come up with ideas that have not been thought of before.

3. Demonstration: Lesson three is about the responsibilities of the governed. The teacher could ask the students to brainstorm, either in the class or in small groups about the following question: "List ten ways that citizens can encourage and support their elective representatives." Since this has not been discussed before, this will encourage the students to use their creativity to come up with the suggestions. Since all students are different, it is likely that the combined class may come up with 15 or 20 different suggestions. It is almost certain that the students will suggest at least a few ideas that the teacher did not think of.

## F. Debate Method

1. Definition: A debate is a discussion between two or more persons in which at least two different opinions are expressed, supported and defended.
2. Advantages
   - This method often gets students emotionally involved in the lesson.
   - This method gives students an opportunity to really express opinions.
   - This method often provides a layman's understanding of a topic.
3. Characteristics
   - Though debates can be conducted when students argue positions they do not believe, the best debates occur when there are genuine differences of opinion.
   - Debates can be done formally or informally. Formal debates are planned with the students in

advance. Informal debates occur when two positions are presented in class and volunteers are asked to stand and speak for 30 seconds in support of one position and then another person is given the same amount of time to respond. Students are given opportunity to support alternate positions on a rotating basis until the teacher is satisfied the subject has been satisfactorily covered.

4. Example: Lesson 4 encourages people to make public confessions. Students could debate the proposition: "It is not good for the Church to talk about its faults to the general public." Some people will probably believe this thesis. Others will disagree. Therefore, it should generate a lively debate.

## G. Question and Answer Method

1. Definition: Students ask questions of the teacher and the teacher asks questions of the students.

2. Advantages
   • Teachers can direct questions to students who normally do not participate.
   • This encourages concentration because students do not know when they will be asked a question.
   • This helps to measure understanding in the student.
   • Students can ask about things they do not understand.
   • This often gives the teacher a chance to demonstrate knowledge that is not brought out in the normal class. Some teachers teach best when asked questions.

3. Characteristics
   • Teachers have to be very creative in interpreting questions. Sometimes the question is not clear but if the teacher can pick out something from the question

to respond to, the student will feel good that his or her question brought out good information.

• Teachers also have to be creative in responding to poor answers. The teacher does not want to make the student look bad. Therefore, the good teacher will find some part of the answer to say something positive about.

• Teachers have to control the amount of time devoted to questions and answers because some students are naturally curious and will dominate this time.

• If one is going to have a question and answer period, it is good to prepare the questions in advance so the question and answer time will flow well.

• Questions can be used to introduce the lesson, to clarify points in the presentation or to summarize the lesson at the end of the lesson.

• Some teachers prefer to allow students to interrupt at any time to ask questions. Other teachers prefer to go through a specific unit of information and then take questions at that end. Either method is acceptable.

4. Demonstration: In the "Responsibilities of Government" section of Lesson 1, the teacher could prepare the following questions:

• What are some of the responsibilities of government? (This measures how well students listened in class.)

• How does Romans 14 teach that government must provide law and order? (This measures the ability of the student to remember and interpret the Bible.)

• What are some of the ways that government officials provide law and order in Nigeria? (This encourages application of the lesson.)

- Give an example of some situation you have personally known in which the government either provided or failed to provide law and order. (This gives students an opportunity to further focus on application by giving an illustration.)

## H. Memorization Method

1. Definition: Memorization involves studying a passage of scripture to the point that one can remember the exact words without looking at the text.
2. Advantages
   - Memorization forces the student to think about a topic over a period of time.
   - Memorization provides the student with precise wording of a proposition.
   - Memorizing Scripture gives the student a tool to use in overcoming temptation in the future, like Jesus did (Mt 4:4, 6, 10).
3. Demonstration: In Lesson 3, students could be encouraged to memorize 1 Peter 2:13-14. In fact, it would be good to select a memory verse for every lesson.

## I. Resource Person (Guest Speaker)

1. Definition: A resource person is a visiting specialist or a witness who comes to the classroom to give a personal or professional opinion about the subject under discussion.
2. Advantages
   - Resource persons create real interest in the class.
   - Resource persons usually know more than the teacher about a particular subject.
   - Resource person often teach in the first person. First person teaching (I, me, our) is very effective.
   - Resource persons help to demonstrate the practical value of the theory learned in the classroom.
3. Demonstration: During Lesson 2, the teacher could invite to the class any public official to come and talk about his or her experiences in public life.

**A Man Who Changed the World**

In the 18ᵗʰ century, England had many of the same problems Nigeria has, including deplorable health conditions, high crime, corruption, violence and an inefficient government run by an aristocracy that knew little of the life of the common man. The elites of the day maintained their affluent lifestyles by slave trade, mass poverty, child labor and political corruption.

At 25, William Wilberforce, a member of the British Parliament, was converted under the influence of John Newton. He wanted to give up politics and become a pastor, but Newton encouraged him to stay in politics "for the good of the nation."

On 28 October 1787, Wilberforce noted in his journal that he felt called to devote his life to two major causes. The first was the abolition of slavery. Forty-six years later and only three days before his death, the bill to abolish slavery throughout the British Empire passed its second reading in the House of Commons.

Wilberforce also set out on a "reformation of manners"—changing the thinking of the society. In those days, it was fashionable to be loose in morals, corrupt in business and skeptical in faith. Wilberforce sought to change the leaders. He wrote a best-selling book about values and morals. He created "launchers," discussion points for the parties of the elite. He even joined with the non-religious who were sympathetic with his cause. Besides changing laws, he changed the society.

Wilberforce's efforts were successful. This movement grew into the Victorian era where goodness became fashionable. It emphasized character, morals, justice and business integrity. Over the next half century, the British Empire's influence spread around the world and Christianity also expanded to Africa and other places through the great missionary movements.

William Wilberforce is proof that one man can have a great influence on a society by working in governance.

*Appendix 101:*

*NOTE:  This file contains several documents produced by AFREG and/or CAN. The beginning of the documents can be found by Finding "xxxx"*

## Contents:

1.  The First African Forum On Religion And Government (Afreg) Held In Abuja, Nigeria From 25th To 28th July 2006    Afreg I Abuja Declaration

2.  Strategy and Organization for the Initial Implementation of AFREG I

3.  Action Plan

4.  AFREG Political Candidate Interview Project

5.  Unofficial Progress Report, March 6, 2009—Prof. Danny McCain

6.  Communique from South-Eastern Zone, 2008

7.  AFREG 2, 18-21 August, 2009. Kenya—Introductory Statement

## Related Documents:

1.  Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance—Chapter 5:  Inset at end of chapter.

2.   Study Guide for above Creed—Appendix 100.

### DOCUMENT 1

**THE FIRST AFRICAN FORUM ON RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT (AFREG) HELD IN ABUJA, NIGERIA FROM 25TH TO 28TH JULY 2006**
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# ABUJA DECLARATION

From July 25 to 28, 2006, about 200 Christian women and men representing church and public sector leadership from 27 African countries and from the African Diaspora in the United States of America met in the first African Forum on Religion and Government (AFREG I).  There were other participants from the United States and Iraq.  The forum was held in Abuja, Nigeria.  We are grateful to God for the presence, encouragement and challenging words of His Excellency, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and His Excellency President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi and his wife Madam First Lady Denise Bucumi Nkurunziza.

The atmosphere surrounding AFREG I was very clear; the time has come for change in Africa. The current state of affairs in Africa is characterized by:

- being the wealthiest continent in terms of natural resources and yet having the poorest people on planet earth.
- being known as incurably religious people and yet having a serious lack of authentic spirituality, morality and integrity in all spheres of life (in church and society).
- the threat of religious intolerance and conflicts to peace and stability in Africa.
- the identity crisis in which African values and Western values are often confused.
- the need to strengthen the proactivity of the church vis-à-vis issues of development, governance and justice.

In response to the above realities, we as representatives of African leadership, expressed our deep sense of dissatisfaction for the current realities on the continent, and resolved to make the necessary contributions for positive change on the continent. We engaged in prayer, critical reflection, and discussed necessary action plans. Given our general agreement that the African challenge is primarily one of leadership, our deliberations were guided by the following purpose and objectives:

**Purpose:**
To build a movement of African leaders of integrity who are committed to transforming Africa into a First World continent (a continent characterized by excellence) shaped by God centred values.

**Objectives:**
- Develop deep spirituality among African leaders that is God centred and relevant to the African context.
- Develop a moral vision for Africa based on deeply personalized spiritual values.
- Develop a framework for Africa's development that is holistic.
- Develop a framework for freedom of religion in Africa that ensures a democratic environment characterized by peace and stability.

We are gravely concerned about the gap between what we profess and our actions vis-à-vis what is happening on the continent and have a passion to do something about it. Inspired by the keynote address of Dr. Delanyo Adadevoh, and other presenters, the participants (including government Ministers, Parliamentarians, Judges, Church leaders, Traditional Rulers and other community leaders) took on the challenge of working towards a movement of African leaders of integrity who are committed to making a difference in Africa by being salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16).

**Signs of hope and common concerns**
As participants reflected on the situation on the continent, we had cause to celebrate many signs of hope. The signs of hope include Christians responding to the calling to be in active politics with the value of integrity, and the commitment to making a difference. The Church is also emerging as the key platform for peace and reconciliation in all spheres of life. The African Union is taking initiatives that hold great promise for Africa's development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has provided a common economic plan for Africa's development. The African Peer Review Mechanism also promotes integrity in leadership and governance in Africa.

We are grateful to God for the key role played by H. E. President Olusegun Obasanjo in making the vision of AFREG I a reality.  We are also grateful to God for the full participation of H. E. President Nkurunziza.  His testimonies regarding steps that he is personally taking towards integrity, justice, peace and development in Burundi are inspiring signs of hope.

We also shared common concerns about the challenges that face the continent.  We noted that Africa has suffered much from settling for mindsets that prevent her from moving forward. Africa needs to move beyond these mindsets to those that are closer to the will of God.  Thus there is a critical need to pursue shifts in mindset from:

- mediocrity to excellence; "only the best is good enough for Africa."[1]
- corruption to integrity.
- lack of confidence and initiative to confident, original and constructive creativity.
- limited supply mindset to abundance mindset.
- ethnocentrism to inter-ethnic communality.
- exclusivity on the basis of gender to inclusivity and partnership in development.
- favouritism to meritocracy.
- mindset of intervention and fatalism to the principle of sowing and reaping.
- the tendency to adjust to the status quo to change leadership.
- focus on raw material production to value added product economies.
- ignorance to knowledge of the true value of Africa's resources.
- under-utilisation to maximization of African resources for development.
- charity dependence to fair business mindset.
- dependence mindset to responsible interdependence.
- self serving leadership to sacrificial leadership.

**Values**
Participants agree that change and transformation is very necessary, very urgent, and possible to achieve in Africa through the power of God.  Such change is not merely cosmetic. It ought to be radical beginning from the changes which take place in the lives of individuals who form the churches and Christian communities, and is expressed in how the individuals become the salt and light of our communities and nations.  We agree that the desired change will be possible when the following values are embraced:

- God-centredness
- Sacredness of human life
- Positive self-identity
- Personal and public integrity
- Ubuntu[2]
- Freedom and human rights
- Communality
- Sacrificial service
- Dignity of labour
- Responsible interdependence

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[1] This is a famous quote from Dr Kwegir Aggrey, first African Vice Principal of Achimota College, Ghana.
[2] *Ubuntu* describes a wholesome person who has integrity, moral values, and compassion, and can relate constructively in community.  It is an African concept particularly found among the Nguni (Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Baswati) and other people of southern Africa.

- Justice for all
- Excellence

**Commitments and actions**
These call for some direct commitments on the part of leaders at various levels.

1. As participants in AFREG I, we commit ourselves to

   - disseminate in our various constituencies the vision, objectives and passion of AFREG including the declaration and action points.
   - promote a spirit of oneness and cooperation between Africans on the continent and the Africans in the Diaspora.
   - foster a climate of working with people of other faiths in order to have peaceful communities that will enable us to address the many challenges facing the continent without compromising our faith.

2. We commit ourselves to, and call upon African churches to commit themselves to

   - more proactive and collective leadership in addressing holistically the issues of development, governance and justice.
   - foster Christian unity on the continent and move beyond divisions that have plagued churches and church organizations.
   - sponsor and insist on the development of theologies that speak from and to African expressions of Christianity.
   - develop theologies and ministries that liberate Africans from spiritual superstition, deception and oppression.
   - promote global missions from Africa as a move from being a missionary receiving to a missionary sending continent.
   - include issues of leadership, development and governance at all levels of church education, paying particular attention to mentoring and empowering women and youth.
   - encourage those who are called to engage in public politics and help in the building of their capacity to do so with the highest level of integrity as models to the entire society.
   - utilize the gifts of all members without discrimination on the basis of gender or age.
   - engage in activities that combat HIV/AIDS.

3. We commit ourselves to, and call on all leaders of African Governments to

   - put the needs of the citizens of the nations first, and to seek the welfare of the nation rather than their own benefits.
   - commit themselves to accountability and the eradication of corruption.
   - partner with churches for the development of our communities.
   - commit more resources to the education, health and food security of their peoples.
   - ensure the independence of the judiciary.

- foster communities in which people of different faiths live together with mutual respect.
- develop and involve women in leadership at all levels.
- develop a positive sense of African identity as well as bridge the communication gaps among the Anglophone, Lusaphone, Francophone and Arab African countries by promoting one African language as an official language of Africa.[3]
- sponsor and/or partner with institutions engaged in combating HIV/AIDS.

4. We commit ourselves to, and call on all African Christians in leadership and in Government to commit themselves to

- excellence and integrity in how they carry out their responsibilities.
- act as role models to other politicians as well as other Christians aspiring to become politicians.
- be principled when they have to be pragmatic and to avoid the absolutist trap.
- invest wisely where it matters for the development of their communities and nations.

We acknowledge that God is at work in Africa creating something new. Our commitments are best carried out in the spirit of prayer and dependence on God. Believing that God is with us, and the Holy Spirit empowers us, we in AFREG I assert that transformation can and will happen in Africa. We are committed to doing our part to bring this transformation about. With God, all things are possible!

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# DOCUMENT 2

## Strategy and Organization for the Initial Implementation of AFREG I

The following strategy of action will be taken by AFREG Nigeria, under the umbrella of CAN. The various parts are not necessarily sequential. They will all be implemented simultaneously as much as possible.

## STRATEGY

### Part I – Distribution of the Creed
The document Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance will be printed and distributed as widely and rapidly as possible.
The following are some ways that the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance will be used to sensitize Christians about the Christian philosophy of governance.
It will be published in a one page format and distributed to all churches and all Christian NGO's in Nigeria who will be encouraged to further distribute it.

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[3] Kiswahili has been approved by the African Union as an official African language. African leaders need to implement policies that will ensure the learning and usage of Kiswahili or a preferred alternative across the continent.

It will be read in churches every Sunday or at least once a month from the registration of voters until after the election.

It will be reproduced as a poster in an attractive artistic format and placed in churches, schools, hospitals and other public places.

It will be placed as a bulletin insert in church bulletins

It will be reproduced in denominational and other Christian publications.

It will be studied as Bible study/discipleship/Sunday School lessons, using a specially produced Bible study guide that AFREG Nigeria will produce.

It will be used as a foundation for a series of sermons between now and the election time.

It will be given to all Christian primary and secondary schools with the recommendation that all school children memorize it and recite it before the election.

It will be circulated to all Bible colleges, seminaries, and missions schools and these institutions will make sure that the document becomes a part of their curriculum.

It will be given to the officers of the National Association of Bible Knowledge Teachers of Nigeria (NABKTN) with the recommendation that all Christian children who are taking CRK in public schools study and memorize it.

It will be sent to all radio, TV stations and media houses and they will be asked to read and/or print the document regularly between now and election time.

It will be reproduced in a nice format and given to all Christian politicians and public servants in the country.

It will be translated into all major Nigerian languages.

## Part II – Training

AFREG will conduct zonal, state and local government area workshops for Christian leaders to train them in the use of the Creed, its Bible study materials and a strategy for the creation of awareness on the Creed. AFREG is asking CRUDEN to provide the administration of the training programme.

### National Level Training

A two-day training programme will be held for the training of the national trainers. CAN will recommend a minimum of two persons from each state plus representatives from cooperating NGO's be invited to the training programme. These national trainers will in turn run the training programmes at the state level.

### State Level Training

This training workshop will be executed on a state level by those who participated in the National Training Programme. In each state, two representatives will be trained from each local government area. A one day training workshop will be set at the State Capital. The training will be based upon the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance and its supplemental materials.

### Local Government Training

Trainers who participated in the State Training Programme will fan out into the local governments and run a one-day training programme for Pastors and Leaders from every church in the local government areas. The training will be based upon the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance and its supplemental materials.

### Local Church Level Training

Pastors and church leaders who participated in the Local Government Training Programme will conduct a one-day training programme in their own local churches using the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance and its supplemental materials.

## Part III – "Heal our Land Day"

A state and national rally will be held in January and February 2007 to focus attention on the Christian philosophy of governance as reflected in the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance. The rallies will be held at two levels:

**State "Heal our Land Day"**

This will be a rally of all Christians to be held in a stadium at the State capital on ___ January 2007. CAN will mobilize its members from every local government area to participate in this rally. Each rally will include the following:

A goodwill address by a Christian Political Leader in the State (Note: Care must be taken to give no particular political party any advantage.)

A welcome address by the CAN Chairman in the State

A public reading of the Creed

A message from a selected preacher

Public invitations (altar calls) for repentance and public commitment to support the goals of the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance

**National "Heal our Land Day"**

A rally will be held in Abuja on ____ February 2007 to climax the awareness of the Nigeria Christian Creed on Government.

This will run along the same lines as the State Heal Our Land Day.


**Part IV -** AFREG Nigeria will send a copy of Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance and supporting documents to all international participants of AFREG I.

# ORGANIZATION

**Cooperation.** AFREG recognizes that it is not necessary to create a new organization that will do what existing organizations are doing. Therefore, we choose to cooperate with existing organizations as much as possible.

AFREG desires to work with CAN as the overall umbrella organization that brings all Christian organizations together. All AFREG goals are consistent with CAN goals.

AFREG desires to work with CRUDEN and other NGO's who have had experience in training and capacity building to help implement the programme all the way down to the grassroots level.

AFREG desires to work with COCEN and Covenant Keepers and other bodies who have developed materials related to Christianity and governance, integrity and corruption and to help reproduce and distribute these materials as widely as possible.

**Committees.** In order to make all of these things happen, AFREG will create several committees that will focus on individuals parts of this strategy. The following are the initial committees

Executive Committee (specifically focuses on coordination, fundraising, public relations and interaction with AFREG International)

Creed Distribution Committee

Training Committee

"Heal our Land Day" Committee

**Funding.** To be successful, this project will require money. The following are thoughts about funding.

It will take a good bit of money to get the project going. It is not likely that churches will fund the early stages of the project. Therefore, the AFREG Executive Committee should raise all the initial money for the takeoff of the project.

CAN should use its office to encourage denominations to contribute to this project particularly at the grassroots level.

It should be noted that people value things in the direct proportion that they have investments in them.

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# DOCUMENT 3

## FIRST AFRICAN FORUM ON RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT (AFREG I) HELD IN ABUJA, NIGERIA FROM 25TH TO 28TH JULY 2006

## ACTION PLAN

The church in Africa in all its manifestations needs to be transformed by God into something new that will be at the forefront as an instrument for transformation. Africa

has enormous potential and urgently needs a new breed of courageous and visionary leaders of integrity who are able to lead transformation in all spheres of society.

The following action points are recommended to help develop a **Moral Vision** for Africa providing a holistic (affecting every sphere of life) framework for Africa's development based on moral values and ensuring a democratic environment characterized by peace and stability.

The church needs to strengthen its mission to include evangelism and discipleship in which lives are transformed. Transformed individuals are God's instruments for transforming communities as their leadership makes a difference politically and socially. We are called to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20) and to be salt and light in communities (Matthew 5:13-16).

To this end, the following actions are recommended in line with the themes addressed at AFREG I, particularly in the seminars and discussion groups:


1. **Christian Responsibility in Politics**

   *Promote a positive view of politics as a vocation to which God calls His selected servants.*

   - God calls many Africans with integrity into active public political engagement. People of faith need a positive view of politics so it can be viewed as a vocation to which God does call His people.

   - It will be necessary to develop and utilize a critically examined theology of politics and the state as a theoretical framework for good political leadership. Such a theology of politics and theology of the state is needed to provide the theoretical framework which informs good political leadership.

   - Support political leaders of integrity through prayers, encouragement and partnership. Churches should be committed to supporting political leaders of integrity through prayers, encouragement and partnership for transformation, rather than view them as persons from whom they expect special favors.

   - Encourage Christian political leaders to be principle-centered in their leadership. Christian political leaders will do well to practice principled pragmatism as opposed to opportunistic pragmatism and/or the absolutist trap.

   - Encourage current leaders to move into mentoring new emerging leaders. Current African leadership should learn to move on into new mentoring

roles instead of clinging to power beyond their usefulness. They can use their mentoring roles to groom new leaders. The biblical models of Moses mentoring Joshua, Paul mentoring Timothy, etc. are helpful here to foster good leadership succession.

2.      **Moral Vision**

*Develop and articulate moral values that will characterize the "Universal African Citizen."*

- These moral values should place God at the center, build confidence, promote respect for African culture, and encourage a pan-African outlook.

- The church should develop a theology on moral vision that

    helps Africa return to what God wanted her to be in the first place, before the fall.

    is under-girded by biblical conviction.

    is based on the biblical values of forgiveness, kindness, etc.

    serves as a resource for destroying spiritual and psychological strongholds that are hindering Africa's development.

- The church should exercise leadership in promoting a morality where the private life of leaders in society is consistent with their public lives.

3.      **Leadership and Democratic Sustenance in Africa**

*Promote the value of democracy in leadership and governance in Africa.*

There must be a strong resolve to condemn and detest any form of corruption on the African continent. The church should serve as a good platform for harnessing and encouraging potential members, who are so called, to respond to the vocation of public political engagement as well as provide prayer, support, training, and capacity building.

4.      **Transformational Leadership in Africa**

*Develop and promote transformational leadership which reverses the perception of leadership in Africa as corrupt, self-serving and unable to deal with the challenges that have plagued the continent.*

Transformational Leadership should

- Be values-based leadership that is operating at all levels of community and deals with issues that matter most to the continent.

- Appraise the African culture to promote those aspects which are life-enhancing and discard those which are harmful and destructive to life.

- Lead to transformation in the media such that reporting on Africa is accurate, positive, inspiring and constructive.

5.      **Individual Rights and Development in Africa**

*Churches and individual Christians need to develop the capacity to organize themselves for involvement in the formulation and defense of laws that affect individual rights.*

- The church should promote legal literacy giving special attention to laws affecting the rights of women, children and marginalized groups.

- In the process of signing and ratifying international treaties and conventions affecting individual rights, steps should be taken at different levels to be sensitive to our national context and interests. National interests should also be prioritized above selfish personal ambitions.

**6. Ethics, Integrity and Government in Africa**

*Establish accountability structures to ensure that leaders operate with integrity and deliver on their promises.*

- Urge governments and churches to set up peer review structures, mechanisms, and departments to foster ethics and integrity.

- Establish methods of recognizing and affirming persons of integrity so as to create and publicize role models.

**7. Leadership and Development**

*Ensure leadership development which promotes a culture of excellence at individual, church, corporate and government levels.*

- Churches should take responsibility for developing leaders for various sectors of society (professional, business, corporate, government, etc.).

- Encourage churches to allocate resources to develop leadership skills of their members.

- Theological institutions should incorporate leadership and development studies in their curricula.

**8. Church and Development**

*The church should be at the forefront for fostering and advocating development issues.*

The church should

- Create an environment in which on-going learning takes place for sharing best practices, needs and resources for development.

- Encourage and promote Christian schools for quality education, values formation and propagation.

- Empower their youth (including those on University campuses) and foster fellowship and nurturing opportunities that enhance their Christian unity.

- Promote quality transformational discipleship to maximize the church's role in teaching development and Africa's global mission initiatives.

**9.      Education and Development**

*Families, churches, businesses and governments should prioritize the funding of education and ensure it is relevant to the needs of the continent and capable of empowering students to think and apply themselves to the transformation of their environment.*

- Favorable working conditions and adequate up-to-date facilities and equipment should be ensured in all educational institutions.

- Functional and adult literacy on leadership and developmental issues such as agriculture in the rural areas should be done in local languages.

**10.     Economics, Religion and Development**

*Establish micro-finance initiatives for building entrepreneurship and community participation in development.*

- Encourage investment in capacity building, which will lead to increased productivity.

- Establish economic initiatives to empower church members to be economically independent.

- Encourage research into viable income generation and economic empowerment activities.

- Devote substantial resources to empower church members to be economically independent, thereby reducing poverty in Africa.

- Establish investment opportunities in which Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora find themselves in true partnership.

**11.     Gender and Development**

*Provide equal opportunities for male and female to contribute to governance and development.*

- Recognize and support women as community leaders and as development agents.

- Build a clear vision for gender and development that is rooted in Africa, not just mirroring what is happening elsewhere in the world.

- Churches should create policies which ensure active participation of women in development activities and decision making.

- In view of gender being critical to good governance and development, a paradigm shift is needed, where both male and female have equal opportunities at every level (home, school, church, marketplace, etc.).

- The church and communities should affirm women and acknowledge their role in development projects.

- The church and communities should create opportunities to mentor young people towards their gender sensitive personal development.

- Create conducive working environments, which would enable women to empower themselves in their contexts.

## 12. Reconciliation of Africans and Africans in the Diaspora to African Development.

*Africans and Africans in the Diaspora should move from exclusivity to inclusivity which overcomes past differences as well as tribalism and other forms of discrimination.*

- People of African descent on the continent and in the African Diaspora need to recapture their belonging together in the development of Africa. This should be captured in language use as well. The pronouns "We" and "Us" are preferable to more exclusive pronouns.

  To fulfill this goal, there is a real need to engage in true repentance and to take steps towards reconciliation. AFREG I was a forum during which Africans on the continent offered such repentance, affirming that this needs to be done in different communities. At the same time, AFREG I recognizes that a complete repentance and moving forward will include all sides of the triangle (the African Diaspora, Africans currently living on the continent, and descendants of the slave trade in Europe and North America).

  Good models of repentance are portrayed in Leviticus 26:39-42, Nehemiah 1, and Daniel 9:1-18. Following these examples we can identify with past generations in their sins.

- There is a need to use the media, educational tools, and exchanges to break the myths that these communities have acquired.

- There is need for intentionality in developing steps towards reconciliation.

13.     **Freedom of Religion**

*Africa needs to embrace a concept of freedom that promotes the acceptance of all people as fellow human beings irrespective of race, tribe, religion and other ideological persuasions.*

- All national constitutions in Africa should provide freedom of religion that allows people the freedom to choose their religion without coercion, manipulation or force. People should be free to share their religious and other persuasions with others in so far as they do not use any form of coercion, manipulation or force.

- Freedom of worship is a God-given right for all individuals, and it is enshrined in many African constitutions. The freedom to propagate our faith leads to a renewed commitment to evangelism.

- There is a need for education in order to move beyond misunderstandings of the different religions on the continent and be committed to understanding, respecting and cooperating with one another in promoting development on the continent.

14.     **Peace, Stability and Development**

*Teach and build a culture of peaceful co-existence where individuals exercise their freewill in the choice of their religions and political affiliations.*

- The Church must model peace.

- There is need for teaching and building a culture of tolerance – tolerance of ethnic, political and religious differences. This will be a vehicle by which Africa can rise above how people with vested interests use religious and ethnic sentiments against one another.

Maintain peace and cooperation with other religions in the development of communities, nations and the continent.

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# DOCUMENT 4

## AFREG POLITICAL CANDIDATE INTERVIEW PROJECT

The fundamental prerequisite to a successful democracy is for the public to know the beliefs and convictions of those seeking to represent them and for public officials to know the beliefs and convictions of those they represent. Therefore, anything that will encourage greater openness in the political process is a serious boost to the democratic process. It is normal and legitimate for various communities and sub-sectors of society to make known their beliefs and to know the convictions of candidates about those issues. Because not every part of the society participates in an equal manner in the discussion of public issues, it is those who choose to participate who have the most influence in society. For example, the homosexual community in America is a very small percentage of the population, probably less than five percent. However, for the past thirty years they have been extremely vocal and now have a significantly greater impact in politics and the society at large than their small numbers would imply. In fact, the homosexual agenda intimidates politicians to do things that they do not personally believe in or support but they do so to remain politically viable.

In this spirit, the Africa Forum on Religion and Governance (AFREG), which represents probably the majority of the citizens in Nigeria, must become much more vocal and public in its statements and actions. It must not allow the vocal minority to set the agenda or create the default positions on public issues. It must create ways to make the positions of the faith community known to politicians and the positions of politicians known to the general public.

One particular project that would help achieve these goals is to create a public forum in which all persons seeking public office will be interviewed about their beliefs on issues affecting people of faith. This forum will include national, state and local candidates. Appropriate strategies will be worked out for each. This project will be help political candidates to know the issues that are important to people of faith by the questions that are raised and will help people of faith know the positions of political candidates by interviews that eventually become the publications of AFREG.

### Reasons for this Project

1. **Timing.** The time before an election is the best time to have political influence. Politicians need the support of people before the election. They are willing to listen and willing to make commitments when they are contesting for office. They obviously do not need the votes and support of people as much after the election.
2. **Setting the Agenda.** Raising certain questions during an interview will be a way to let the candidates know the issues that are important to the faith community.
3. **Specific Issues.** This project will help to underwrite the fact that for the faith community, the major issues in this election are moral and ethical issues.
4. **Laying a Foundation.** Getting politicians to commit themselves publicly during the election season will give the faith community a powerful tool to use in the future if the candidates start to stray from the positions they have taken during the election. Politicians are always interested in re-election so even after elections, politicians have to be concerned about their reputation. No politician will want to

be accused of saying one thing during an election and doing something different afterwards.

5. **Unity.** This project will help generate the impression the faith community is united.
6. **Public Debate.** These issues will encourage public debate about these issues.
7. **Aid Media.** These issues will give the media specific issues to discuss and debate.

## Goals of the Project

1. The project will give people of faith a chance to know the beliefs of the political candidates particularly about things that are of concern to the faith community.
2. The project will force politicians to declare in advance what they believe about issues that are important to the faith community.
3. The project will document the beliefs of candidates so that they can be held accountable in the future.
4. The project will force political candidates to take people of faith seriously.
5. The project will get more committed people of faith involved in the political process.
6. The project will be a cost-effective but highly visible means of projecting people of faith into the political debate.
7. This project will lay a foundation for future elections in which the opinions and support of the faith community will be taken much more seriously.

## Strategies of the Projects

**Interviews**

Presidential Candidates. Arrangements will be made either through CAN or directly by AFREG to interview all presidential aspirants and get them to respond to certain predetermined questions. The interviews will be taped so that there is no possibility of inaccurate information. Since all major presidential aspirants are Muslims, their views about Christian and religious pluralism will be specifically sought.

State and Local Candidates. Candidates for governor, senator, national assembly, state assembly and LGA will be interviewed with specific questions that are appropriate to their states, zones or districts.

These interviews can be done in public, on TV, radio and for the press. They can also be done privately.

**Publications**

Interviews will be edited so that the candidate's positions on key issues can be presented in brief statements and published in national newspapers.

One page summary statements will be published that will contain the comparative positions of various candidates in parallel columns.

**Scoring.** AFREG may want to create an objective scoring system that will give various weights to different issues. Candidates can then be scored by a committee to insure objectivity.

## Possible Problem Areas

**Lack of Funds.** It will take a little bit of money to do something like this but the potential benefits far outweigh the costs.

**Lack of Will.** It is much easier to do nothing than to do something. It takes no effort to be apathetic, thinking that nothing we will do will make any difference anyway. Therefore, it will take strong leadership to motivate the people who could implement this project into doing something.

**Appearance of Partisanship.** AFREG could be accused of just being a stooge of the PDP or some other party. Therefore, all preparations, questions and analysis will have to be done very objectively to avoid such accusations. It is almost certain that if there is objective analysis, people from all political parties will likely rise to the top.

**Sustainability.** The temptation will be to think that at the end of this election season, the work of this project is over. AFREG must understand that gaining and maintain political influence is a long-term strategy. The impact of the AFREG Political Candidate Interview Project must be viewed from a long-term viewpoint with the understanding that the impact of the project will be greater in future elections than in this election. It also may be greater closer to the grassroots than at the national level in the first instance.

**Manipulation.** Politicians and their handlers could see this project as an opportunity to get a certain segment of the population to support their candidate through saying all the right things. This might be done by helping to pay for the publications or some other "favor" that would cause the people doing the analysis to be preferential in their analysis. Therefore, those who implement this project must be "smarter" than those who would try to use them.

**One-Sided Perspective.** To this point, AFREG is purely a Christian movement. That is fine. This project could be a purely "Christian" project if that is what we want. However, some time in the future, the project may want to expand to all "people of faith." Because this project is one-sided, it could be misunderstood by Muslims and others as it currently is. However, this may be the best starting place.

## Key Issues and Questions

### A. Presidential Candidates
Note: These questions represent issues that relate both to Nigeria at the present time and the western world that could potentially affect Nigeria.

What is your understanding of religious pluralism and how should that affect the government in Nigeria?

What is your understanding of the use of public funds to help support religious organizations and functions? For example:

Should government funds be used to build religious facilities?

Should government funds be used to sponsor religious pilgrimages?

Should government funds be used to support education in religious institutions?

What is your relationship to the spiritual leaders in your faith?

To what extent does your own personal faith affect and influence your public office?

What is your position regarding homosexual marriage? Should homosexuality be a crime?

What is your position regarding the abortion of unborn babies? Should abortion be legal?

What is your position about pornography? Should pornography be legal? Should some controls be placed upon satellite TV that brings in pornographic or sexually explicit material into Nigeria?

What is your position about gambling? Should gambling be legal?

Please explain your position on Nigeria being a part of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). What does membership or participation in that organization mean?

What would you do to prevent ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria?

Please explain your position on Sharia in Nigeria.

What is your position on the allocation of lands and approval for Christian churches to be built in areas where Christians are a minority?

What is your position on the teaching of Christian Religious Knowledge in the public schools of places where Christians are in the minority?

What is your position about faith-based approaches to the HIV/AIDS pandemic?

What is your position about giving money or other favors to delegates or voters to vote for a political candidate?

What will be your position toward ministers or other public servants who divert government money or assets to private use?

What is your position about public officials, including the police, customs, immigration or others who are caught demanding bribes or kickbacks?

**State and Local Elections**

All the questions asked of presidential candidates could also be asked of state and local candidates.

Muslims have the right to know the same things about Christian aspirants as these questions attempt to determine from Muslim aspirants. Since all major presidential aspirants are Muslims, all questions related to Christians should be reversed for Christian political aspirants.

Questions over local religions issues should be formulated and asked of all state and local candidates.

## Timetable

This project should take off as soon as possible. It should include the following steps.

1. Refining and approving the project by AFREG.
2. Selecting a person and/or committee who could direct the project. The director should preferably be a journalist or a person who has had experience interviewing people. It should be a person of impeccable character whose objectivity cannot be questioned.
3. Workshop for state and local representatives to prepare them to interview candidates at the state and local level.

4. Scheduling interviews with the presidential candidates (and perhaps their running mates).
5. Summarizing, editing, analyzing and publishing of material.
6. Distribution of materials through churches and other organizations.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

This strategy has been used successfully in the US and other places to identify and give support to worthy political candidates. Therefore, the Nigeria chapter of AFREG should lead the way in developing this strategy or a similar strategy and implementing it in the largest African country. The question is not whether or not the strategy will have a positive influence; the question is whether or not we have the commitment to make it happen.
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# DOCUMENT 5

# PROGRESS REPORT

## PROF. DANNY MCCAIN

**This report is personal, not official. McCain graciously allowed me to include it in this file.**

AFREG has not done as much as we had hoped but here is a brief list of some of the things that were done during the two years or so immediately after the initial AFREG conference.

1. The first meeting after the major AFREG conference was on Wednesday, 5th October 2006 and included a small group of AFREG participants. We met in the church office (All Christian's Fellowship) of Rev. William Okoye, who was then the chaplain of the Aso Rock Chapel. The participants included Prof. Yusuf Turaki, Chief Maduekwe (currently the Minister of Foreign Affairs), Mr. Peter Ozodo, Venerable. Dr. Sola Igbari (the secretary to the Archbishop of the Anglican Church and President CAN), Elder Sulaiman Jakonda, Most Rev. Dr. Nze Ebere, (the archbishop of the Methodist Church), Mrs. Nene Amogu, Dr. Moses Iloh, Elder Ibrahim Sara Bangalu, Rev. Okoye and myself. During this meeting Chief. Maduekwe suggested that we needed a clear statement about what the Church in Nigeria believes about Christianity and governance. Since four of us were from Jos, a committee of Peter Ozodo, Yusuf Turaki, Sulaiman Jakonda and myself were appointed to produce a draft within two weeks.

2. We were able to produce the draft and brought it to Abuja about ten days later. It was refined and taken to the CAN President, the primate of the Anglican Communion in Nigeria, Archbishop Akinola. He made some suggestions which were also incorporated into the document. Peter Ozodo later presented this document and a strategy for implementing it to the National CAN executive.

3. After creating the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance, we were invited to do a training session for the national CAN executive plus two or three key representatives from each state. About 60 people participated. This was done at the National Ecumenical Centre in Abuja, the now completed national cathedral.

4. We did a similar training workshop in Plateau State under the Plateau State CAN auspices. This was for key church leaders and was designed to provide them with the tools to pass this training on down to their own people. I would guess about 60 church leaders participated.

5. We videoed the project in Abuja and Jos and the central AFREG office distributed a copy of these (4 VCD's) to all state chapters of AFREG and encouraged them to use them in training. At least some were used but not as much as we had hoped. The training was done by Peter Ozodo and myself.

6. The one page Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance was produced quite massively, perhaps 100,000 copies. Also the four lesson study booklet was produced extensively, perhaps 20,000. And actually there were two versions of this, a student version and a teacher's version. Copies of these materials were placed in the hands of all Christian legislatures, senators and political appointees in Abuja. Copies were also sent to all Christian state governors.

7. A mechanism was created to interview, in the name of CAN, all candidates for president during the last election. All three of the major candidates were interviewed, including Buhari, Atiku and Yar'adua. Also, Yar'adua was later taken to visit the CAN chairman by the president's chaplain, Rev. Okoye, where he was given a copy of the Nigeria Christian Creed on Governance. He was very impressed and stated that he would like to see something like this created on the Muslim side. This same strategy filtered down to at least some of the states where various candidates were interviewed by CAN officials on issues of particular interest to the church.

8. The closest thing to a state-wide AFREG conference was held in Enugu in February 2008, I believe, in which we did a two day training workshop in the Anglican Cathedral for about 200 pastors. After that, there was a big "political" rally in one of the hotels, with the governor, the Minister of Education and several other prominent Igbo politicians present. This whole thing was designed to encourage greater participation of Christian leaders in

politics and governance and also to encourage greater integrity while doing so.

9. We later had a meeting with the Minister of Education in his private residence to discuss the possibility of getting this material into the CRK curriculum. He was sympathetic and gave us a letter of introduction to the Director of the National Education Research and Development Council in Gwagalada. We made a trip down there but the director had traveled and we met with his deputy. In the meantime, the Minister of Education has been replaced and that project has grown a little cold.


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## DOCUMENT 6

# AFRICA FORUM ON RELIGION AND GOVERNANCE
# South-East Zone

## ”Equipping the Church for Greater Relevance in Society”

## Communiqué

Christian leaders from across denomination divides and representing the five states that make up the southeaster geo-political zone of Nigeria, met on the 7th and 8th of May 2008 at the Cathedral Church of the Good Shepherd, Enugu. The delegates discussed the subject, "Equipping the Church for Greater Relevance in Society." At the end of their deliberations, they had agreed on the following statements;

1.  The Church needs to balance its ministry to the world between spiritual activities such as evangelism, discipleship, prayer and worship and its social responsibilities to the needy, the economy, and the polity.

2.  The Conference fully endorses the Nigerian Christian Creed on Governance, an official publication of the Africa Forum on Religion and Governance (AFREG).

3.  The Conference maintained that the Church has a major role to play in governance. To this end, it agreed on the following:

    - Government is an agent of God and therefore must be respected, supported and obeyed.
    - Those who hold public office must be completely honest and efficient in the fulfillment of their duties.

- Those who are governed must participate in the political process through voting, supporting and praying for their elected representatives, paying taxes and not having improper expectations of their elected representatives.

4.      The Conference determined to take action to mobilize, train and lead all Christians in effective participation in the political process across the geo-political zone.

5.      The Conference concluded that the economy of the South-East will vastly improve if:

- Entrepreneurs will go into partnerships and mergers to take advantage of available funds and support systems to grow their businesses.
- Business leaders will treat their workers with fairness.
- Business will produce goods and services characterized by excellence.

6.      The Conference calls on Christians in the South-East to repent of their past failure to engage more effectively in the political process in order to produce a society devoid of poverty, disease, ignorance and oppression.

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Chairman, AFREG, Nigeria                              Co-ordinator, AFREG, South-East
Zone


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# DOCUMENT 7

## African Forum on Religion and Government
## AFREG 2—The Church in Mission and Transformation

**Conference Dates**
18-21 August 2009
Limuru, Kenya


**The Importance of this AFREG Conference**
There are more than 400 million Christians in Africa, with thousands indicating conversion to the faith daily. Yet, Christianity is having a minimal impact on African society.

People often claim to be Christians, while their traditional worldviews, customs and institutions are virtually unchanged.

If the church intentionally engages people with biblical principles and values that will guide their worldviews and lives, they will positively impact and transform society.

**AFREG 1**
In partnership with the Christian Association of Nigeria, the International Leadership Foundation (ILF) conducted the inaugural AFREG conference, in Abuja, Nigeria from July 25-28, 2006.

Bringing together nearly 200 key leaders, representing 27 African countries, from the church, education, business, non-governmental organisations, government leaders and two Heads of State, the event resulted in commitments to remain involved in moving to transform Africa.

Since 2006, both regional and national initiatives have been implemented. AFREG 1 members from Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, the Republic of Congo and Nigeria have formed task forces and groups to plan and conduct local events, as well as large-scale leadership conferences to promote and grow this transformational movement.

**AFREG 2**
With the theme, *The Church in Mission and Transformation*, AFREG 2 is an initiative designed to both sensitise and equip the church for playing her role as salt and light in society.

AFREG 2 will be a continental consultation of 300 Christian denominational and organisational leaders from across Africa, with the following purpose and objectives:

**Purpose of AFREG 2**
Equip leaders of the church in Africa to carry out the mission of spreading the gospel in a way that will result in total Christ-centred societal transformation on the continent and beyond.

**Objectives**
Commit to the whole task of mission in Africa and the world

Call the church to her role in being salt and light in society

Develop a new theology of mission that has as its goal the complete transformation of individuals and their situations

Evaluate what it would take for the church to holistically fulfil the task of mission on the entire continent and the world

Provide training and resources for church leaders in how to lead transformation in society

Equip church leaders with skills on how to engage national and continental governance, conflict and reconciliation challenges

Promote a continental network for sharing ideas, expertise and resources in leading transformation in society

**Outcomes**
AFREG 2 participants developing national and regional initiatives towards transformation

Resources produced and forums conducted for developing and equipping church leaders to spearhead holistic transformation on the continent

Strategic materials developed and published on *The Church in Mission and Transformation*

A growing network of church leaders committed to providing on-going support and encouragement to one another

**Kano State Government versus CAN**
**About Female School Uniforms**
**Jan H. Boer, 2009**

Christians and human rights advocates in general object to turning fashion into a legal matter. That is what was happening in a number of sharia states.[1] An argument arose between Kano State Government and CAN about the former's alleged decision to impose Muslim dress on all students in all schools in the state, government and private both. The Government denied the charge and chided CAN for publishing their statement without checking it out with the Government. In the charged atmosphere of the day, it would be no surprise if CAN went to press prematurely. Of course, the Government *might* have made such a rule but retracted it when CAN attacked it publicly. The Government claimed, it had indeed ordered all Muslim girls in these schools to wear Muslim dress, but Christians were merely ordered to "dress decently."

> *The true position is that, a law has been in existence for long time in Kano State requiring all female Muslim students in public schools to wear hijab. While the Hijab is mandatory for female Muslims, female non-Muslims were directed to dress decently but not compelled to wear the hijab.*
>
> *Kano State Government has just decided to extend the policy already in practice in its public schools to private schools that all female Muslim students must be allowed by the proprietors to wear hijab, given the increasing number of Muslim students enrolled in such private institutions presently.*
>
> *There is nowhere in Kano State where non-Muslim female students are required by law to wear the hijab. The hijab is only for female-Muslim students while non-Muslim female students are required to dress decently.*

The Government statement explained:

> *Education is all about discipline and morality, and the purpose of sending our children and wards to schools will surely be defeated if we cannot instill into their young minds the discipline of decent dressing and general good conduct.*

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[1] J. Boer, 2008, vol. 7, pp. 156-159.

> *The Kano State Government is committed to instilling a morally right dress code among its students and therefore expects Northern CAN and indeed all well-meaning organizations to join hands to stamp out immorality and indiscipline in our schools and society. Acting on rumour and cheap religious sentiments will not help us in our struggle for a united Nigeria.*

Besides, the Government argued,

> *requesting students to dress decently is not exclusive to Kano State, even universities and other tertiary institutions, including those located in non-Muslim communities as well as religious organizations, now impose dress codes for their female students, emphasizing decency and self-respect. We have it on good authority that some Southern state with a predominantly Christian population now directs that female visitors to their Government Houses should dress properly or be turned back.[2]*

Again in Kano State, the governing body of BUK published a dress code incumbent on all students, one that called for decent, smart and respectable fashion. The code was said to be "initiated to imbibe sound moral values in the students."[3] It was a big issue at ABU. Sule Machika wrote a powerful paper at ABU that covered all the issues—pardon the pun!—and is a *must* read. In fact, I encourage you to delve deeply into the entire resource-rich *Companion CD* folder on the subject. It was absolutely necessary, according to Machika, for ABU to develop a dress code.[4]

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[2]S. Y. Sule, 10 Aug/2007.
[3]*D/Triumph*, 8 Jan/2007.
[4]S. Machika, 2005. *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Women/Fashion and Hijab/…>.

*Appendix 103:*

# Biblical Meditations on Women

## Jan H. Boer

In 1995, I published a book of meditations under the title ***The Prophet Moses for Today: 366 Social Biblical Meditations.***[1] The following are meditations on women that are scattered throughout that book.

**Day 15 – Having Sons and Daughters**

**Genesis 1:28 – God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."**

Having children, you will now remember, is the arrangement willed by God for most people.  For this reason, the Bible writers extol the family and having children.  In fact, the more the merrier, as far as the Old Testament is concerned.  They are blessings from God.  In Psalm 127: 3-5 we read, "Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.  Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.  Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them."

….

The above verse and others like it emphasize sons and ignore daughters.  I do not need to apologize for the Bible to you, if you are a woman, but you should understand that emphasis as a result of the fall, as we will see later.  For the moment, please remember that in the beginning male and female are both created in the image of God and both were assigned the work of ruling.  It would not do, therefore, for Christian parents to look down on daughters as inferior.


**Day 28 – Image: Male and Female**

**Genesis 1:27 – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

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[1] Jos: Institute of Church and Society, 1995. These meditations appear in the same order as they do in the book and are numbered by the day, not by the page.

Today's verse is a powerful one in terms of men-women relationships. It is important to note that the differences in power and status that men see today between themselves and women are not found in this passage.

Women as well as men were made in God's image. That means it is wrong for men to look down on women as they often do. If you are a man, be honest and ask whether you tend to look down and think you are more important than them. Come on, be honest. You think that you are the master and the woman should merely obey you. Ruling them is your right.

If you are a woman, deep down in your heart and in your bones you know how men tend to despise you. It is even possible that you think that's the way things ought to be. You are merely to obey the man in your life. You are merely to obey the male leaders in your church. You are merely to obey the male rulers of your village, state or country.

The situation as we know it is very different from the original relationships. Women have the image of God in them as much as men. In fact, it would seem that this image finds a central expression in the male-female relationship. God made them in His image as female and male creatures.

All the things we have said about the image in people holds for women as well as men. The image is related to our dominion and women have that authority and power as well as men.

## Day 29 – Woman: A Helper

**Genesis 2:18 – The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."**

Gen. 2 tells about the same developments we find in Gen. 1, but from a different perspective. While all the animals existed male-female, the man Adam was alone. That was not a good situation, according to God Himself. The creation of the human race was still incomplete. And so God staged a situation in which Adam became aware of his incompleteness by having him meet all the animals as males and females. God could have just imposed woman on Adam, but He chose to instill a desire in him and a sense of incompleteness, so hat when Even appeared, Adam would welcome her and be glad. You see, right from the beginning, God treated people as people, not as mere things with whom He could do as He pleased. He prepared Adam to make Eve's appearance a positive experience for both of them.

And so it happened.  When Adam first saw Eve, he was overjoyed.  He of course noticed the physical differences , but his overwhelming experience was that of unity.  "Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." No sense of competition.  No desire to manipulate.  No eagerness to dominate.  It was love and unity at first sight.

Woman is twice described as a suitable helper (:18, 20).  To some women that is considered an insult.  However, in that context of love and unity, the position of being a helper was not threatening.  The threat to that for the modern woman has come out of the sinful situation where women are often considered inferior and suitable only for having babies and cooking food.

## Day 33 – Eyes Opened to Darkness

## Genesis 3:7 – Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked.

It happened exactly as both God and the serpent, the representative of Satan, had said.  After both Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened.  But what they saw with their open eyes was nothing beautiful or wise.  In fact, it was negative, unpleasant and fearful.  God's gracious warning had been disobeyed and disbelieved.  Now it turned out He was right.  They now experienced something that was too heavy for them to bear.  And, in spite of Satan's promise, they did not become like God.  Instead they became miserable creatures.

Their nakedness is an important theme in this story.  Chapter 2, the chapter in which all is peaceful and blessing, ends with the statement that Adam and Eve were naked without embarrassment.  This speaks of intimacy and close relations between them.  But as soon as they disobey and their eyes open, the first thing they notice is their nakedness and they become embarrassed.  Immediately they cover themselves with leaves.

Disobedience to God led and always leads to breaks in human relations as well.  Their loss of intimacy is a symbol for a nee distortion in all human relationships.  Estrangement has set in, even in the closest of all human relationships, namely marriage.

Sexual relationships between marriage partners are holy, you will remember, and good.  However, from this point on they are distorted because of sin.

## Day 35 – Pain in Childbearing

**Genesis 3:16 – I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing.**

From the beginning, having children was part of God's plan. The Cultural Mandate of Gen. 1:28 included the command to "be fruitful and increase in number." God created us so that having children would be a natural thing for the human race even before the fall.

But sin has distorted everything. We continue to do the things we are created to do, but what should have been easy and come naturally, now comes with pain and difficulty. In the depths of our hearts, our souls, our minds, distortions have crept in so that everything we do is distorted. Our estrangement from God and each other has complicated everything, including nature. Childbearing, which is supposed to be natural and a pleasure, now comes with great discomfort and agony, as if it were an alien thing for a woman to have children. It often brings death to either mother or child and always pain.

This suffering in childbearing was not original and not meant to be. It is the result of disobedience. Today, with the Gospel having made its inroads, we have facilities to reduce that suffering. We have clinics for antenatal and postnatal care. These clinics and the technology that is used there are the result of the gospel, even when run by non-Christians. Use these facilities with thanksgiving to your Saviour.

**Day 36 – The Battle of the Sexes**

**Genesis 3:16 – Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.**

Human relations became deeply distorted as the result of the alienation sin brought between God and people as well as between people themselves. We saw it in the matter of nakedness. We saw it in blaming others. And now we see more of it, again between husband and wife.

In Gen. 1 we are told that both husband and wife are made in the image of God and both were given the authority to rule. There was no sign of superiority of the one over the other. But here we see that part of the punishment for sin and a result of the distorted relationship is that wives become subject to their husbands' authority in a way that is burdensome. That is a drastic change from the original created situation and not part of God's original design.

Christians are supposed to have overcome the results of the fall at least partially, something that will become more clear as we go on. However, it is very strange that many Christian husbands, especially the more pious ones, seem to enjoy punishing their wives by

ruling over them in a distorted way and by denying them their own original dignity and authority.  If we men are saved, we should also be saved from our exercise of power over our wives and accord them their legitimate created place.  Wives, take heart in Christ and claim your God-given authority.

**Day 70                        Rebellious Women**

**Exodus 1:17   The midwives … feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt told them to do ….**

The basic teaching of the church has always been that Christians honour the government of the day.  That government is usually seen as the servant of God.  To disobey the government is to disobey God Himself.  That basic teaching will continue to serve as an important guiding principle.

But Shiphrah and Puah, two midwives, disobeyed the king's order not only, but the lied about it.  At the end of the story you will find that God blessed them (:20-21) for their disobedience.  The reason for their disobedience was their fear of God.

Pharaoh was forcing them to choose between obedience to God or king.  He wanted them to commit murder.  In such situations, the Bible teaches clearly that we must choose for God and disobey the king or government.  There is a limit to our obedience.  We may not support murder or oppression, not even if our own government or chief demands it.

Civil servants and police are often expected to take part in oppressing the poor.  A friend of mine hosted a census taker in 1992, who reportedly said he was inflating the figures because he was ordered to do so.  The Bible would have encouraged him to disobey.

Though Christians should basically be prepared to obey, when authorities force you to choose between them and God, the Bible is clear what is expected.  Women, be proud of these midwives!  Follow their example.  And you men, too!

**Day 145   Honour Your Mother**

**Deuteronomy 5:16   Honour your father AND your mother….**

The first part of the 5th Commandment reads exactly the same in both versions of the Decalogue.  They use the same word for "honour" and both read "your father AND your mother."  We are expected to honour BOTH of our parents, not just one of them.

In most cultures, including Nigerian cultures, men are honoured more than women. In such cases, it is difficult to honour your mother as much as your father. But remember, in the beginning men and women were TOGETHER given the authority to rule the world. Israel and most other nations had forgotten that original equality and began to discriminate against women. In Babylonian literature of the time there is a warning to honour your father, but the mother is not mentioned. The Roman Empire, the superpower of NT days, knew only of father power and hardly mentioned the mother.

It is against this tendency that both versions of the Decalogue emphasize that honour is due to both parents equally. The Word of God is a liberating Word. It always seeks to free people from every kind of oppression. Here we have the original creation emphasis on equality of honour.

When a mother becomes a widow in Nigeria, she often loses everything, children as well as property. This commandment opposes such practices. It is time church, state and ethnic group unite to restore mother's honour, including that of the widow.

How do you honour YOUR mother?


## Day 146   Freedom or Purdah

## Exodus 20:12   … Honour your … mother.

As you read through the Bible, you will find that much of its language assumes a male-dominated world in which women are sort of second-class citizens. The creation story shows, of course, that this was not the intended arrangement. But God is a God of patience. The fall led to sinful distortions between men and women, with men lording it over women. Here and there in the Bible there are reminders of God's original intentions, as in this commandment. For the rest, God sort of tolerated it, knowing that the human race was not yet prepared for correcting this distortion.

After His coming at Pentecost with a new intensity, the Holy Spirit has been working on many issues. For example, it slowly dawned on people that slavery is not acceptable, even though the NT does not outrightly forbid it. Likewise, it is slowly dawning on the Christian church that women are to be honoured equally with men. This awareness is not limited to the church. It is strong in Nigeria in general. Just read the newspapers.

In Nigeria, Muslims "protect" the honour of women by keeping them at home (purdah). This arrangement may protect women, but it hardly honours them. It assumes a male-

dominated world in which men may move about freely.  It seems more a case of a man protecting his own honour and property than of honouring his wives.

Let us be guided by God as we develop HONOURABLE new gender relationships.


## Day 147   Honourable Dress

## Exodus 20:12   … Honour … your mother.

If you want, honour, you must act honourably.  There is no way people will honour you, if you act shamefully.  This holds true for all, men and women, including mothers and wives.

You should face it, women, mothers.  Too many of you dress in ways that may draw attention to your beauty, but not to your honour.  During the 1993 petrol shortage, I picked up a man and two women in my car.  One of the women decided to sit in front.  I could not fail to notice her beautiful legs because of the way she was dressed.  I know nothing about her honour, but there certainly was nothing in her dress that even encouraged me to think of her honour.  And you do not only see this on the street, but even in church!

I agree with the outrage of Muslims about the loose fashions of today.  I agree with the newspaper complaints about women that dress so provocatively.  Or about female students on the campus, who then turn around and cry "Rape!"  What do you expect?  You get what you ask for.  If you sow dishonour, you harvest dishonour.

Mothers, if you want equal honour with your husbands, dress so as to earn it.  If you want your daughters to be so honoured later, model modesty and honour for them today.  Husbands, encourage your wives and daughters to demonstrate modesty and so deserve the honour due to them.

A mouthpiece of God should dress accordingly.  Especially His image!


## Day 148   Honouring the Elderly

## Proverbs 23:22  … Do not despise your mother when she is old….

Some theologians explain the Fifth Commandment in quite a different way.  They say that Israel had no need for such a command to children, for obedience to parents was deeply ingrained in their culture.  Well, I have never heard of such a perfect world where all children obey their parents!

They claim that this command first of all addresses adults who have aged parents. Such adults are told to honour and care properly for their parents who have become weak and helpless. One writer says that "helpless and aged dependents … are not to be sent abroad to be eaten by beasts or to die of exposure, as was the case in some societies." He could also have commented on the practice of some people today in Western countries who place their aged parents in special homes and then abandon them to cruel profiteers. Though I do not accept this interpretation, it does remind us of something important.

Another writer correctly points to Jesus, the adult Son of Mary. WHILE HE WAS ON THE CROSS, He handed responsibility for His mother to disciple John. While in the midst of terrible agony, He remembered His responsibility for her and carried it out. He did not use His own difficulties as an excuse.

Let us not allow modern pressures to rob us of that sense of responsibility that is part of our Nigerian tradition. Protect and honour your aged parents, no matter your difficulties.


## Day 345   Widows

## Exodus 22:22  Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan.

Exodus 22:21-22 speaks on behalf of the alien, widow and orphan. This is a trio that occurs often in the OT as representative of the most vulnerable groups of people (Deut. 24:17; Zech 7:10; Mal. 3:5). We have dealt with the alien. Let's now turn to the widow.

There is an interesting difference between the way the OT talks of aliens and of widows. The alien is to be protected, but he also has obligations to the community. The OT does not say much about the social obligations of widows, only about their protection. The reason for this difference is, of course, that an alien group can sometimes dominate the locals, but there is no way that a widow or even a group of widows will grow into a threatening social force. Widows are generally a vulnerable group dependent on the goodwill of everyone else.

In our traditional societies widows have generally had a raw deal. Not only have they lost their husbands, but often their children are taken away from them by the in-laws. The in-laws often help themselves to the possessions of the bereaved family. If the in-laws are not Christians, the children of Christian parents can end up in another religion. Many widows can tell you heartbreaking stories.

Because of their special problems, we will spend some days meditating on God's Word to and about widows. Stay with me.

**Day 346   Levirate Marriage**

**Deuteronomy 25:5-6  If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family.  Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her.  The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.**

I thought you would enjoy reading about what is called "levirate marriage," marriage of a widow to her late husband's brother.  Some other nations had similar customs.  God's interest here was protection of the widow as well as continuation of the late husband's name.  It is possible that your own ethnic tradition knows of some arrangement like this.

We are living under different socio-economic conditions today, while the Holy Spirit has moved us beyond polygamy.  The arrangement is thus no longer suitable.  But our obligation to protect a widow stands.  What would be an appropriate modern Christian alternative?  Try to think of something today.  Discuss it with your friends.

**Day 347   Ladi and her In-laws**

**Isaiah 10:1-2  Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.**

Ladi's husband fell into the wrong company after they moved to the city and became a drunkard.  In time he married a second wife and for a while even had a third.  Ladi did all she could to keep her five children fed and clothed.  Her Christian friends helped her get a job with a Christian organization who cared for her.  Her husband eventually died from damaged liver.

Then the real troubles started.  Her in-laws in the village wanted her and the children to return to the village.  They also wanted to take their possessions.  They were not Christian and there was no school in the village.  She had a relatively well-paying job in the city.

What was Ladi to do?  Their particular equivalent of levirate marriage would land her in a heap of troubles.  No job or income to care for the children.  No school for them.  Christian upbringing would become difficult.  And become someone's second wife?

A true example of how a good ancient custom had become outdated.  It now became a vehicle for oppression instead of protection.  With the advice and support of friends, Ladi decided to stay in the city with her children and take care of them.

She was successful, though not without difficulties.  Did she do the right thing?

## Day 348   Social Legislation for Widows

**Deuteronomy 24:19   When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it.  Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.**

Yesterday's verse and story was about laws and customs that were good at one time but have now been overtaken by developments.  They have become oppressive.  Those who insist on still using such customary laws had their ears pulled by the prophet Isaiah: "Woe to those who make unjust laws …, making widows their prey."  "Woe!" "Kun shiga uku!" "Kaito!"  Those are expressions of wrath and punishment.

Today's verse is an example of social legislation on behalf of the poor and weak, including the widow.  In essence it was a call to the harvester not to glean every last straw he can from his farm.  He was to leave a generous portion for the weak to collect for themselves.  It was good legislation by God Himself, but effective only in a farming community, not in the large modern city.  Many people have no access to a farm.

The town and city widows' need is for new provisions to protect them on the part of the government, the church and even society at large.  In some communities, widows and their supporters are setting up centres to provide them social and economic support.  You should support these measures.  Perhaps even start one.

## Day 349   Pure Religion

**James 1:26-27   If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.**

**Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**

For most people, good religion is what you do in church or when you have your quiet time. It is easy to deceive yourself and think you are truly religious in the Biblical sense. But religion that God accepts as faultless is to take care of the poor, including widows.

Often people feel that a Christian should not enjoy himself, or "ji dadi." Not so God. In Deut. 16:10-11 He wants us to give freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you. And rejoice before the LORD your God—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you.

Even the widows have the right to rejoice before God, but you must help them do so by your freewill offerings.

So you desire to be truly religious? You really wish to please God? Then do not first of all go to church or attend the next prayer meeting. Go to the home of a widow.

Some people will not immediately show you they are in difficulty. They will act cheerfully. Some widows may be like that too. However, if you are dealing with a widow, especially one with children, you do not need to ask her whether she has any need. You know she does. Just go ahead and do something for her like paying the school fees for one of her children. That's pure religion, says God.

**Day 350   Widows, God Hears You**

**Exodus 22:22-24   Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.**

Widows, so far I've been talking about you. Today I want to talk to you. Read especially :23 over a few times. Does that not encourage you? If you cry to God, He will CERTAINLY hear you, it says. That's God Himself guaranteeing you that He will hear your cry. How wonderful to have such assurance. Anyone can guarantee anything, but when the crunch comes, they can

back away.  But this is God Himself promising to hear your cry.  I am almost jealous of you.  What a guarantee!  What a promise!

As for those who do take advantage of you, I would not like to be in their place.  It is better to be a widow, I believe, than be one who oppresses widows, for God has the most terrible things in store for him.  He makes God angry.  God will kill him with the sword.  In other words, he will die a violent and painful death.  His wife will become a widow just like you and his children orphans.  Deut. 27:19 says, "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the … fatherless or the widow."

Be comforted also by Deut. 10:18 – "He (God) defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, giving them food and clothing."  That's His promise to you and your children.  He defends you and sees you through.

*Appendix 104:*

# Nigeria and the Islamic Development Bank

> **NOTE: This file contains xxxx articles about IDB. The articles are separated from each other by =======xxxx.**

**List of Documents:**
1. Islamic Banking— no article, only internet links
2. Reps suspend debate on Nigeria's membership of Islamic Bank
3. Islamic Bank Divides House
4. Atiku lauds Nigeria's membership of Islamic Bank
5. Country Joins Islamic Development Bank
6. The "Daily Sun" And IDB Membership

## DOCUMENT 1

# Islamic Banking   NN  17 July 2001, p. 14

[www.Islamiq.com](http://www.Islamiq.com)
[www.failaka.com](http://www.failaka.com)
[www.Muslim-Investor.com](http://www.Muslim-Investor.com)
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## DOCUMENT 2

# THE PUNCH   2005-05-26

Reps suspend debate on Nigeria's membership of Islamic Bank
*Ibanga Isine-Abuja*

A debate by the House of Representatives on a motion for Nigeria's membership of the Islamic Development Bank was abruptly halted on Wednesday when tension rose as members made contributions to the issue.

As members expressed different views on the matter, the Speaker of the House, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, stepped in, advising that the issue be treated with caution since it could jeopardise the unity of Nigeria.

Mr. Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed and 16 other members sponsored the motion, which sought to direct the Federal Government to release $4.5million as an initial subscription for membership of the bank,

They said that the payment of the sum would qualify Nigeria for a $200million interest-free loan annually.

While presenting the motion, Baba-Ahmed said IDB was an international financial institution that provided interest-free long-term loans to finance both private and public sector projects in member countries.

He said that due to the enormous benefits accruable to IDB-member nations, through project financing and other services capable of engendering economic growth, it was necessary for Nigeria to join the body.

He said, "In West Africa, only Nigeria and Liberia are not members of the IDB and other countries like Kenya, Uganda, Malaysia and Thailand are among the 55 member-nations.

"The only outstanding requirement for Nigeria to obtain membership of the IDB is the financial subscription of a minimum of $4.5million which is payable in up to seven tranches over a period of time."

He advised his colleagues against bringing unnecessary sentiments into the issue, saying that a country like Thailand, with only five percent of its population as Moslems, was a member of the group.

According to him, Islamic Development Bank was a mere nomenclature, adding that the bank was not discriminatory in its policies and practices.

Mr. Igwua Aguma supported the argument that Nigeria should join the bank. He said that in this era characterised by government deficit and increasing debt burden, there was a need for the country to look out for debt facilities that would not attract interest.

Aguma said that if Nigeria secured loans from the IDB, it would no longer face the burden of debt rescheduling, as was the case with such facilities obtained from the Western countries.

He said Nigeria should be realistic and avoid undue religious sentiments since membership in IDB would add value to the country's economy.

Contributing to the debate, Mr. Halims Agoda, drew the attention of the House to the provisions of Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution and advised that it would be dangerous if the legislature dabbled into a matter that could jeopardise the corporate existence of the country.

He argued that with the prevailing tension in the country, it would be easy for religious hostility to break out if the country became involved with the bank.

Mr. Depo Oyedokun strongly opposed Nigeria's membership of the bank, saying that in view of its secular nature, a wrong signal would be sent to the Christians and adherents of

other religions.

He asked the sponsors of the motion to explain how the interest of Nigerians who were non-Moslems would be protected since "there is no free lunch anymore."

Dr. Wale Okediran reminded the lawmakers that the situation in some West African countries that are IDB members was different from that of Nigeria.

He argued that the crises that could erupt if the country joined the bank would rubbish the gains.

Sensing the raging emotions, Masari appealed to the members to exercise restraint in the matter because of its sensitivity.

He added that it was fundamental for the House to safeguard the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria.

Rather than commit the motion to vote, Masari asked the Chairman of the House Committee on Business and Rules, Mr. Ita Enang to study IDB's Article of Association and advise the House on what steps to take.

It will be recalled that violence erupted in many parts of the country in 1986 when the then military president Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, attempted to register the country in the Organisation of Islamic Countries.

**DOCUMENT 3**

*THE PUNCH, Thursday, May 26, 2005*
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**THISDAY**    **www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=18393**

# Islamic Bank Divides House

From Ahamefula Ogbu in Abuja, 05.26.2005

The House of Representa-tives was sharply divided yesterday when Nigeria's subscription for membership of the "Islamic Development Bank" (IDB) came up for debate.
Speaker Aminu Bello Masari, however, promptly referred athae matter to the Rules and Business Committee for further deliberations when tempers began to rise.
Masari said to avoid any misunderstanding based on religious sentiments, the Committee

should look for the bank's article of association to enable the House determine its impact on Nigeria's secular nature.

Hon Datti Baba Ahmed informed his colleagues that all loans and other facilities taken from the bank are interest free.

He said the Federal Executive Council had in 1999 made attempts to join the bank, which is an international development financial institution. He said that if Nigeria becomes a member, benefits accruable to the country could be as much as $200 million annually, which would engender economic growth.

Ahmed noted that Nigeria was the only nation in West Africa that was yet to subscribe to IDB whereas the only requirement to join and begin to access the funds from the bank was a subscription of $4.5 million payable in instalments over a period of seven years. He pointed out that countries like Kenya, Uganda, Thailand and Malaysia among others were already members and were benefiting from the scheme adding that there was nothing stopping Nigeria from joining.

Hon Igo Aguma, who seconded the motion, said that in this era of debt problems and budget deficits and pleas for debt cancellations, Nigeria should only go for facilities that would benefit the country maximally with no strings attached, such as the Islamic bank offers.

Trouble, however, started when Hon Halims Agoda called for a point of constitutional order and referred the House to section 10 of the 1999 Constitution, which he said did not allow the country to go into a religiously controversial turf. He was overruled by Masari who pointed out that the section quoted deals with state religion, which was different from the motion.

Deputy House Leader Abdul Ningi said the principle behind the bank was that of interest free funds provision, which the country should not miss on account of sentiment, adding that if other African countries that are multi-religious are members, there was nothing stopping Nigeria from joining.

Hon Kunaiyi Akpana urged members to disabuse their minds and think of the benefits since no other bank was granting such interest free loans. Hon Abubakar Momoh submitted that since religion has been divorced from the bank Nigeria should go ahead and join it.

Hon Depo Oyedokin warned against the House dabbling into issues that would cause divisions in the country, adding that if it were a scheme that would benefit Nigeria, he would be at the forefront.

He said since Nigeria was sitting on a religious tripod of Islam, Christianity and traditional religion, there was need to avoid any semblance of tilting towards a particular one no matter the allure.

Hon Wale Okediran said that the implication of the move was loaded, adding that he was not swayed by the argument that other countries have joined since Nigeria differs in several respects from those that have joined. He referred to past religious violence in Kaduna, Kano and Jos and said the $200 million being spoken of is child's play when compared to the losses from the crises therefrom.

He described the bank's interest-free loan as the "dangling of a carrot which is like 419" and urged his colleagues to reject the motion.

At this juncture, the atmosphere became charged as members even pointed fingers at themselves. After failing to restore order Masari said to ensure that the greater interest of

Nigerians were served, the bank's articles of Association should be produced to see whether it had religious coloration. Members still shouted from the floor that the procedure Masari adopted was against the House Rule and that having heard from both sides he ought to have put the matter to vote. ============xxxx

## DOCUMENT 4

GUARDIAN  OCT 10  2005  ISLAMIC BANK

## Atiku lauds Nigeria's membership of Islamic Bank

**N**IGERIA'S decision to join the Islamic Development Bank is a wise one as it stands to gain from the bank's vast opportunities, Vice President Atiku Abubakar has said.

Receiving the bank's President, Dr. Hamed Mohammed Ali, who led a 10-man delegation to his office on Friday, Atiku said that the bank had enormous opportunities for public sector development.

Atiku recalled that the country's relationship with the bank started years ago, noting that the recent signing of an agreement between the two was to merely formalise its membership.

He said that the bank had been intervening in the country's programmes since they both opened communications some time in the past.

"The presence of the bank in Nigeria is for cooperation and partnership between the people of Nigeria, the bank and other countries of the south," the vice president added.

While noting the bank's interventions in areas such as agriculture, water resources and industry, Atiku urged it to explore other public sector areas for cooperation.

He said that both the people of Nigeria and the bank would benefit immensely from such arrangement.

The vice president also noted that with Nigeria's large population, cooperation between it and the bank would be mutually beneficial.

Speaking earlier, Ali said that the bank was established to enhance south-south cooperation and promote development among them.

He expressed his pleasure with Nigeria's membership of the bank, saying that he looked forward to working with the country for the benefit of its people.

The bank offers interest-free loans to member-countries and is also involved in equity financing, especially in the textile industry.

It also finances equipment leasing and engages in import-export guarantee, technical cooperation and exchange of experts.

Established in 1975, the bank has all the West African countries as members, except for Ghana, while Nigeria is its 56th member.
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## DOCUMENT 5

Nigeria - Thursday June 23, 2005   COMPASS

COUNTRY JOINS ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

## Membership raises religious tension in the country.

June 23, **2005 (Compass)** -- Nigeria has formally joined the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in spite of protests by Christian leaders, who see the move as the continuation of the Islamization of the country by Muslims, increasing the already tense religious atmosphere in Nigeria.

The IDB is run in accordance with the principles of *sharia*, the Islamic law. The bank was established in 1973 in Saudi Arabia, and has its headquarters in Jeddah.

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's finance minister, announced the membership of Nigeria as the 55th member of the Islamic bank on Wednesday, June 15. Okonjo-Iweala stated that the Nigerian government has paid the sum of $3.4 million to the bank as its initial membership subscription.

To become a member in the IDB, a prospective member country should be a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), pay its contribution to the capital of the bank and be willing to accept such terms and conditions as may be decided upon by the IDB Board of Governors. The OIC is an international organization of countries pooling resources to speak with one voice to safeguard the interests of their people and of all Muslims in the world. Nigeria joined the OIC in 1986.

Okonjo-Iweala said at a press conference in Abuja, the nation's capital, that the Nigerian government had wanted to join the bank in 1999, but religious controversy derailed the decision, forcing the government to delay the processing of the country's bank membership.

**Muslims Introduce Motion to Join Bank**

Christian and Muslim legislators in the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of Nigeria's National Assembly, adamantly opposed each other on Wednesday, May 25, while debating Nigeria's decision to become a member of the bank.

Sixteen Muslim members of the House of Representatives brought a motion before the House demanding Nigeria's membership in the Islamic bank. The motion was countered

by the Christian members of the House who saw the demand as a desire to continue the Islamization of the country.

Datti Baba Ahmed, a Muslim legislator in the House and spokesperson for the sixteen Muslim legislators, claimed that Nigeria's membership of the Islamic bank will attract loans of about $200 million to the country annually.

**Christian Legislators Voice Concerns**

However, Halims Agoda, a Christian legislator, countered that Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, under section 10, forbids the government from adopting any religion as a state religion. He said Nigeria's membership in the Islamic Development Bank will indicate that the country is an Islamic state.

Agoda's position was supported by Depo Oyedokin and Wale Okediran, both Christian legislators, who said in view of the prevailing religious atmosphere in the country, Nigeria should not become a member of the bank.

The debate on the issue was inconclusive and tensions remained high among the legislators as both sides fought for their convictions. The leadership of the House then hurriedly adjourned the debate on the issue. While Nigerians were waiting anxiously to see what the outcome would be, the government announced the membership.

**Finance Minister Ignores Concerns**

Okonjo-Iweala said despite the outcry by Christians against membership in the Islamic bank, the government decided to take the membership because, "The IDB is a multilateral development financing institution which promotes economic and social development of member states."

She explained that the Islamic bank performs similar functions to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank.

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The IDB is run in accordance with the principles of *sharia*, the Islamic law. The bank was established in 1973 in Saudi Arabia, and has its headquarters in Jeddah.

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's finance minister, announced the membership of Nigeria as the 55th member of the Islamic bank on Wednesday, June 15. Okonjo-Iweala stated that the Nigerian government has paid the sum of $3.4 million to the bank as its initial membership subscription.

To become a member in the IDB, a prospective member country should be a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), pay its contribution to the capital of the bank and be willing to accept such terms and conditions as may be decided upon by the IDB Board of Governors. The OIC is an international organization of countries pooling resources to speak with one voice to safeguard the interests of their people and of all Muslims in the world. Nigeria joined the OIC in 1986.

Okonjo-Iweala said at a press conference in Abuja, the nation's capital, that the Nigerian government had wanted to join the bank in 1999, but religious controversy derailed the decision, forcing the government to delay the processing of the country's bank membership.

**Muslims Introduce Motion to Join Bank**

Christian and Muslim legislators in the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of Nigeria's National Assembly, adamantly opposed each other on Wednesday, May 25, while debating Nigeria's decision to become a member of the bank.

Sixteen Muslim members of the House of Representatives brought a motion before the House demanding Nigeria's membership in the Islamic bank. The motion was countered by the Christian members of the House who saw the demand as a desire to continue the Islamization of the country.

Datti Baba Ahmed, a Muslim legislator in the House and spokesperson for the sixteen Muslim legislators, claimed that Nigeria's membership of the Islamic bank will attract loans of about $200 million to the country annually.

**Christian Legislators Voice Concerns**

However, Halims Agoda, a Christian legislator, countered that Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, under section 10, forbids the government from adopting any religion as a state religion. He said Nigeria's membership in the Islamic Development Bank will indicate that the country is an Islamic state.

Agoda's position was supported by Depo Oyedokin and Wale Okediran, both Christian legislators, who said in view of the prevailing religious atmosphere in the country, Nigeria should not become a member of the bank.

The debate on the issue was inconclusive and tensions remained high among the legislators as both sides fought for their convictions. The leadership of the House then hurriedly adjourned the debate on the issue. While Nigerians were waiting anxiously to see what the outcome would be, the government announced the membership.

**Finance Minister Ignores Concerns**

Okonjo-Iweala said despite the outcry by Christians against membership in the Islamic bank, the government decided to take the membership because, "The IDB is a multilateral development financing institution which promotes economic and social development of member states."

She explained that the Islamic bank performs similar functions to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank.

## DOCUMENT 6

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GAMJI 220    www.gamji.com/article4000/NEWS4791.htm

The "Daily Sun" And IDB Membership
By Garba A. Isa
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In its editorial of June 21, 2005, the "Daily Sun" newspaper portrayed a burning fire of crass Islam phobia and sentiment in an attempt to discredit the country's decision to join the Jedda-based Islamic development Bank(IDB). The paper particularly described the decision of the Federal Executive Council to formally join the Bank Group having paid the about $3.4million to subscribe to 250 shares of the IDB as "hasty" and "divisive".

The "Daily Sun" is either ignorant or blinded by sheer bias to know that Nigeria's process of entry to the IDB Bank Group began as far back as 1999 and only completed it recently. This cannot therefore be sensibly described as "hasty". The other argument of the paper is that our joining the IDB is "divisive" and a breach of our "secularity" since it is a "faith-based" institution. This writer has always maintained that the our claim to secularism is hypocritical. This nation is from all practical purposes, operated on a "multi-Religious" basis whatever jargons we put on the paper. A pertinent question is should we for instance stop observing Sallah and Christmas celebrations as public Holidays or closing from work to attend to Mosques and Churches on Fridays and Sundays respectively because they are "divisive"? The other possible hypothesis is to stop Government's involvement in Hajj and Christian Pilgrimage in the name of Secularism! The Federal Government recently approved the establishment of several private Universities in the country majority of which are "Faith-based" but the "Daily Sun" and its likes did not criticize for obvious reasons.

The trouble with "bias" as my friend Kabiru Yusuf of "Trust"

Newspapers once said, is that it cannot be erased even by "good education". Otherwise, how can supposedly well educated elites ignore reason and oppose something simply because the "other Religion" is involved even where the benefit is multi-religious or multi-cultural like in the case of the IDB? Beside, some of the member nations of the IDB in Africa for instance which have benefited tremendously in terms of developmental assistance and investment portfolios can hardly be described as "Islamic" notably Gabon, Cameroon, Cote de Ivoire and Mozambique.

In the spirit of mutual co-existence, Nigerians must own the necessary moral courage to adopt the culture of symbiotic relationship anchored on the basis of give and take. We must learn to respect the principles of "Freedom of Choice" under a Democratic setting. The major World financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the Africa Development Bank are basically run on the basis of *interest* charges. But that does mean *non-interest* options should be denied in our competitive national and international business spaces largely dictated by the" market forces". The painful reality in this country is that people often read sentiment into what they perceive as religious advantage to the opposing(?) religion while abandoning the real spiritual demands of the faiths to the dogs. It is in Nigeria that one will oppose what belongs to the "other man's religion" even where it doesn't impinge on his legitimate Rights.
In the final analysis therefore, the "Daily Sun" and its likes must give a breeze to our democratic plain and understand the multiplicity of the society which necessitate the need for varying choices for reciprocal, peaceful co-existence. We should strive to ensure justice and equity on all sides of the national divides as a collective National challenge. As rhe late Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa once said, Nigeria is "big enough to accommodate our differences".

Garba A. Isa

# Study Guides

***NOTES:***

1. *For explanation of these Study Guides go to Chapter 2, p. 15 xxxx*
2. *In the digital version, you can move from one study guide to the next by using Find <xxxx>.*
3. *Sometimes the questions are many. Select the ones you have time for or interest in.*

## Study Guide 1 (Chapter 3, p. 27 xxxx) -- Worldviews[1] .

1. Worldview: (a) What is it?  (b) Who has it?   (c) What does it do?  (133, 166-169 / 96-97, 121-123)
2. What does such a worldview do in your life and culture? ( 133-134, 169 / 96-97, 123)
3. Why do I write that everyone is a believer, even an atheist? (See Proposition 2, 170 / 124)
4. What happens when a country has more than one worldview?  How does that show itself in Nigeria? (168-170 /  123-124)
5. What is the foundation of the (a) Muslim worldview (b) secular worldview (c) Christian worldview?  (170 / 124)
6. Which are the only two Western Christian traditions that provide *motive and inspiration* as well as worldview *content* for working in society*?* Try to explain what this means. (171 / 125)
7. Why do people tend to contrast faith and science as if they are mutually exclusive?[2] (151-154, 180-181 / 110-113, 127-128)

## Study Guide 2 (Chapter 3, p. 34 xxxx) --  Secularism    xxxx

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[1] For further information on worldview, see J. Boer, 1979, pp. 446-460; 1984, pp. 132-137; 1991, pp. 90-96. Note the number format. After each question there are numbers in parentheses ( ).  The numbers are the page numbers in volume 5, where you can find the answer.  The number *before* the slash is the page number of volume 5 in book form; the number *after* the slash is the page number of volume 5 on the *Companion CD-Rom.*

[2] This is a difficult question. If you cannot handle it, simply move on.

1. Muslims often claim that theirs is not a religion but a way of life.  Explain. (126 / 90-91)

2. Is the above the same or different for Christianity?  Explain.

3. How do Muslims see the relationship between Christianity and secularism? (126-127 / 91-92)

4. In this context, what do Muslims see as the central difference between the two religions?  How do you see that? (127 / 91)

5. What is wholistic religion?  (127 / 91)

6. What is dualistic religion? (127 / 91)

7. What is the purpose of Part 2 in Volume 5? (128, 130-131 / 92, 94-95)

8. What is the core question that the four people are asking?  (128-129 / 93)

9. Why did missionaries bring us a secularized gospel?  (129 / 93-94)

10. What effect did the above have in Nigeria?  (129-130 / 94)

11. What is a major difference between Evangelicals and Kuyperians? (130, 132 / 94, 95-96)

12. Describe the disappointment of Walsh and Middleton. (132-133 / 96)

13. What is a worldview and what does it do? (133 / 96)

14. Who was Kuyper and what did he accomplish?  (135 / 97-98)

15. Give some characteristics of the Kuyperian tradition.  (135 –137 / 98-99)

16. What are some of the countries where Kuyper has much influence? (137 / 99)

17.  What does Kuyperianism  repudiate?  What does that mean? (137 / 101)

18. Can you find examples of the above in Nigeria?

19. What does Kuyperianism affirm?  What does that mean? (127 / 100)

20. Can you find examples of the above in Nigeria?

21. Which one of the above two choices (questions 17 and 19) do you prefer?  Why?

22. What is a major reason for the rise of secularism?  (139-140 / 101)

23. Why does Van der Walt find secularism more dangerous than Islam? (141 / 102)

24. Which term is favoured in these pages?  "Secularism" or "secularisation?"  (143, 146-147 / 104, 106-107)

25. How does Marshall characterize the attitude of American secular elite to religion? (143-145 / 104-106)

26. What do Buruma and Sanneh say of secularism?  (145-146 / 106)

27. What is the relationship between secularism and faith?  (148-150 / 107-110)

28. Where does dualism come from and what is it?  (151-154 / 110-112)

29. What is the problem or danger of dualism?  (154-157 / 112-114)

30. What is the main thrust of the Evangelical confession?  (157-164 / 115-120)

31. Quote the most famous statement of Abraham Kuyper. (165 / 120)

32. The sacred/secular hierachy

    a.  What is it?   b.  What does the Bible say about it?  (165-166 / 120-121)

33. What is more important in the Bible, the physical or the spiritual?  (165-166 / 120-121)

34. How do secularists want to restrict religion?  What error underlies this idea? ( (234-235 / 168-169)

35. Explain the modern concept of neutrality (235-236 / 169)

36. What is the origin of this concept and what its error?  (236-237 / 169-170)

37. How has pietism contributed to secularism?  (237-238 / 171-172)

38. What is the Christian alternative to secular neutralism?  (239-240 / 172)


*Study Guide 3 (Chapter 3, p. 41 xxxx) --  Sovereignty of the Spheres*[3]

1.  Explain the basic idea of "sovereignty of the spheres."  (186-190 / 132-135)

2.  What is the importance of this sovereignty of the spheres?  (188-189 and 190-191 / 134-135)

3.  What would Kuyperians say about this statement:  "The custody and regulation of religious affairs rightly belongs to the clergy?"  (192-194 / 137-139)

4.  How can Christians help each other serve God in their daily occupations and professions?  (193-194 / 138-139)

5.  Is the church as an organization equal to the full or entire Body of Christ? (193, 232 / 138, 166)

6.  How have Christians in other countries organized themselves?  (232 / 166)

7.  How do you think Christians can best organize themselves as "bodies of Christ" in

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[3]These issues are all discussed in vol. 5, chapter 6—pp. 177-206 / 147-182.

different areas of life?  This is for your group to work on, using as guidelines the answers to questions 1-6.

## *Study Guide 4 (Chapter 3, p. 45 xxxx) -- Individualism and Communalism/Collectivism[4] xxxx*

1. Please explain the twin evils mentioned on p. 207 / 147. What is wrong with either one?

2. Explain Gousmet's statement that Kuyperian thought is neither individualistic nor communalistic. (208-209 / 147-148)

3. How do you see Nigerian society: individualistic or communalistic? (not in book)

4. What is the effect of individualism in Canada?  (209 / 148)

5. Please summarize Van der Walt's description of individualism. (209-210 / 149)

6. Please summarize Van der Walt's description of communalism. (210 / 148-149)

7. Which does Van der Walt prefer?  Why?  (210-211 / 149-150)

8. Which one do you personally prefer?  Why?  (not in book)

9. Which one does your group prefer?  Why? (not in book).

## *Study Guide 5 (Chapter 3, p. 57 xxxx) -- Pluralism[5]   xxxx*

1. What three things should renewed Nigerian social structures accomplish?
   (178 / 125)

2. Who should be allowed to live in a multi-religious society? (177-178 / 125)

3. What is the Kuyperian concept of pluralism? (212-216  / 151-154)

4. What is the difference between the Kuyperian and secular concepts of pluralism? (212-215 / 151-153)

5. How does pluralism affect access to government funding? (215-216 / 153)

6. Antonides strongly recommends pluralism but does he also favour the creation of a Christian (or Muslim) society?  Why or why not? (217 / 154)

7. Do you agree or disagree with Antonides?  Why?  (not in book)

8. Can you summarize aspects of Mouw's view of pluralism? (217-218 / 154-155)

9. Should Christians ever compromise with Muslims in politics? Why or why not? (217-218 / 154-155)

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[4]These issues are all discussed in vol. 5, Chapter 7, pp. 207-254 / 147-182.
[5]These issues are all discussed in vol. 5, Chapters 6, 7, pp. 177-178, 207-254 /125, 147-182.

10. What is confessional pluralism?  What would this mean in Nigeria? (218 / 155)

11. What is structural pluralism?  How could this be practised in Nigeria?  (218-219 / 155-156)

*Study Guide 6 (Chapter 4, p. 66 xxxx) -- Religion—What and Where[6]   xxxx*

8.  What does it mean that "life is religion" or "all of life is religion/religious?"  (195-200 / 141-144)

9.  What is religion?  (199 / 142)

10. What does it mean that religion lies at the root of our culture? (199 / 143)

11.  What is "heart" in the Bible and how does it function religiously?  (200-203 / 144-146)

12. How do faith and reason interact?  Which comes first?  (202-203 / 145-146)

*Study Guide 7 (Chapter 4, p. 77 xxxx) -- The Human Mission in the World[7]   xxxx*

1.  What is the name of the first ever command given in the Bible? (179 / 126-127)

2.  What was the human race's original religious service?  (179 / 127)

3.  How did the human race pursue the Cultural Mandate after the fall? (180 / 127)

4.  Summarize briefly in broad outline the history of the relation between Christianity and science. (180-181 / 127-128)

5.  What is the relationship between the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission? (181-182 / 128-129)

6.  What is the relationship of economics and politics to the Kingdom of God? (182-183 / 129-130)

7.  What does it mean that we are stewards or trustees of creation/nature? (183 / 130)

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[6]These issues  are all discussed in vol. 5, chapter 6—pp. 177-206 / 147-182.
[7]These issues are all discussed in vol. 5, chapter 6—pp. 177-206 / 147-182.

8. How do divine and human factors work together in our stewardship or management of the earth? (183-184 / 130)

9. How is the human race the image bearer of God? (184 / 130)

10. What does it mean that, according to Islam, we are Allah's vicegerents or *khalifa*? (184-185 / 131). Do you agree with that?

11. How do many people in the West and in Nigeria, cover up God's image in them? (185-186 / 131-132)

## *Study Guide 8 (Chapter 5, p. 108 xxxx) -- Politics and Religion* [8]  *xxxx*

1. If the connection between politics and religion is natural, why do so many Nigerian Christians try to separate them?  Should they be separated? (220-221, 223 / 157-158, 159)

2. What is the difference between Christian ministry and politics? Be careful: this is a trick question! (221-222 / 158-159)

3. How do Muslims see this connection?  (Not in this chapter. Think about it. Ask a Muslim.)

4. If Christ did not engage in politics, why should we?  (222-223 / 159)

5. Should Christian politicians promote the good of Christians only?  Why or why not? (223 / 159) Then what of Muslim politicians?

6. What is the relationship of the state to other social spheres? (224 / 160)

7. How does the concept of sovereignty of the spheres protect liberty?  (224 / 160)

8. Discuss each point of Van der Walt about the role of government, one by one. Be sure to apply the discussion to Nigeria.  This discussion may be enough for an entire sitting. (224-225 / 160-161)

9. Discuss each point of Van der Walt about the role of citizens with respect to government. Be sure to apply the discussion to Nigeria.  This discussion may be enough for an entire sitting. (226-228 / 162-163)

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[8]The issues of this study guide are all discussed in vol. 5, chapter 7, pp. 207-254 / 147-182.

10. What is the similarity and difference between government leaders and church leaders? (229 / 164)

11. What is the main difference in the task of the official church and that of its members in society?  (229, 233-234 / 164, 167-168)

12. What is the responsibility of the church with respect to politics?  (229-231,  233 / 164-165, 167)

13. Why do some people oppose this task of the church in Nigeria? (229-230 / 164)

14. Most Christians and secularists agree on separation of church and state.  Why? (231 / 165-166) Do Muslims also agree? See above.

15. Please describe the difference between the relation of *church* and state and that of *religion* and state. (192-200 / 137-144)

16. Even if we should opt for separation of church and state, what of *religion* and state?  Should they also be separated?  (231-232 / 166)

17. Does separation of church and state mean Christians should not bring their religion into politics?  In one sense, no; in another sense, yes.  Try to explain. (232 / 166)

18. Read the paragraph about how Christians in some countries organize themselves politically.  What do you think should be done in Nigeria?  Why?  (232-233  and Appendix 16 / 166-167)

19. In what way should church members be involved in society?  (233 / 167)

20. What is my proposed formula for church/mosque relations to government? Please describe the content and the intention of this formula. Discuss its pros and cons. (pp. 11, 16, 18 xxxx above) Please note that the formula will be further expanded in succeeding chapters.


*Study Guide 9 (Ch. 8, p. 151 xxxx) -- Religion Distorted as "Party"  xxxx*

1. Why do governments and religious leaders often downplay the role of religion? (2-82 / 2-61)

2. Describe the two aspects of religion referred to in this section. (2-82, 83; 5-110, 111 / 2-61; 5-80)

3. Which of the two is most important, if any?  (above)

4. What happens when the communal is given priority over the personal? (2-82, 83 / 2-61)

5. When that happens, the interests of religious leaders moves from what to what? (2-83 / 2-62)  Try to give an example.

6. In such cases, what happens to the personal or spiritual?  (2-83 / 2-62)

7. Explain: Religion has been degraded into a political party or tribe with its own motivations that usually go contrary to the spirit of the personal aspect. (2-83 / 2-62)

8. When Christians kill, what does not and what does guide them? (2-83 /  2-62)

9. In what sense do they now look and act like a party or tribe? (2-83 / 2-62

10. Why do some people call for the abolition of religion and of God? (2-83 / 2-62)

11. What is it that makes Shehu Sani fear religion in politics? (4-51, 52 / 4-35)

12. Give some examples of what people do when they love a religion more than the truth of the religion. (5-111 / 5-80, 81)

13. Describe a religious community that acts like a tribe. (5-111 / 5-81)

14. Describe tribalism, its nature and what it does to religion according to these pages. (5-110, 111, 112 / 5-80, 81, 82)

15. Why do some people want to separate religion and politics? (5-112 / 5-81)

16. Describe the "shura/consensus" component of my proposed formula.  What do you think of it?  (for *shura*--pp. 123, 128,141, 149-150, 153-154; for "consensus"—pp. 140-141, 149, 151-154. xxxx above)


*Study Guide 10 (Chapter 6, p. 154 xxxx) -- The Problem of Ethnocentrism  xxxx*

1. Give two words that mean the same as "ethnocentrism." (5-116 / 5-86)

2. How is it related to ATR? (5-116 / 5-86)

3. Is it enough to be aware of it? (5-117 / 5-86)

4. What role does it play in your ethnic group?  (5-117 / 5-86)

5. What role does it play in your own life? (5-117 / 5-86)

6. How does ethnocentrism put the demands of the group above those of God? (5-117 / 5-86, 87) Can you give an example from your own ethnic group?

7. Why is it sometimes difficult to distinguish religious and ethnocentric causes? (5-117 / 5-87)

8. Explain "The blood of tribe is thicker than the water of baptism." (5-118 / 5-87)

9. How do ethnocentric people tend to react towards a progressive or ambitious person? Not in Volume 5.[9] You have to think this one through in your group.

*Study Guide 11 (Chapter 6, p. 154 xxxx) -- Individualism vs Collectivism   xxxx*

1. What is a dominant theme in Kuyperian thought on this subject? (5-208 /5- 147)

2. Kuyper found and opposed a collectivist state.  Describe it.  What did it do? (5-208 / 5- 147-148)

3. Explain "no man is an island."  (5-208 /5- 148)

4. Why did Kuyper reject individualism? Be sure to read the entire Gousmett quote.(5-208-209 /5- 148)

5. Why did Kuyper reject collectivism? Again, read the entire Gousmett quote.(5-209 / 5-148)

6. Summarize my description of an individualistic society.  What does it look or feel like?  (5-209 / 5-148)

7. Which is the dominant view in Africa, according to van der Walt?  Does that reflect you?  (5-210 / 5-149)

8. Where or how do we find "our true identity?"  (5-211 /5-150)

9. Which of the two dimensions should be used in community development? Why? (5-211 / 5-150)

10. How do these two dimensions relate to each other? (5-211 / 5-150)

*Study Guide 12 (Chapter 7, p. 215 xxxx) – Human Rights [10]*

1. What is the basic human rights principle on which Kuyperians and Muslims agree? (p.xxxx)  Do you agree with this principle?

2. According to Spykman, what is the standard for human rights and on what is it grounded?  (p. xxxx)

3. Do you have any idea about "creation order?"  What do you think it is? (Endnote 3, and pp. 3-4) xxxx

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[9]B. van der Walt, 1994, p. 214.
[10]Unlike previous study guides, this one is meant to help you immerse yourself in the foregoing discussion, not materials from vol. 5.  The numbers represent the page numbers in this chapter where you can find the answers.

4.  What assignment are both religions given? (p. 2)  xxxx

5.  How do the Bible and Humanists differ on human rights? (p. 3) xxxx

6.  What are the three relationships that underlie all human rights? (p. 3) xxxx

7.  Explain the relationship between imaging God and human rights. (p. 3) xxxx

8.  Do human rights only apply to individuals? (pp. 4, 7. xxxx . See also Volume 5, pp. 208-211)

9.  What is the criterion for a valid human right? (p. 4) xxxx

10. Name the two religious rights on p. 6 xxxx  and explain them. Do you think they are acceptable to both religions?

11. What is the church committed to with respect to human rights in the REC statement? Is this currently being practised?  Give some examples. (p. 6) xxxx

12. With what does REC hope to replace adversarial social relationships?  What does "adversarial" mean? (p. 6).xxxx

13. Explain "vicegerent." What word to Muslims have for it? (p. 7) xxxx. See also Volume 5, pp.  184-186)

14. What creates injustice? (p. 7) xxxx

15. What is the duty of the Government in the face of conflicting human rights claims? (p. 8) xxxx

16. What are positive human right laws? (p. 8 xxxx, in the box)

23. What do Sanneh, Kuyperians and Muslims agree on with respect to the relationship between religion and politics? Do you agree or disagree?  Why? (p. 8) xxxx

17. If the OIC succeeds in Nigeria, how will that affect Muslims? (pp. 10-11) xxxx

18. Who should be kept out of the negotiations between Christians and Muslims?  Why? (p. 11) xxxx

19. What is a major difference between the way Muslims are treated in the West and Christians in Muslim countries or communities? (p. 12) xxxx

20. Explain *dhimmi* status.  Does it exist in Nigeria?  Have Muslims always insisted on it? (p. 12)  xxxx

21. What am I suggesting as a possible replacement of the formula "separation of church and state?" Do you favour this replacement? Why or why not? (p. 13) xxxx

22. What aspect of religion should *not* be separated from the state? What formula should we use there? What does this formula mean? (p. 13) xxxx

23. What does it mean that we are a race of believers? (p. 14) xxxx

24. Why is religion at home in state and politics? (p. 14) xxxx

25. What is the purpose of this chapter? Do you feel it has succeeded? How or why? (p. 15) xxxx

26. How can the perspective of this chapter help in creating more mutually respectful dialogue between Christians and Muslims? This question assumes you have read some of the other volumes, especially Volumes 4 and 6. (p. 15) xxxx


*Study Guide 13(Chapter 9, p. 244 xxxx) -- Economics and Business[11]*

1. What is the difference between seeing commerce, for example, as an *area* or as a *vehicle* for mission? (241-242 / 174)

2. What is the Christian mandate for economics and all other areas of life? (242 / 175)

3. What are the problems of Marxism? 242-243 / 175)

4. What is the attitude of the Bible with respect to private property and enterprise? (243 / 175)

5. Why do some want to restrain freedom? What is the negative effect? (243 / 175-176)

6. What problems does the priority of profits create? (244 / 176)

7. The priority of profits should be replaced by what? What effect might that have? (244 / 176-177)

8. Could you envision Christians who understand the issues above to join with Muslims to operate such businesses? Why or why not? (244-245 / 177)

9. What problems is modern capitalism (globalism) creating today? (245 / 177)

10. Is capitalism good enough for Christians? Why or why not? (245-246 / 177)

11. According to the Cultural Mandate, what should Christians be doing? (246 / 178)

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[11]These issues are all discussed in vol. 5, Chapter 7, pp. 241-248 / 174-180.

12. What does it mean for the Bible to serve as a brake? What is wrong with that? (246 / 178)[12]

13. What does it mean for the Bible to serve as engine? (246-247 / 178-179)[13]

14. How can the Holy Spirit of God guide you in your economic or business efforts? (247 / 178-179)

15. How do Christians often contradict themselves? (247 / 179)

16. What causes this contradiction? (247 / 179)

17. Explain the formula "business equals mission." (247 / 179)

18. How do the Kuyperian and Muslim styles differ from that of secularism? (248 / 180)

## *Study Guide 14 (Chapter 10, p. 276 xxxx) -- Law, Religion, Culture[14]*

1. What is a major reason Christians reject sharia?

2. What is the basis for this reason?

3. What Muslim claim about Common Law do Christians reject? Who is correct here? How do you know?

4. Fill in the blanks: The separation of _____ from _____ that people are talking about today is *not* the separation of *all* religion but of *one* religion, namely _____ from law. The _____religion has been replaced by the faith or worldview of _____, no less a religion or belief system, since it, too, deals with "ultimate concerns."

5. What does Hebden Taylor say about Western Common Law and religion?

6. According to Berman, what is the relationship between Canon Law[15] and modern Western law?

7. According to Berman, where and when were the foundations of Western law laid?

8. According to Berman, what happens when law and religion are conceived narrowly? How is this true for developments in Nigeria?

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[12]For Bible as brake or engine (see next question) go to J. Boer, 1992, pp. 195.

[13]Hassan al-Turabi once said, "Religion is the motor of development." Quoted in S. Huntington, 1996, p. 100.

[14]Unlike previous study guides and with the exception of one endnote, the questions below are drawn only from the section you have just read. The reason for the study guides in this chapter is to help you, the reader, realize the radical nature of the discussion here, radical in the sense of going back to the *radix* or root issues of history and religion.

[15]J. Boer, 2008, vol. 7, pp. 74, 80-90, 400-401, 431.

9. According to Berman, what is the key to Nigeria's future?

10. According to Berman, "People will not give their allegiance to a political and economic system, and even less to a philosophy, unless…… People will desert institutions that…….. (Complete the sentences) Can you see this happening in Nigeria? How?

11. Please summarize the Ado-Kurawa report. If this is true, what could this mean for Nigeria?

## Study Guide 15 (Chapter 10, p. 278 xxxx) -- Law and Secularism[16]

1. Why can the Muslim complaint about the imposition of a foreign religious law no longer be ignored?

2. Why can Christians no longer complain about Muslims imposing *a religious* law on them?

3. What is the parameter shift Christians must now develop?

4. Why do Christian graduates have no strong defense against secularism?

5. When secularism replaced Christianity, it replaced religion. True or False? What then *did* happen? (see p. 8) xxxx

6. Nigerians are now faced with a choice of three religions. Please name them.

7. What is the underlying issue here?

8. What do you think of Murray Last's statement?

## Study Guide 16 (Chapter 10, p. 289 xxxx) -- Law and Imposition

1. Can you explain the meaning of "double imposition" in the above section?

2. Can you explain the meaning of "double repugnancy" in the above section?

3. What needs to be done to make Nigeria's laws indigenous to all of us?

4. In the first two paragraphs of this section there are three items on which Christians and Muslims agree with each other. List them.

5. What is the first step to take to make our laws relevant to our various cultures?

6. Whether people push the sharia or Common Law, they are doing the same thing. What is this "same thing" they are doing?

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[16]The questions in this Study Guide are based on the section you have just read.

7. What are the two things that prevent Byang—and most other Christians—from clear thinking about these issues?

8. In what way is sharia both foreign and indigenous in the core North?

9. What offence are both religions committing in Nigeria?

10. What are the three things Christians should do to correct their contradictions?

11. Summarize the suggestions in the box about what Muslims and Christians should do. Are you prepared to give that a try?  Why or why not?  What is the consensus of the whole group?

12. The provisions of  Common Law and sharia are very similar with a few exceptions. What kind of suspicion does this evoke?  What could be a possible Christian response? What contradiction could arise from such a response?

*Study Guide 17 (Chapter 10, p. 293 xxxx) -- Law: Permanence and Change*

1. What have Zamfara-style sharia proponents not considered?

2. What is the problem with the idea of an unchanging codified law?

3. What do advocates of an unchanging law ignore?

4. What do Kuyperians and Muhammad Asad have in common in their interpretation of divine law?

5. How do Kuyperians and secularists differ with respect to laws and social structures?

6. What is permanent and what is temporary in law?

7. Try to explain Rushdoony's view of law.

8. Browse through this section and explain what you have learned about divine norms and human codified law.  What is their relationship?