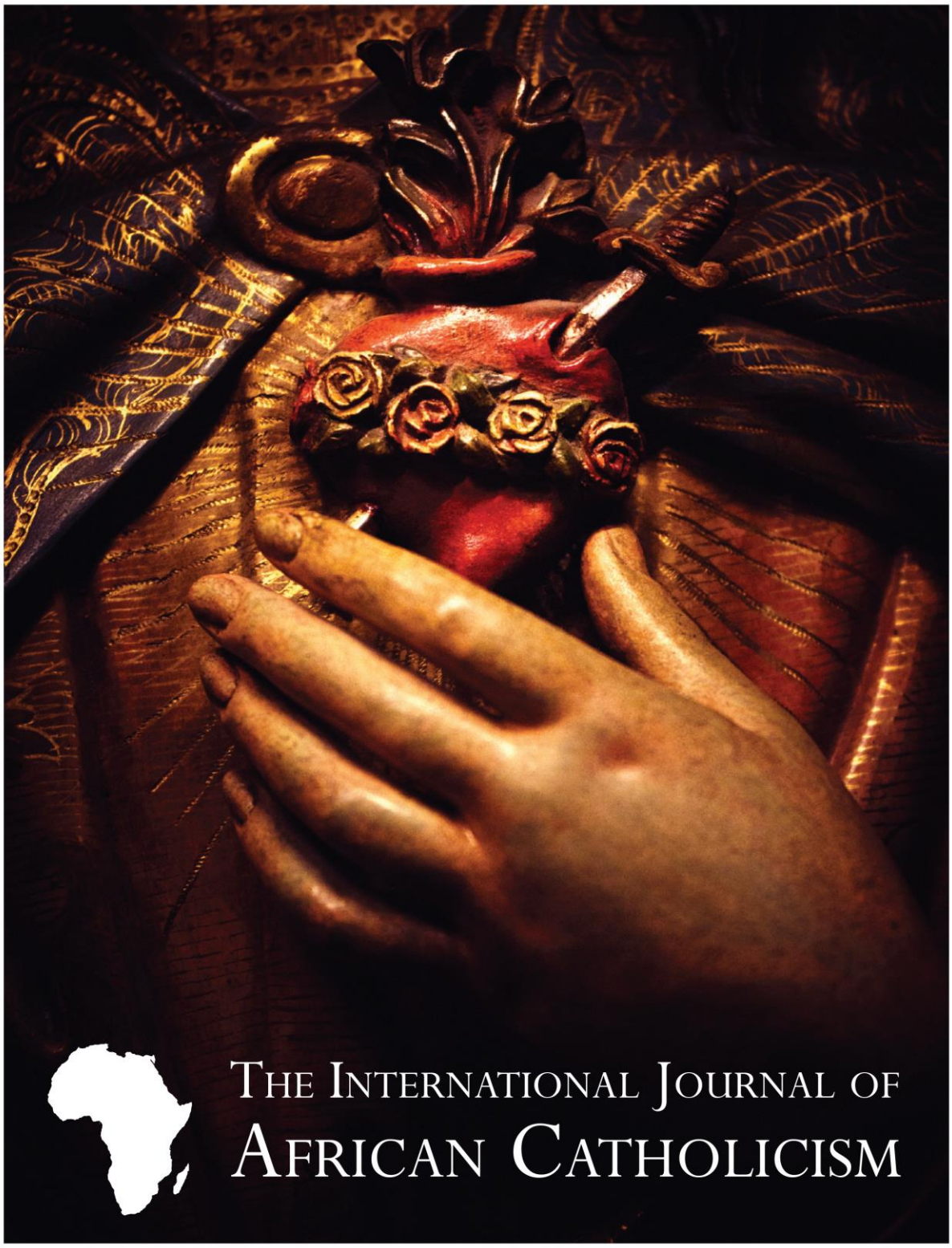

Editor Randall Woodard, Ph.D.

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The Impact of COVID-19 on Congregations of Catholic Women Religious:

A Case Study in East Africa

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine how congregations of women religious in East Africa responded to the COVID-19 pandemic under unique and varying levels of mitigation efforts. Kenya was a country under partial lockdown, Uganda under total lockdown, and Tanzania experienced no lockdown throughout the pandemic. The survey sampled major superiors, also known as congregational leaders (N = 173), from both pontifical right (66%) and diocesan right (34%) congregations. The study utilized a convergent mixed methods survey design. The findings of this study revealed that the majority of congregations experienced adverse negative impacts from the pandemic. The study also found that most congregations do not have sufficient risk mitigation strategies or policies (60%), with some congregations (16%) reporting that they did not have any such risk mitigation strategies in place. This translates into nearly eight in ten congregations (76%) lacking comprehensive and necessary policies or strategies for risk mitigation for management of their ministries. Based on these findings, it is recommended that congregational leaders be provided with necessary training and opportunities that will allow them to create policies that safeguard the wellbeing of their members and develop strategies to govern their practice during unprecedented circumstances, such as those created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Superiors, pandemic, policies, risk mitigation, East Africa

Women religious in the Catholic Church are also known as Catholic sisters or nuns constituted under the institutions of consecrated life (Can. 607-709). Women religious as such, are a group of consecrated women who "assume the observance of the three evangelical counsels by public vow and are consecrated to God through the ministry of the Church" (Can. 654). For the purpose of this study, the term women religious is preferred to include both the apostolic and contemplative life of those who respond to the call and are canonically instituted for the work of the Church. The work or ministry of women religious around the world seeks to reach the poor, underserved, and marginalized populations. During the pandemic of the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19), the presence and work of women religious intensified, as was the case for all essential workers.

Notably, in East Africa, congregations of women religious were on the frontlines of relief efforts to ease the suffering associated with COVID-19 (Gingrich, 2020; Gitonga, 2020). The pandemic has had adverse negative effects on the vitality of congregations of women religious,

similar to other areas where the extent of the impact has not been previously explored (Allen, 2020). A study conducted by the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC, 2020) during the early stages of the pandemic, revealed that financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic was a major area of need for the ministries of women religious in Africa (ASEC, 2020). However, this study did not include major superiors, also known as congregational leaders, amongst the participants and did not explore this matter in further detail. Therefore, this gap led to the participant selection of major superiors, to explore in-depth and to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women religious in East Africa at the congregational level.

The study also intended to assess the main sources and reliability of information to congregations' members about the pandemic. In addition, the study explored the means of financial support to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic under unique circumstances of the lockdown within the East African region. This region encompasses Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, where each country experienced unique preventive measures to thwart the spread of the virus. This study sought to further investigate the kind of differences and similarities that emerged within and across the countries to determine the impact as experienced by leaders of congregations of women religious and their members. The significance of the study was projected to highlight the importance of policies and preparedness in disaster/risk mitigation strategies.

This study was designed to answer two central research questions: What is the impact of COVID-19 on congregations' vis a vis members and their ministries? Were there major differences in the impact between congregations of pontifical and diocesan right? The status of congregations is defined as "pontifical if the Apostolic See has erected it or approved it through a formal decree. It is said to be of diocesan right, however, if it has been erected by a diocesan bishop but has not obtained a decree of approval from the Apostolic See" (Can. 589). To answer these questions, the following aspects were assessed: funding sources, access to information on the pandemic, congregational investments, strategies of risk and disaster mitigation, and support from associations/conferences of women religious (A/CWR) compared to conferences of Catholic bishops (CCB) in their countries.

This study is significant particularly for congregational leaders and the Church in general in understanding on a wider scope the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the internal systems of congregations and the experiences of others within the same region. The findings may point to areas of strength and areas of improvement in policy formulations for congregations as pertains to preparation for disaster/risk mitigations. The outcomes of this study add to existing literature in disaster management strategies and can also be used to enhance the vitality of congregations of women religious in Africa south of the Sahara as it relates to their own investments.

Review of Literature

In June 2020, a representative of the Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA) reported that the closure of income generating ministries (i.e., teaching, social services) during the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for congregations

of women religious in Africa to sustain themselves (Allen, 2020). A study conducted on the impact of COVID-19 on nonprofit stakeholders found that ministries managed by women religious were the most negatively impacted when compared to ministries managed by the lay (ASEC, 2020). The impact of COVID-19 was experienced in many spheres of everyday life due to the lockdown with great variation in degree of severity (Shupler et al., 2020). The greatest negative impact was cited in the education and healthcare professions (ASEC, 2020; Ochillo & Elsie, 2020).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of September 2, 2020, Kenya had recorded 34,315 cases of COVID-19 and 577 deaths from the disease. The first case of COVID-19 was identified in Kenya on March 13, 2020 and the government then instituted lockdown restrictions including: curfews, restricting movement in and out of major cities, limiting public vehicles to 60%, mandated face masks, closures of schools, prohibiting handshaking, and a ban of all public gatherings (Huho, 2020). Hugo (2020) found that lockdown measures had created numerous unanticipated outcomes throughout Kenya such as: increased rates of domestic violence, financial hardships, disruption of children and youth's education, police brutality, and teenage pregnancy. Huho also identified many opportunities created by the pandemic in Kenya including innovations (i.e., ventilator development, digital platforms, ICT), improved hospital facilities, diversification of livelihoods, improved hygiene, governmental tax relief, and closer family bonds.

Ochillo and Elsie (2020) advance that instances of depression and anxiety were the most prevalent issues resulting from the pandemic. They also found that mental health is not adequately studied in Kenya, where there is only one mental health facility in the entire nation and few practitioners in the discipline of mental health (Ochillo & Elsie, 2020). Anxiety and mixed reactions were met with proposals made by political leaders in Kenya to have students repeat their level of education in 2021, other than the primary and high school candidates in the class of 2020 (Mbogo, 2020). Other impacts in Kenya associated with the pandemic included increases in food prices, food shortages, and exploitation of natural resources, such as wood and kerosene, which are the primary source of household utilities for most families (Daily Nation Kenya, 2020; Shupler et al., 2020).

In Tanzania 509 cases of COVID-19 and 21 deaths had been reported by the WHO as of September 2, 2020. Efforts to stop the spread of the virus by the Tanzanian government included, for a limited time: closure of schools, encouragement of physical distancing, restrictions on mass gatherings, and handwashing/mask wearing campaigns (Rugarabamu, Ibrahim, & Byanaku, 2020). Despite these efforts, Richards (2020) found that Tanzania may have been underreporting the severity of the spread of COVID-19 in the country. The release of COVID-19 cases for Tanzania were stopped on April 29, 2020 and the country paused all testing on May 4, 2020. Reports also abound that the true COVID-19 situation in Tanzania was unknown as the Tanzanian government silenced media outlets and hospitals by sending the sick home (Richards, 2020). In Tanzania, even though limited lockdown measures were instituted during the pandemic, negative impacts associated with political economy, particularly in tourism and trade, were reported (Saleh, 2020). In Tanzania, similar to Kenya, negative impacts were also expanded to include an increase in food prices, which ultimately affected access to quality food, and acute food shortages for many citizens (Nordhagen, 2020).

The WHO report of September 2, 2020 showed Uganda had 3,037 cases of COVID-19 and 32 deaths recorded. The first case of COVID-19 in Uganda was identified on March 21, 2020, since then measures of containment included a total lockdown: closure of borders, closures of schools, suspension of mass gatherings, and suspension of public and private transportation (Kawuki et al., 2020). Uganda being a landlocked country experienced adverse impacts compared to Kenya and Tanzania (Rwengabo, 2020). Longstanding collaborative partnerships amongst agencies such as the Ugandan Ministry of Health, the WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Infectious Diseases Institute permitted early success of the virus containment within the country (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Challenges that have been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have also reinforced some perennial rivalry between some countries, a case in point being Uganda and Rwanda (Rwengabo, 2020). Most of the rivalry is associated with the closure of borders, which had a major impact on trade and industry within East African communities (Rwengabo, 2020). Major challenges include price increase on goods and delays in reaching the consumers, which inevitably has had a negative impact on the economies in all the three countries of East Africa. The WHO, and most studies report on matters of infections, deaths, economic impact, education but did not explicitly explore categorical impact on individuals and distinct groups of service providers. This study focuses on leaders of congregations of women religious as individuals and their members as service providers in relation to their experiences during the pandemic.

Methodology

This study utilized a convergent mixed methods survey design, with data being collected at one point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Following a study on stakeholders' experience during the pandemic, the selection of East Africa was identified through the lockdown status, which provided the unique case study under scrutiny. Selection of East Africa therefore was done through purposive sampling (Patten & Newhart, 2018), for three unique characteristics within the geographical scope: total lockdown in Uganda, partial lockdown in Kenya, and minimal lockdown in Tanzania (ASEC, 2020).

Participant Selection

Participants in this study were chosen through purposive and convenience sampling methods (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Patten & Newhart (2018) define purposive sampling as the selection of a specific group of respondents who meet the desired goal for a study. The population sample is presented as leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in East Africa. The convenience sampling method was preferred because of the availability of respondent contact information using the database of an international nonprofit serving the population. The assistance of country directors/coordinators from the nonprofit on the ground in East Africa was utilized to identify potential participants.

Data Collection

Data was collected using Survey Monkey, an online cloud-based survey tool. The link to the survey was shared with participants through email contacts sourced from the sponsoring

agency database. Additional assistance was provided through country directors/ coordinators in each of the three countries. To ensure that a vast majority of major superiors had been reached, the country directors and program coordinators contacted participants via WhatsApp group platforms and provided the link to the survey.[1]

Results and Dicussion

Data Analysis

The study's central question was to determine if there were differences in the experiences of COVID-19 pandemic in congregations of pontifical right and congregations of diocesan right. Congregations of pontifical right have a higher juridical status with the ecclesial authority resting with the Pope, while the ecclesial jurisdiction for diocesan congregations rests with the local Bishop where the women religious serve (Can. 589). Such nuances and guiding policies were considered in this study to determine if the impact of the pandemic was explained by such differences or they were similar in all circumstances regardless of the status. Data analysis was conducted using IBM Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26 for quantitative analysis. While qualitative analysis was conducted using the constant comparative method in NVivo Pro 11. Further assessment of the impact was analyzed on thematic areas of financial support, access to information, policies, challenges, and lessons taken from the COVID-19 phenomenon.

Demographics

The majority of the participants were found to be from pontifical right congregations 66% (n = 79), while 34% identified as congregations of diocesan right (n = 40). For this demographic variable, some participants (n = 60) did not provide their congregation status. In this study, 65% of participants have completed the sponsoring organization's Superiors' Workshops.

To delve deeper into demographic data about the participants and some possible explanations for differences that may have come from respondents, the following data was analyzed. Descriptive statistics found the mean age of participants in this study was 53 years, the mode was 50, while the median age was 53. The minimum and maximum age of participants was 37 and 75, respectively. Participants were also asked to report on the numbers of years they had served in their occupations, the mean for the years of service was six, the mode and the median being five years, respectively.

A comparison of the groups, that is, congregations of pontifical right and congregations of diocesan right, was made to examine their similarities and differences at various levels to respond to the research questions on the impact of COVID-19. By highlighting a comparison on policies of risk mitigation within congregations, the leaders were asked to indicate the nature of

[1] The questionnaire contained 12 descriptive questions and 2 qualitative questions. The researchers projected that the survey would take no more than 20 minutes to complete and allowed for a duration of two weeks for participants to complete the survey.

preparedness and risk management skills their congregations provide members. These were defined as full professional courses, short courses, internal congregational policies, or no strategies analyzed as dummy variables. The highest response to this question was associated with congregations who provided short courses for their members (40%, *n* = 66). Further scrutiny of congregational status revealed that congregations of pontifical right were more likely to engage in short courses (62%), compared to congregations of diocesan right (38%). This finding aligns with other scholars who found that congregations invest in short courses for their members more than full professional courses (Njageh, 2015). Njageh's study conducted among young sisters in Kenya, found that a majority of congregations invest in seminars and workshops which last only a few days, weeks, or months (Njageh, 2015).

Another proportion of 16% (*n* = 28) respondents, representing congregations across the three countries in this study, indicated that they do not have any strategies for risk/disaster mitigation. Congregations of pontifical right were less likely to have policies (68%) compared to those of diocesan right 32% who did not have such policies. However, for those with written policies, congregations of pontifical right were represented by 74% compared to those of diocesan right represented by 26%. This outcome affirmed a study conducted in Uganda which revealed that a lack of policies for education in congregations inhibits the professional development and preparedness of its members for ministry (Nakitende, 2015).

Similarly, in a study conducted in Tanzania between two congregations of women religious, results identified gaps between congregational and government policies (Bandiho, 2019). Most women religious did not meet the standard regulations outside their congregation, thus government policies systematically cut them off from inclusion during recruitment for service or promotions within the government sector (Bandiho, 2019). Investment in full-fledged or accredited courses is one of the weakest points by congregations in this study as a resource for professional development for women religious (*n* = 26). This statistic represents a higher number from congregations of pontifical right (58%) compared to their counterparts (42%) of those reporting from congregations of diocesan right, who have considered full-fledged courses for professional development.

Access to the Results

During the pandemic, many people struggled to find a dependable source of knowledge due to variable circumstances and misinformation about COVID-19. In this study, congregations' preferred source of information for their members was television news broadcasts. Television news was utilized by 60% (*n* = 108) respondents, where participants from pontifical right congregations utilized television news more frequently (67%) compared to those from diocesan right congregations (33%). This was followed in frequency by members' access to the internet (58%, *n* =104), where participants from congregations of pontifical right had higher access (68%) compared those from congregations of diocesan right (32%). Congregational circulars were utilized by 56% (*n* = 100), where 71% congregations of pontifical right used this tool of communication, compared to 29% of the congregations of diocesan right. Congregations' social media platforms were the least utilized medium to access information (*n* = 59), with the majority of those utilizing this medium being congregations of pontifical right (73%).

Funding Sources

Many challenges that were caused by the pandemic required urgent financial interventions, as identified by participants in a study conducted during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak (ASEC, 2020). Congregational leaders were asked to report on their situation and sources of funding during the pandemic. It emerged that congregations were forced to pull funding from their investments, where about 40% of participating congregations reported utilizing this financial resource. The highest number of congregations in this study reported getting no funding from any of the named sources, constituting 27% of respondents, while the least help to congregations came from the government (1%), see Table 1.

Those congregations that received funding for their needs were most often supported by independent donors constituting 21% (n = 37). A combination of help coming from the dioceses and/or the Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCB) provided financial assistance to only 3% of congregations *(*n = 6) compared to 2% of respondents who reported that their assistance came from Rome (n = 4).

Funding sources were also cross-examined by the designation of funds, which was defined as help for the women religious in the congregation or help for the beneficiaries in their ministries. The majority of respondents in this study were those who did not receive help, constituting 35% of respondents (n = 63). For those congregations that did receive help, 18% (n =32) received financial assistance for women religious in the congregation, while 15% (n = 27) received help for beneficiaries in the ministries managed by women religious.

Funding from Associations/Conference of Women Religious (A/CWR)

The highest number of respondents in this study reported that they did not receive any help from their country's association/conference of women religious (CWR, 26%, n = 46). Among those who reported receiving help (6%, n = 11) this was associated with supply of information through circulars (25%, n = 45) and training on COVID-19 (18%, n =33). Only about one in ten of participants reported having received funding (12%, n = 22) from their country's conference/association of women religious. Table 1 presents statistics of needed assistance and their sources from respondents in this study. These results present the situation reported by participants at various levels of mitigation for the three countries under study.

Most Challenging Aspect of the Pandemic

The participants were asked an open-ended question, *in whichever level of lockdown you experienced, which ONE aspect did you find to be the most challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic?* The leaders in this study reported challenges in five key areas (in order of frequency): (a) financial crisis, (b) meeting the basic needs of sisters, (c) lockdown restrictions, (d) social isolation, and (e) fear.

The leaders identifying financial challenges reported no or minimal sources of income for their congregations due to the closure of their own income generating projects. This resulted in the inability to pay the salaries of those employed by their asset organizations (i.e., schools, hospitality centers). They also reported the inability to meet the additional financial burden associated with the pandemic, such as more sisters returning to their mother houses without additional financial support. One respondent wrote, "30 sisters who were working to private/diocese institutions were not paid their wages for three months and 35 students gathered at our mother house while we were not having their budget" [sic].

The second most common reported challenge was an increased number of individuals in need of services in their ministries. Congregations found it challenging to feed, provide medical care, and shelter their sisters, this was especially true for elderly sisters within congregations. For example, one participant reported, "It has been also difficult to buy some medicine for the sisters especially for the elderly, very hard" [sic].

The lockdown restrictions were cited by major superiors as a significant challenge associated with their daily operations. The Sisters were unable to access transportation and could not travel, this caused great difficulty for superiors whose ministry sites were spread in various regions. Many congregations reported having no means of transportation, as one wrote, "travelling was a real challenge to my community since we have no private means of transportation. We use public transport." The lockdown required many sisters like other citizens to cancel plans, stop providing some services, and stay home - all of which posed unprecedented challenges to their clients and ministries that were not considered essential services.

Social isolation or infrequent in-person social contact was also reported as a challenge by the major superiors. Social isolation was reported as not being able to attend funerals and other rites of passage, which caused much anxiety within the congregations among members. As women religious, not being able to attend Holy Mass in-person created a sense of social isolation. The participants also found it challenging to remain in limited communication with their loved ones and maintain their relationships through physical distancing. Lastly, the participants cited an overall sense of fear as a great challenge during the pandemic, mostly associated with the uncertainty of the situation. Not knowing what would happen next and receiving mixed messages from others through social media all contributed to this fear. One participant described it as, "psychological torture because of hearing about death and no witness" [sic].

Differences in Challenges by Country

Despite differences in the degree of mitigation efforts in the countries under study, no major differences were found when comparing greatest challenges associated with the pandemic by country. The order of frequency of cited challenges remained the same for those in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. There were however some anecdotal references to differences in experience, for example a study participant from Uganda wrote:

> We could not have common retreats as had been arranged. Our candidates to religious life could not wait until COVID-19 is over, so we lost some. They joined congregations

> with formation houses in Tanzania because ours is in Uganda and they had total lockdown.

This quote demonstrates potential differences between countries in the degree of impact the pandemic lockdown measures may have had on congregational vitality and growth.

Lessons Learned During the Pandemic

Participants in this study were also asked to provide one positive lesson they have taken away from the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this short-answer question, superiors identified the following (in order of frequency): (a) spiritual growth, (b) vibrant community living, (c) creativity and innovation, (d) importance of serving the vulnerable, (e) financial/crisis preparedness, and (f) increased cleanliness/hygiene.

As all study participants were major superiors, the outcome of this study is consistent with a previous study findings that showed those who identify as men and women religious most commonly have experienced spiritual growth through the COVID-19 pandemic (ASEC, 2020). Another positive aspect of the stay home order enhanced creativity and vibrant community living. The participants reported that the pandemic lockdown allowed them more time for personal prayer, adoration, and a deepening relationship with God. This was exemplified in responses such as "God is omnipotence, all what we have and are can brought [sic] standstill. He alone remains. We are pilgrims on the journey...God gave us time [sic] learn better how to trust in his Providence."

Another common lesson learned was increased connectedness in community living. This theme included responses pertaining to the development of better relationships and community bonding with sisters within each community. The superiors described increased solidarity among their sisters and a richer communal life. One participant wrote, "Strengthening community living and activities, e.g., praying, exercising, working, recreation together and more time for sharing together as a family."

The superiors also described how they have learned to be creative and innovative during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown forced them to move out of their "comfort zones" and try new methods to minister, as one participant put it, "the Catholic Church opened wide it's horizons." Innovations were reported in the areas of technology, collaboration, discoveries in personal gifts, and food production. The superiors reported implementing new creative methods of engaging their sisters for instance, "The courses and sessions organized by AOSK, reaching out to sisters even beyond Kenya via online platforms. It is a real opportunity of learning and bringing us together"

Another participant reported that through the pandemic they have learned the importance of serving the vulnerable. They described that the pandemic demonstrated that all are equal and there is a great need for everyone to take care of one another. One superior reported that she felt a "strong responsibility for each member of the Institute." Study participants learned that care must be shown to the poor and reported sharing what little they had with those less fortunate than themselves was a great good.

The fifth most cited lesson learned was that of financial/crisis preparedness. COVID-19 has taught superiors the importance of planning for crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and making wise financial decisions. They wrote about discovering the urgent need to engage in multiple apostolates to have varied sources of income, developing a saving/investment culture within their institutions, and creating budgets that factor in possible emergency situations. One superior gave the example, "Engage in various apostolate to enhance continuity in case one field is affected i.e., in Kenya schools were closed from much to the following year thus affecting apostolate in schools."

Lastly, the participants cited increased cleanliness and hygiene as a lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Superiors have learned the importance of hand washing, the use of personal protective equipment, and how to use these techniques to minimize the spread of the virus. These practices have reportedly assisted in limiting the spread of other diseases as well, "The good lesson that we all learnt after this pandemic is that people in the society have learnt more about hygiene as everyone is washing hands almost continuously. This was the reason that this year there was no cholera even when there was flood."

Differences in Lessons Learned by Country

Slight differences were discovered in comparing lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic by the country in which the superior resided. Those from Kenya were more likely to report creativity and innovation as a positive lesson learned than those from Uganda and Tanzania. Further, those from Tanzania were more likely to cite increased cleanliness/hygiene in comparison to the other two countries. While Ugandan superiors emphasized financial/crisis preparedness and caring for the vulnerable more often than those from Kenya or Tanzania. It is possible these differences in positive lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic can be attributed to various levels of lockdown measures imposed and the available infrastructure in each country.

Among the studies conducted in East Africa on COVID-19, not much has been revealed on the impact of the pandemic on congregations of women religious. The findings of this study, however, correspond to the experiences of most citizens in East Africa (Allen, 2020; Mbogo, 2020; Saleh, 2020). Major challenges within the East African region arose from border closures which slowed trade between the three countries inherently negatively impacting the economy (Rwengabo, 2020). Other negative impacts identified on services provided by women religious were adverse socioeconomic challenges, similar to other studies that found ministries of women religious to either have shut or experienced great constraints under the pandemic (ASEC, 2020). Prices of goods and services went up while unemployment also spiked (Daily Nation Kenya, 2020).

This study found that unemployment impacted the work of women religious negatively due to the lockdown and closures of institutions that generate revenue like the schools. Employees who rely on private organizations did not continue to receive their pay because schools were closed during the pandemic. Funding was a major challenge for congregations of women religious, who did not have much support from the government or conferences of bishops within their countries. For the financial assistance availed to congregations, the funds

were mostly designated for the needs of their beneficiaries compared to the needs of their members.

Contrary to popular belief and expectation, the least amount of financial help for congregations of women religious came from Rome. Only three congregations in this study reported having received help from Rome. Two of the recipients were from Kenya, a country in partial lock down and one in Uganda. No respondent from Tanzania indicated they had received help from Rome. Most congregations received help from independent donors (n = 44) while the highest number (n = 47) reported that they did not receive any financial support from any of the known sources highlighted in this study during the pandemic. Instead, one participant indicated that they received help from the government, which was a case of Tanzania alone. Congregations from Kenya and Uganda did not receive any help from their governments. The ministries of women religious are all inclusive and do not discriminate against any clients seeking services. As such it would be ideal for women religious congregations to seek and explore opportunities for government support in the noble work that they carry out in every nation.

The fear of the unknown did not limit participants from adjusting favorably toward the opportunities that came with the pandemic. Innovation in learning and enhancement of communication. Virtual conferencing and online learning were reported among participants as the new direction resulting from the situation of the pandemic. Majority of the participants reported that social media became a central medium of communication during the pandemic. The adjustment from traditional communication like hard copy circulars was enhanced with congregational social media platforms, where WhatsApp became the most used platform of communication.

Limitations of the Study

The representation of congregations in this study does not capture the entire scope of women religious in the three countries, therefore results cannot be generalized to congregations of women religious in East Africa. A longitudinal study may have included more congregations, which may have produced dissimilar results.

Further, the scope of this study was limited to superiors of congregations in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda). Therefore, results of this study cannot be applied to congregations serving in other regions under different levels of COVID-19 lockdown or risk mitigation efforts. The majority of respondents in this study were also serving in a pontifical right congregations (66%), in comparison to those serving in a diocesan right congregations (34%). The small number of diocesan affiliated congregations also poses limitations to the study's generalizability.

Recommendations for Future Studies

It is recommended that research of this nature should be carried out in other African regions (West, South and Central) in order to establish whether there are major differences and similarities in the impact of COVID-19 on congregations of women religious throughout the continent. Further studies could also focus on the relationship of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and their adaptation for innovation. Follow-up is needed to assess whether

the lessons cited by superiors in this study have actually been instituted at the congregational level.

The study could also be carried out among congregations of men religious within the same countries in the region to determine the extent of the impact of the pandemic and their experiences compared to that of women religious. Learning outcomes could be shared between the two practice settings and best practices adopted by those congregations that have adverse challenges.

Conclusion

Based on this data and analysis, it is evident that congregations need to create sustainable programs for posterity. Few congregations were able to draw from their own investments during the pandemic, while others were caught in the dilemma and choice of meeting the needs of their members and the needs of those that they serve (beneficiaries). When disasters strike, the kind of the unprecedented level that came with the COVID-19 pandemic, they are indiscriminate. COVID-19 did not exempt class or religion, race, or color, developed or developing countries. Everyone across the globe has faced equal challenges from the pandemic. The takeaway lessons presented by participants in this study have a lot to offer in policy formulation and review of capacity building to enhance vitality of congregations.

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Table 1. Needed Assistance and Sources

Needed Assistance and Source	***f***	**Total Lockdown**	**Partial Lockdown**	**No Lockdown**
Help for sisters in the congregation	32	31%	56%	13%
Help for beneficiaries in ministries	27	33%	52%	15%
Did not receive help	62	15%	40%	45%
Funding from A/CWR	22	32%	59%	9%
Circulars from A/CWR	45	20%	53%	27%
Training on Covid-19 by A/CWR	33	39%	55%	6%
All of the Above from A/CWR	11	18%	82%	-
None of the Above from A/CWR	45	11%	36%	53%
Help from the government	1	-	-	100%
Rome	3	-	33%	67%
Diocese	3	33%	67%	-
Conference of Catholic Bishops	4	-	25%	75%
Independent Donors	37	27%	51%	22%
Congregation Investment	44	21%	43%	36%
None of the above	47	19%	49%	32%

Note: f = frequency

The Numbers and Percentages of Christians and Muslims in Africa, 2020

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Abstract

The study examined the numbers and percentages of Christians and Muslims in Africa in 2001, 2009, and 2020, to better understand the trends in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Christians have become the majority in Africa in the year 2020. By 2020, Christians and Muslims combined accounted for over 9 out of every 10 people (94%) in Africa. Christians had increased from 304.3 (36.9%) million in 2001, to the majority in Africa, 657.3 (51.3%) million in 2020. Muslims increased their numbers from 371.5 million in 2001, to 553 million in 2020, but their percentage decreased from 45.1% in 2001 to 43.1% in 2020. Adherents of African Traditional Religion decreased substantially from 137.84 (16.7%) million in 2001 to 34.5 (2.7%) million in 2020. In 2020, of the five regions in Africa, Christians were the majority in Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, and Southern Africa; Muslims were the majority in Northern Africa and Western Africa. Christians have surpassed Muslims in numbers and percentages by 2020 due to demography and conversion, especially from adherents of African Traditional Religion to Christianity. The study recommended that Christians and Muslims should socialize with each other and attend each other's ceremonies. They should also work together along with the African Union to improve the lives of all the people on the continent.

Introduction

The competition between Christians and Muslims in Africa for members goes back 1,400 years ago when Islam became the second major foreign religion to seek converts among Africans. Christianity had already been on the continent 600 years before Islam. By 2020, these two world religions found themselves in a strong position with Africa becoming the continent with the fastest population growth in the post-World War II era. The success of these two world religions in converting Africans has resulted in African Traditional Religion becoming almost extinct, accounting for only 2.7% on the continent in 2020, according to this current study. In 2009, that figure was 11.8% (Kaba,2009:12). By 2020, Christians and Muslims combined accounted for over 9 out of every 10 people in Africa (94%). Between these two world religions in Africa, Christians have become not only the highest proportion on the continent, but they also have become the majority, accounting for the majority in Eastern Africa, Middle Africa and

Southern Africa in 2020. Muslims are the majority in Northern Africa and Western Africa. In 2009, Africa was the only continent where Muslims accounted for the highest proportion (43.6% and 41.2% for Christians) (Kaba, 2009: 12). With the surge of the Christian population in the continent, that fact has changed. The study illustrates that Christians have surpassed Muslims to become the clear majority among religions in Africa.

The 657.3 million Christians in Africa in this current study is almost equaled the 658.5 million people in the European Union (450,131,902), Russia (142,320,790) and the United Kingdom (66,052,076) combined in July 2021 (Compiled and computed from the 2021 CIA World Factbook). The 552.7 million Muslims in Africa in this current study as of 2020 are tens of millions more than the 516.2 million people in the European Union and the United Kingdom combined in July 2021 (516.2 million) (Compiled and computed from the 2021 CIA World Factbook). The 552.7 million Muslims in Africa in 2020 accounted for 29% of the 1.907 billion Muslims in the world (24.9% of world total) in that same year. The 657.3 million Christians in Africa in 2020 accounted for 27.6% of the 2.383 billion Christians in the world (31.1% of world total) in that same year ("World Religion Makeup," 2021). The Catholic Church is among the Christian denominations that have increased their proportions and raw numbers of members in Africa in the past century. For example, according to Hodge (2021), of the 1.3 billion people in Africa in 2020, 236 million (18.2%) were Catholics. Hodge adds that Catholics in Africa "already make up 19% of the global Catholic population, but they are also the fastest-growing Catholic region in the world." That figure is projected to increase to 32% in 2050. In 1900, 58% of people in Africa practiced Traditional African Religion, 33% practiced Islam, and 9% practiced Christianity, with Catholics accounting for 2%, Protestants, 2%, and Orthodox

Christians, 4% (Hodge, 2021). The 236 million Catholics in Africa in 2020 is 35.9% of the 657.3 million Christians in Africa in 2020 in this current study.

The more than 1.2 billion Christians and Muslims combined in Africa in 2020 is a very important development in the Twenty-First Century because it has happened at a time when the continent is getting wealthier at a rapid pace and wealth accumulation is a big part of Christianity and Islam. Christian and Muslim organizations are among the largest land and property owners in the world, and they have also accumulated substantial amounts of wealth (Barrett, 1983; Manhattan, 1983). This wealth is sued to fund their missions such as schools and hospitals all over the world, including in Africa. For example, it is reported that:

> In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 72.667 kindergartens with 7.532.992 pupils; 98.925 primary schools with 35.188.771 pupils; 49.552 secondary schools with 19.370.763 pupils. The Church also cares 2.395.540 high school pupils and 3.833.012 university students.Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church include: 5.245 hospitals, most of them in Africa (1.418) and in America (1.362); 14.963 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (5.307), America (4.043); 532 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (269) and Africa (201); 15.429 Homes for the elderly, or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8.031) and in America (3.642); 9.374 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3.233) and in Europe (2.247); 10.723 creches, mainly in Asia (2.973) and in America (2.957); 12.308 marriage counselling centres, mainly in Europe (5.504) and America (4.289); 3.198 social rehabilitation centres and 33.840 other kinds of institutes ("Vatican – Catholic Church Statistics – 2021," 2021).

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Africa's total gross domestic Product (GDP, Purchasing Power Parity, PPP) increased from $ $2.366 trillion (3.9% of the Gross World Product (GWP), PPP) of $60.71 trillion in 2005 to $ $5.519 trillion (4.32% of the GWP, PPP) of $127.8 trillion in 2017. The total area of Africa at 11.635 million square miles, almost three times the area of the United States is now almost completely owned by Africans. There were 22 billionaires in Africa, with at least $1 billion in

2019, including. Aliko Dangote (Nigeria), Mike Adenuga (Nigeria), Patrice Tlhopane Motsepe (South Africa), Abdulsamad Rabiu (Nigeria), and Strive Masiyiwa (Zimbabwe).

In 2019, there were 302,360 people in Africa with at least $1 million. It is reported that the 20 billionaires in Africa in 2020 as a group were worth a combined $73.4 billion (Kaba, 2020: 238-239 & 245). The relevance of this information is that these millionaires and billionaires in Africa tend to support the religions they belong to. Of the five billionaires listed above, three are Christians (Adenuga, TIhopane, and Masiyiwa), and two are Muslims (Dangote and Rabiu). For example, TIhopane and Masiyiwa are widely reported to publicly proclaim their Christian faith.

This information is very useful to a variety of individuals, scholars, students, governments, non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), etcetera. For example, Hassan (2008ab) produced two reports for members of the United States Congress through the Congressional Research Service on the numbers and percentages of Christians and Muslims in Africa. Hassan's reports extracted and utilized a table from research by Kaba (2005) on the topic.

This means that this updated version with data as of 2020 and at a time when Africa's total population in this study shows that it is 1.282 billion in that same year is very useful or relevant for the world. In fact, according to data compiled and computed by this author from the 2021 World Factbook, as of July 2021, there were 1.377 billion people in Africa: 443.8 (32.2%) million in Eastern Africa; 416.5 (30.3%) million in Western Africa; 252.9 (18.4%) million in Northern Africa; 198.8 (14.4%) million in Middle Africa; and 65.24 (4.7%) million in Southern Africa (compiled and computed from the CIA World Factbook, 2021). This study built on the studies by Kaba (2005, 2009, 2016:33-79) that examined the numbers and percentages of Christians, Muslims and Africans who practiced indigenous religions in 2001 and 2009. This study examined the numbers and percentages of Christians, Muslims, and Africans who

practiced indigenous religions in 2020. The study began by presenting a methodology section that explains the data selection, collection, and computation. Next the study presented the results or findings. Next a discussion section is presented to make sense of the new developments in the findings. Finally, a recommendation section is presented.

Methodology

The data for the religious adherents in Africa for the first two studies that this current study builds on were collected from the 2001 and 2009 CIA World Factbooks (Kaba, 2005:553-570;2009: 4-10). This data for the religious adherents in this current study are from the "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project" (Pew Research Center. Washington D.C. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries). The reason for utilizing the "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project" data is that it is more complete and uniform than the data presented by the CIA World Factbook or other organizations that produce such data. For example, the CIA World Factbook has missing data and inconsistent years for dozens of countries, which then requires the author to seek data from other organizations and then provide explanations in the methodology section, and also under the tables created. The "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project", on the other hand, has almost complete and uniform data. For example, the data in this current study is as of the year 2020 for every single country in Africa, including those African countries still colonized by France (which are now combined into the French total population by the CIA World Factbook), such as Mayotte and Reunion. The only nation/entity that was missing its population figure (but not percentages) for the year 2020 in the "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project" is Saint Helena. The author decided to utilize the 2020 population figure for Saint Helena from the CIA World Factbook).

The "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project" presents data for each African nation's or entity's religious adherents in percentages and raw numbers. It is broken down as follows: Buddhists, Christians, Folk Religions, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, "Other Religions", and "Unaffiliated". This study divided these religions into: Christians, Folk Religions, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, "Other Religions", and "Unaffiliated". Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews are combined in the "Other Religions" category. One reason for doing this is that the "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project" did not provide raw numbers below 10,000 people, although it provided percentages even if the religion has less than 10,000 adherents. The second reason is that this research focuses on the numbers and percentages of Christians and Muslims in Africa, relative to Africans who practice Traditional African Religions.

I compiled and computed the available data presented for each African nation or entity. If the total is less than 100 percent, I then computed to find the missing number and percentage and add it in the "Other Religions" category. If the percentage of a religion in a nation or entity is provided, but the raw number is not provided because it is less than 10,000 people, I also computed to get the raw number to match the percentage figure provided.

It is useful to note that the total population in Africa for the year 2020 that resulted in this current study is tens of millions less than the total population of Africa compiled and computed based on data in the 2020 CIA World Factbook: 1.282 billion versus 1.34 billion (Kaba, 2020: 252), a difference of 58 million people. The reason is that organizations that produce population estimates of countries in the world tend to have different figures. For example, according to the United Nations, the estimated total population of Ethiopia in 2020 was 114.964 million, and 89.561 million for the Democratic Republic of Congo ("Total Population – Both Sexes," 2021). However, according to the CIA World Factbook, Ethiopia's estimated population in 2020 was

108.1 million, and 101.78 million for the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kaba, 2020: 250& 253).

Classification of the Five Regions of Africa

There are several different classifications of the regions of Africa utilized by colleges and universities, think tanks, government agencies, international organizations, foundations, and major newspapers. The reason is that there is currently no agreed upon standard internationally sanctioned classification of the regions of Africa and other regions of the world. In the case of Africa, the legacy of colonialism contributed to this fact (Boyd, 1979; Reader 1998; Wesseling, 1996). For example, the CIA World Factbook classifies Zambia and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, but the United Nations classifies them in Eastern Africa. For this study, the classification of the five regions of Africa (Eastern, Middle, Northern, Southern and Western Africa, see appendix A) by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is utilized. Under that U.N. classification of regions of the world, 58 countries comprised Africa (see Appendix A). Pertaining to the basis for the groupings of the regions of Africa, the U.N. cautions, "The designations employed and the presentation of material at this site do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries (see source under Appendix A).

Findings/Results

Tables 1A and 1B, and Table 2 present data on the numbers and percentages of Christians, Muslims, and people who practiced Traditional African Religions in Africa in 2001, 2009, and 2020. According to Tables 1A and 1B, of the 823.4 million people in Africa in 2001, Muslims accounted for 371.5 (45.1%) million, Christians accounted for 304.3 (36.9%) million,

people who practiced Traditional African Religion accounted for 137.84 (16.7%) million, and people who practiced other religions accounted for 9.8 (1.2%) million. In 2009, Muslims again accounted for the highest proportion in Africa, 434.74 (43.6%) million of the 997 million people in Africa; Christians, 411 (41.2%) million; people who practiced Traditional African Religion, 117.7 (11.8%) million; and people who practiced other religions, 19.4 (1.9%) million. It is useful to note that in 2001 and 2009, Africa was the only continent where Muslims accounted for the highest proportion of religious adherents.

However, by 2020, Christians emerged as the group with not only the highest proportion in Africa, but also the majority in the continent. According to Table 2, of the 1.282 billion people in Africa in 2020, Christians accounted for 657.3 (51.3%) million; Muslims, 553 (43.1%) million; people who practiced Traditional African Religion, 34.5 (2.7%) million; "Unaffiliated", 32.5 (2.54%) million; and people who practiced other religions, 4.8 (0.37%) million. From 2001 to 2020, the number of Christians increased by 353,963,707 (53.9%) people; Muslims increased by 181,275,911 (32.8%); people who practiced Traditional African Religion decreased by 103,368,369 (75%) (Tables 1A and 1B; Table 2).

Of the five regions in Africa, Muslims accounted for the majority in Northern Africa in 2001 (167.1 million or 91%), 2009 (188.6 million or 89.6%) and 2020 (223 million or 95.9%); and in Western Africa in 2001 (130.8 million or 54.4%), 2009 (154.4 million or 52.8%), and 2020 (218.3 million or 55.4%). Christians accounted for the majority in Eastern Africa in 2001 (135.2 million or 53.6%), 2009 (181.9 million or 57.5%) and 2020 (308.2 million or 71.5%); in Southern Africa in 2001 (34.2 million or 68.1%), 2009 (44.8 million or 79.5%), and 2020 (51.3 million or 82.1%); and in Middle Africa in 2001 (61.8 million or 63.9%), 2009 (79.2 million or 65.2%), and 2020 (138.1 million or 85.3%). People who practiced Traditional African Religion

had their highest proportion in Southern Africa in 2001 (28%) versus 23.4% in Eastern Africa, 21.2% in Middle Africa, 17.3% in Western Africa and 4.9% in Northern Africa; in 2009, they accounted for 16.3% in Eastern Africa, 12.8% in Western Africa, 14.7% in Middle Africa, 4.9% in Northern Africa, and 1.2% in Southern Africa; and in 2020, they accounted for 4.3% in Western Africa, 3.1% in Eastern Africa, 1.8% in Middle Africa, 0.6% in Southern Africa, and 0.5% in Northern Africa(Tables 1A and 1B; Table 2).

According to Table 3, within Eastern Africa, of the 430.9 million people in 2020, Christians accounted for 308.2 (71.7%) million, Muslims, 96.5 (22.2%) million, people who practiced Traditional African Religion, 13.2 (3.1%) million, "Unaffiliated", 11.7 (2.7%) million, and people who practiced other religions, 2.3 (0.53%) million. Zambia had the highest proportion of Christians (97.4%); Somalia had the highest proportion of Muslims (99.7%); and South Sudan had the highest proportion of people who practiced Traditional African Religion (32.9%). Of the 20 nations or entities in Eastern Africa, 17 (85%) had a majority Christian population, with four of them having over 90%: Zambia, 97.4%, Seychelles, 94%, Rwanda, 93.8%, and Burundi, 91 percent. There are four (20%) nations with a Muslim majority in Eastern Africa: Somalia, 99.7%, Mayotte, 98.6%, Comoros, 98.3%, and Djibouti, 96.9% (Table 3).

According to Table 4, within Middle Africa, of the 161.8 million people in 2020, Christians accounted for 138.1 (85.3%) million, Muslims, 14.9 (9.2%) million, "Unaffiliated", 5 (3.1%) million, people who practiced Traditional African Religion, 2.9 (1.8%) million, and people who practiced other religions, 980,844 (0.61%). The Democratic Republic of Congo had the highest proportion of Christians (95.8%); and Chad had the highest proportion of Muslims (55.1%). Of the nations in Middle Africa, 8 (88.9%) had a majority Christian population, with 5(55.6%) of them having over 87% or higher: the Democratic Republic of Congo, 95.8%,

Angola, 90.5%, Central African Republic, 89%, Equatorial Guinea, 88.7%, and the Republic of Congo, 87.1% (Table 4).

According to Table 5, within Northern Africa, of the 232.6 million people in 2020, Muslims accounted for 223 (95.9%) million, Christians, 7 (3%) million, "Unaffiliated", 1.22 (0.53%) million, people who practiced Traditional African Religion, 1.21 (0.52%) million, and people who practiced other religions, 99,733 (0.04%). All of the nations in Northern Africa have a Muslim majority, with Morocco having the highest proportion at 100%, and Sudan with the lowest proportion at 90.7% (Table 5).

According to Table 6, within Southern Africa, of the 62.5 million people in 2020, Christians accounted for 51.32 (82.1%) million, "Unaffiliated", 8.9 (14.2%) million, Muslims, 1.03 (1.65%) million, people who practiced other religions, 920,599 (1.5%), and people who practiced Traditional African Religion, 370,000 (0.6%). Christians make up the majority in all of the nations of Southern Africa, with the highest proportion in Namibia (97.5%), and the lowest proportion in Botswana (76.4%). South Africa had a substantial number of people who are "Unaffiliated", 8.22 (15.3%) million (Table 6).

According to Table 7, within Western Africa, of the 394 million people in 2020, Muslims accounted for 218.3 (55.4%) million, Christians, 152.63 (38.7%) million, people who practiced Traditional African Religion, 16.83 (4.3%) million, "Unaffiliated", 5.8 (1.5%) million, and people who practiced other religions, 476,692 (0.12%). Mauritania had the highest proportion of Muslims (99.1%); Saint Helena had the highest proportion of Christians (96.5%); and Togo had the highest proportion of people who practiced Traditional African Religion (36.9%), the highest in Africa, with Guinea Bissau second at 30.6%, but third in Africa after South Sudan. Of the 17 nations or entities in Western Africa, 9 (52.9%) had a majority Muslim population, with 5 of

them having over 94%: Mauritania, 99.1%, Niger, 98.3%, Senegal, 96.6%, The Gambia, 95.3%, and Mali, 94.6%. It is useful to note that Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation had a Muslim majority of 51.1% out of 204.8 million in 2020. There are 5 (29.4%) nations or entities with a Christian majority in Western Africa: Saint Helena, 96.5%, Cabo Verde, 89.3%, Liberia, 86.2%, Ghana, 73.6%, and Benin, 52.2% (Table 7).

Tables 1 A and B. Religious Breakdowns for the Five Regions of Africa, July 2001, and July 2009(N=57 Countries/Territories)

Table 1 A 2001	**Indigenous**	**Muslim**	**Christian**	**Other**	**No Religion**	
Regions	**Religions**	**Population**	**Population**	**Religions**	**Population**	**Total**
Eastern Africa	52,114,073	59,091,873	135,194,880	6,058,251	0	252,459,077
Middle Africa	21,001,056	13,528,373	61,821,241	437,688	0	96,788,358
Northern Africa	9,020,093	167,131,245	6,410,368	632,920	0	183,194,626
Southern Africa	14,089,672	871,722	34,202,095	1,087,807	0	50,251,296
Western Africa	41,617,613	130,835,929	66,685,296	1,601,876	0	240,740,714
Total	137,842,507	371,459,142	304,313,880	9,818,542	0	823,434,071
Percent of Total	**16.7**	**45.1**	**36.9**	**1.2**	**0.0**	**99.9**
Table 1 B 2009						
Regions						
Eastern Africa	51,367,087	73,995,889	181,876,937	7,768,746	1,088,589	316,097,247
Middle Africa	17,852,344	16,959,205	79,182,314	7,160,733	361,465	121,516,061
Northern Africa	10,271,956	188,581,600	10,850,994	705,677	0	210,410,227
Southern Africa	672,137	848,178	44,839,062	2,230,338	7,817,046	56,406,761
Western Africa	37,562,542	154,359,098	94,381,359	1,544,867	4,752,513	292,600,379
Total	117,726,066	434,743,970	411,130,666	19,410,361	14,019,613	997,030,675
Percent of Total	**11.8**	**43.6**	**41.2**	**1.9**	**1.4**	**99.9**

Source: Kaba, 2009:12.

Table 2. Religious Breakdowns for the Five Regions of Africa, 2020

(N=58 Countries/Territories)

	Indigenous	**Muslim**	**Christian**	**Other**			
	Religions	**Population**	**Population**	**Religions**	**Unaffiliated**		**% of**
Region	**Number**	**Number**	**Number**	**Number**	**Number**	**Total**	**Total**
Eastern Africa	13,159,563	95,525,053	308,210,000	2,299,425	11,662,011	430,856,052	**33.6**
Middle Africa	2,906,575	14,890,000	138,090,000	980,844	4,970,000	161,837,419	**12.63**
Northern Africa	1,210,000	223,010,000	7,030,000	99,733	1,220,000	232,569,733	**18.14**
Southern Africa	370,000	1,030,000	51,320,000	920,599	8,860,000	62,500,599	**4.9**
Western Africa	16,828,000	218,280,000	152,627,587	476,692	5,790,259	394,002,538	**30.74**
Total	**34,474,138**	**552,735,053**	**657,277,587**	**4,777,293**	**32,502,270**	**1,281,766,341**	**100**
% of Total	**2.7**	**43.1**	**51.3**	**0.37**	**2.54**	**100**	

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from May 15 to June 2021, based on data presented by the Pew Research Center entitled: "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project". Pew Research Center. Washington D.C. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries.

Table 3. Religious Breakdowns for Eastern Africa, 2020
(N=20)

	Indigenous		Muslim		Christian		Other				
	Religions		Population		Population		Religions		Unaffiliated		
Country	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**Total**
Burundi	6.0	610,000	2.9	290,000	91.0	9,180,000	0.1	10,090	..		10,090,090
Comoros	1.0	9,563	98.3	940,000	..	..	**0.7**	6,694	..	..	956,257
Djibouti	..	..	96.9	1,030,000	2.3	20,000	0.8	8,468	..	..	1,058,468
Eritrea	0.44	30,000	36.6	2,460,000	62.9	4,230,000	0.06	4,034	..	..	6,724,034
Ethiopia	2.1	2,120,000	35.9	36,290,000	61.9	62,610,000	0.1	101,121	0.06	60,000	101,181,121
Kenya	1.5	780,000	10.5	5,550,000	84.5	44,460,000	1.2	631,458	2.3	1,200,000	52,621,458
Madagascar	4.7	1,270,000	3.1	850,000	84.7	23,200,000	0.2	54,770	7.3	2,010,000	27,384,770
Malawi	1.7	340,000	12.8	2,660,000	83.4	17,280,000	0.1	20,711	2	410,000	20,710,711
Mauritius	..	..	17.4	230,000	32.8	440,000	49.1	654,661	0.74	10,000	1,334,661
Mayotte	..	..	98.6	270,000	..	..	1.4	3,834	..	..	273,834
Mozambique	7.6	2,210,000	17.2	5,000,000	57.8	16,760,000	0.1	29,019	17.3	5,020,000	29,019,019
Reunion	..	..	4.2	40,000	87.6	820,000	6.2	58,166	2	20,000	938,166
Rwanda	..	..	2.2	310,000	93.8	13,230,000	1.0	141,111	3	430,000	14,111,111
Seychelles	..	..	1.1	1,053	94.0	90,000	2.1	2,681	2.1	2,011	95,745
Somalia	..	..	99.7	12,110,000	..	..	0.3	36,439	..	..	12,146,439
South Sudan	32.9	4,090,000	6.2	770,000	60.5	7,530,000	..	..	0.48	60,000	12,450,000
Tanzania	1.1	670,000	34.1	20,950,000	63.1	38,740,000	0.11	70,000	1.6	1,000,000	61,430,000
Uganda	0.85	390,000	12.1	5,550,000	86.1	39,390,000	0.44	201,350	0.5	230,000	45,761,350
Zambia	0.33	60,000	0.61	110,000	97.4	17,510,000	1.1	190,000	0.56	100,000	17,970,000
Zimbabwe	4.0	580,000	0.78	114,000	87.1	12,720,000	0.51	74,818	7.6	1,110,000	14,598,818
Total/Average	**3.1**	**13,159,563**	**22.2**	**95,525,053**	**71.5**	**308,210,000**	**0.53**	**2,299,425**	**2.7**	**11,662,011**	**430,856,052**

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from May 15 to June 2021, based on data presented by the Pew Research Center entitled: "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project". Pew Research Center. Washington D.C. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries.

Table 4. Religious Breakdowns for Middle Africa, 2020
(N=9)

	Indigenous		Muslim		Christian		Other				
	Religions		Population		Population		Religions		Unaffiliated		
Country	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**Total**
Angola	4.2	1,020,000	0.2	50,000	90.5	22,190,000	..	..	5.2	1,270,000	24,530,000
Cameroon	3.2	760,000	19.3	4,640,000	69.6	16,750,000	2.7	650,000	5.2	1,260,000	24,060,000
Central African Rep.	1.0	50,000	9.0	480,000	89.0	4,770,000	..	..	1	50,000	5,350,000
Chad	1.3	190,000	55.1	8,090,000	41.1	6,040,000	0.14	20,000	2.4	350,000	14,690,000
Congo, Rep.	2.7	140,000	1.2	60,000	87.1	4,480,000	1.0	50,000	8	410,000	5,140,000
Congo (D.R.)	0.73	620,000	1.5	1,310,000	95.8	81,520,000	0.28	235,280	1.7	1,450,000	85,135,280
Equatorial Guinea	1.7	10,000	4.0	30,000	88.7	770,000	0.6	5,131	5	40,000	855,131
Gabon	5.7	110,000	12.2	230,000	75.6	1,400,000	0.8	14,919	5.7	110,000	1,864,919
Sao Tome & Principe	3.1	6,575	..	..	81.1	170,000	2.6	5,514	13.2	30,000	212,089
Total/Average	**1.8**	**2,906,575**	**9.2**	**14,890,000**	**85.3**	**138,090,000**	**0.61**	**980,844**	**3.1**	**4,970,000**	**161,837,419**

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from May 15 to June 2021, based on data presented by the Pew Research Center entitled: "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project". Pew Research Center. Washington D.C. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries.

Table 5. Religious Breakdowns for Northern Africa, 2020
(N=7)

	Indigenous		Muslim		Christian		Other				
	Religions		Population		Population		Religions		Unaffiliated		
Country	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**Total**
Algeria	0.025	10,000	97.9	39,430,000	0.17	70,000	0.1	4,029	1.8	740,000	40,254,029
Egypt	..	..	95.3	90,420,000	4.7	4,440,000	..	..	..	..	94,860,000
Libya	..	..	96.6	7,170,000	2.7	200,000	0.56	41,581	0.14	10,000	7,421,581
Morocco	..	..	100.0	35,510,000	0.06	20,000	..	..	..	..	35,530,000
Sudan	2.8	1,200,000	90.7	38,430,000	5.4	2,280,000	0.1	42,392	1	440,000	42,392,392
Tunisia	..	..	99.5	11,440,000	0.17	20,000	0.07	8,049	0.26	30,000	11,498,049

Western Sahara	..	..	99.4	610,000	..	..	0.6	3,682	..	..	613,682
Total/Average	**0.52**	**1,210,000**	**95.9**	**223,010,000**	**3.0**	**7,030,000**	**0.04**	**99,733**	**0.53**	**1,220,000**	**232,569,733**

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from May 15 to June 2021, based on data presented by the Pew Research Center entitled: "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project". Pew Research Center. Washington D.C. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries.

Table 6. Religious Breakdowns for Southern Africa, 2020
(N=5)

	Indigenous		**Muslim**		**Christian**		**Other**				
	Religions		**Population**		**Population**		**Religions**		**Unaffiliated**		
Country	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**Total**
Botswana	4.4	100,000	0.9	20,000	76.4	1,700,000	0.8	17,797	17.5	390,000	2,227,797
eSwatini	1.0	10,000	..	..	88.7	1,180,000	0.9	11,988	9.4	130,000	1,331,988
Lesotho	..	..	..	..	97.0	2,310,000	0.2	4,818	2.8	70,000	2,384,818
Namibia	..	..	..	..	97.5	2,600,000	0.6	15,996	1.9	50,000	2,665,996
South Africa	0.48	260,000	1.9	1,010,000	80.8	43,530,000	1.6	870,000	15.3	8,220,000	53,890,000
Total/Average	**0.6**	**370,000**	**1.65**	**1,030,000**	**82.1**	**51,320,000**	**1.5**	**920,599**	**14.2**	**8,860,000**	**62,500,599**

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from May 15 to June 2021, based on data presented by the Pew Research Center entitled: "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project". Pew Research Center. Washington D.C. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries.

Table 7. Religious Breakdowns for Western Africa, 2020
(N=17)

	Indigenous		**Muslim**		**Christian**		**Other**				
	Religions		**Population**		**Population**		**Religions**		**Unaffiliated**		
Country	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**Total**
Benin	17.9	2,050,000	24.6	2,830,000	52.2	6,010,000	0.1	11,502	5.2	600,000	11,501,502
Burkina Faso	15.1	3,430,000	62.7	14,240,000	21.7	4,930,000	0.02	4,543	0.48	110,000	22,714,543

Cabo Verde	1.4	8,000	..	..	89.3	510,000	0.6	3,429	9	50,000	571,429
Cote d'Ivoire	10.5	2,550,000	37.2	9,040,000	44.0	10,690,000	0.2	50,000	8.1	1,970,000	24,300,000
Gambia	..	..	95.3	2,260,000	4.2	100,000	0.5	11,859	..	..	2,371,859
Ghana	4.9	1,500,000	17.5	5,300,000	73.6	22,330,000	0.2	60,701	3.8	1,160,000	30,350,701
Guinea	2.7	340,000	84.6	10,800,000	10.8	1,380,000	0.1	12,763	1.8	230,000	12,762,763
Guinea-Bissau	30.6	560,000	46.1	850,000	18.9	350,000	..	..	4.4	80,000	1,840,000
Liberia	0.58	30,000	11.7	610,000	86.2	4,480,000	0.12	6,236	1.4	70,000	5,196,236
Mali	2.5	530,000	94.6	19,610,000	2.4	490,000	..	..	0.53	110,000	20,740,000
Mauritania	0.46	20,000	99.1	4,310,000	0.23	10,000	0.21	9,133	..	..	4,349,133
Niger	0.09	20,000	98.3	21,660,000	0.9	200,000	..	..	0.77	170,000	22,050,000
Nigeria	1.5	3,050,000	51.1	104,650,000	46.9	96,080,000	0.11	225,418	0.39	790,000	204,795,418
Saint Helena	..	..	..	..	96.5	7,587	0.2	16	3.3	259	7,862
Senegal	..	..	96.6	15,480,000	3.3	530,000	0.1	16,026	..	..	16,026,026
Sierra Leone	0.84	60,000	78.5	5,620,000	20.4	1,460,000	0.3	21,484	..	..	7,161,484
Togo	36.9	2,680,000	14.0	1,020,000	42.3	3,070,000	0.6	43,582	6.2	450,000	7,263,582
Total/Average	**4.3**	**16,828,000**	**55.4**	**218,280,000**	**38.7**	**152,627,587**	**0.12**	**476,692**	**1.5**	**5,790,259**	**394,002,538**

Source: Compiled and calculated by author from May 15 to June 2021, based on data presented by the Pew Research Center entitled: "Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project". Pew Research Center. Washington D.C. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries.

Discussion

The data presented above showed that there are many important developments pertaining to the influence of Christianity and Islam in Africa. For example, both the raw number and percentage of people who practiced Traditional African Religion have decreased substantially from 137.84 (16.7%) million in 2001 to 34.5 (2.7%) million in 2020. One reason for this phenomenon could be the gradual economic development of the continent, coupled with the increased number of people who have completed high school, enrolled in college or graduated from college. Economic development has resulted in the construction of new roads that have penetrated the interior of regions, thereby opening previously isolated areas to be accessed by the outside world. Satellite television and the internet can also be accessed in the interior of countries across the continent. For example, by 2014, there were 2,417,134 km of roadways in Africa, with 569,358 (23.6%) paved; 3431 total airports, with 838 (24.2%) paved runways; and 85,323 km of railways (Kaba, 2016: 161).From the 1950s to the year 2000, those figures were substantially lower because the continent was not as modernized as in 2014. Western Africa, which has experienced a substantial decrease in the numbers and proportions of people who practice Traditional African Religion, from 1996 to 1997, 15 nations in that region had a total of 411,392 km of highways (Kaba, 2007: 6). By 2014, that figure increased to 568,685 km. There were 305 airports in Western Africa by 2014, with 115 (38%) of them having paved runways (Computed from Kaba, 2016:160-161).

Christianity appeared to have benefited from the conversion of people from Traditional African Religion. For example, although the raw number of Muslims in Africa increased from 2001 (371.5 million) to 2020 (552.7 million), the proportion decreased from 45.1% to 43.1% during that period. Christians increased both their raw numbers from 2001 (304.3 million to

657.3 million) and their proportion (36.9% to 51.3%) respectively (also see Martin, 1998; Ribeiro, 2015).There is currently no data indicating significant number of Africans switching from Islam to Christianity or from Christianity to Islam: "Neither Christianity nor Islam is growing significantly in sub-Saharan Africa at the expense of the other; there is virtually no net change in either direction through religious switching" ("Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa," 2010: 12).

Educational attainment might be associated with why Christianity seems more successful because Africans who are Christians or converted to Christianity may attend Christian or Christian related academic institutions and used those connections to further their education in Christian majority nations in Europe and North America such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. For example, the gross enrollment ratio (GER) in tertiary education in sub-Saharan Africa was less than 1% in 1970. In 2008, it increased to 6 percent (Kaba, 2020: 241). There were fewer than 200,000 students enrolled in tertiary education in sub-Saharan Africa in 1970 (Kaba, 2020: 241). . By 2008, it increased to over 4.5 million students. (Kaba, 2020: 241). Every year from 1970 to 2008, the gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education in sub-Saharan Africa grew at an average rate of 8.6 percent (Kaba, 2020: 241). Most African international students are enrolled at institutions in Christian majority countries in the West. In 2008, there were 223,000 sub-Saharan African students enrolled in higher education institutions outside of their home countries. This figure represented 7.5% of the 3 million students enrolled outside of their home countries (Kaba, 2020: 242). In 2008, 65.1% of these African international students were enrolled in Australia, North America, and Europe, including: France (20.6%), the United States (14.2%), the United Kingdom (12.7%), Portugal (5.2%), Germany (3.8%), Australia (3.1%), Canada (2.3%), and Italy (1.5%) (Kaba, 2020: 242).

The ongoing demographic phenomenon of high fertility rates in nations and entities across Africa have also contributed to why both Christians and Muslims each accounted for over half a billion members, with Christianity accounting for the majority of the continent. Although Christianity allows monogamy and Islam allows polygamy, this doctrinal difference does significantly affect the populations of Christians and Muslims in Africa. Although the average fertility rates in African nations have decreased slightly, they continue to be substantially higher than the world average. This is the case in BOTH Christian and Muslim majority nations in Africa. For example, the average total fertility rate in Africa in 2006 was 4.68 children born per woman. In 2020, the average total fertility rate in Africa was 4.3 births per woman. The world average in 2020 was 2.42 births per woman; 1.62 in the European Union; 1.6 in China; 2.35 in India; and 1.84 in the United States (Kaba, 2020:234).

There is no evidence yet as to whether the United Nations, the African Union, and leaders in individual African nations will attempt to halt or stop the proportion of people who practiced Traditional African Religion from decreasing further to zero. This could be an issue taken over by the African Union. Although it is one's freedom to practice any religion they chose, the potential is there for concerns to be raised if the proportion of people who practice Traditional African Religion decrease to zero. The United Nations has usually attempted to prevent languages and cultures from becoming extinct by protecting them (Gupta, 2017; Moseley, 2012). A study by Akin-Otiko (2019) examines Africans who switched back to practicing Traditional African Religion.

However, it is useful to point out that Africans always maintain many aspects of their Traditional African Religion, regardless of whether they are Christians of Muslims, and they even tend to incorporate their traditional religious practices into their Christian and Muslim

ceremonies -- 'dual worshippers' (Kaba, 2005:558; Ngoya, 2019; Warkentin, 1996). This means Africans who claimed to be Christians or Muslims have not substantially changed from their African Traditional Religion Future research could also attempt to explain why Guinea Bissau, South Sudan, and Togo continue to have over 3 out of every 10 people in their nations practicing Traditional African Religion. This could also include investigating why Traditional African Religion have also survived in New World countries such as Brazil and Haiti (Barrett, 1978; Hood, 1981). African Christianity is also reported to gradually having an influence in Europe and the United States (Burgess et al., 2010; Kaba, 2005: 558; Knibbe, 2019).

Recommendations

As the evidence has revealed that Christianity and Islam have deeply penetrated the continent of Africa, the people of the continent should find ways to use these two Asian religions to benefit them. For example, Kaba (2009) argued that a future full-fledged African Union must establish continental universities and require that students in French Africa must learn to speak English and students in English Africa must learn to speak French. The reason is that these students are the future leaders and administrators of the African Union (p.109). This concept can be continued with the African Union partnering with Christian and Muslim leaders to encourage their members to regularly visit each other's religious ceremonies and socialize with them. This will help to prevent religious conflicts on the continent. Africans are known to support religious ecumenism (Hickey, 1984; Portaankorva, 2015;Werbner, 2018; Zziwa, 1976). This recommendation is to prevent any future misunderstandings or conflicts among the various religions in the continent.

The African Union should also establish a full cabinet position called the Ministry of Religions. The minister and ministry will be responsible to make sure that all of the religions on

the continent, especially, Christianity and Islam work as one people – that they are brothers and sisters who worship a God recognized in both religions. look out for the well-being and prosperity of the entire continent. Finally, both the Ministry of Religions of the African Union and religious leaders in Africa must work with the African Union's Ministry of Infrastructure or Ministry of Development to utilise some of the massive revenues collected by Christian Churches and organizations and Muslim mosques and organizations to establish a framework to improve the infrastructures of the communities of the countries and entities within the African Union (Kaba, 2014, 2016:155-187). This is not to suggest that Churches and Mosques lose their independence. However, it is important for religious organizations to work with the government to improve the lives of people in their societies because that is the central objective of the government and religious organizations.

It is also useful to point out that the Catholic Church has contributed significantly to religious ecumenism in Africa. This is observed, for example, in the education sector. Parents in Africa from various religions tend to send their sons and daughters to Catholololic schools and colleges. There is a special sense of trust that parents have for Catholic schools that results in them enrolling their sons and daughters. Today many prominent people in Africa attended Catholic schools or colleges.

Conclusion

This study began by claiming that Christianity and Islam have made tremendous success in Africa, increasing their overall numbers and percentages in the past two decades. This important development happened at a time when the continent's total population was not only the fastest rising and youngest in the world, but the people have also become wealthier. In 2005,

Africa's total GDP was $2.366 trillion. By 2017, that figure increased to $5.519 trillion. In 2019, there were 302,360 people in Africa with assets of at least $1 million.

The study found that of 1.82 billion people in Africa in 2020, Christians accounted for 51.3%, Muslims accounted for 43.1%, people who practiced Traditional African Religion accounted for 2.7%, and those who are "Unaffiliated" accounted for 2.54 percent. Of the five regions in Africa, Christians accounted for the majority in Eastern Africa in 2001 (135.2 million or 53.6%), 2009 (181.9 million or 57.5%) and 2020 (308.2 million or 71.5%); in Southern Africa in 2001 (34.2 million or 68.1%), 2009 (44.8 million or 79.5%), and 2020 (51.3 million or 82.1%); and in Middle Africa in 2001 (61.8 million or 63.9%), 2009 (79.2 million or 65.2%), and 2020 (138.1 million or 85.3%). Muslims accounted for the majority in Northern Africa in 2001 (167.1 million or 91%), 2009 (188.6 million or 89.6%) and 2020 (223 million or 95.9%); and in Western Africa in 2001 (130.8 million or 54.4%), 2009 (154.4 million or 52.8%), and 2020 (218.3 million or 55.4%). People who practiced Traditional African Religion had their highest proportion in Southern Africa in 2001 (28%) versus 23.4% in Eastern Africa, 21.2% in Middle Africa, 17.3% in Western Africa and 4.9% in Northern Africa; in 2009, they accounted for 16.3% in Eastern Africa, 12.8% in Western Africa, 14.7% in Middle Africa, 4.9% in Northern Africa, and 1.2% in Southern Africa; and in 2020, they accounted for 4.3% in Western Africa, 3.1% in Eastern Africa, 1.8% in Middle Africa, 0.6% in Southern Africa, and 0.5% in Northern Africa.

By 2020, Christians had surpassed Muslims due to demography and conversion. Africa's total fertility rate which is over 4.3 children born per woman in 2020 has benefited Christians more than their Muslim counterparts. For example, Christians increased by 353 million members from 2001 to 2021. Muslims increased their numbers by 181.2 million from 2001 to 2020.

People who practiced Traditional African Religions decreased substantially to 103.34 million from 2001 to 2020. Christianity benefited substantially from this decline due to conversion. The study recommended that Christians and Muslims should socialize with each other and attend each other's ceremonies and work together along with the African Union to improve the lives of all the people on the continent.

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Appendix A. Geographic Breakdowns of the Five Regions of Africa
Africa (n= 58)
Eastern Africa (n = 20):
Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
Middle Africa (n = 9):

Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome & Principe.
Northern Africa (n = 7):
Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Western Sahara.
Southern Africa (n = 5) Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa.
Western Africa (n = 17):
Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Saint Helena.
Source: "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" Retrieved on July 6, 2021from: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/.

Islamic Modernity in Dialogue with Nigeria's Terrorist Sects

By Theodore Nnorom

Abstract**:**

Given the aversiveness of some extremist Islamic groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP to modern innovation and western education, leading to terrorist activities in Nigeria and other African countries, this article engages the two opposing Islamic schools, the Political Literalist Salafists and the Modern Islamic Reformists in dialogue for the appropriate Islamic approaches to the socio-political and economic exigencies of the contemporary Nigerian context. This is engaged by juxtaposing the activities and ideologies of the two sects(ISWAPand Boko Haram) with the teachings of Abdulaziz Sachedina and Sherman Jackson to submit that the concept of human rights and religious pluralism replete in the Qur'an and Islamic traditions are leitmotifs for Boko Haram and ISWAP to engage the social order civilly. Hence, it suggests alternative hermeneutics of the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and other classical sources for an appropriate application of Islamic tradition in a modern secular society like Nigeria towards socio-political stability and peaceful interreligious relations.

Key Words: Islam, Modernity, Terrorism, Nigeria, Traditionalists, Human Rights, Religious Pluralism, Shari'a, and Secular Democracy.

Introduction

In the recent decade, northern Nigeria has witnessed unrelenting terrorist attacks by the radical Islamic militant groups, Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). Many factors have been suggested responsible for the groups' emergence and progression from a small peaceful Islamic conservative sect to two formidable terrorist organizations. Prominent among these factors are the sects' aversion to modern innovation and westernization driven by western education because of their impacts on the faithful observance of Islamic laws and traditions. Hence, Boko Haram and ISWAP seek to establish an Islamic caliphate, a *dar al-Islam* legislated by the shari'a law following the dictates of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Such an aspiration in a democratic and pluralistic country like Nigeria

has generated immense controversies, severe religious intolerance, and endermic national disunity.

This article draws upon an Islamic reformist approach to modernity as a viable response for an ideological transformation of Boko Haram and ISWAP by exploring Muslims' responses to modernity, placing side-by-side two Islamic schools: the Political Literalist Salafists (PLS) and the Modern Islamic Reformists (MIR). While the former insists on retaining the medieval interpretation of Islamic tradition despite a modern context, the latter creatively interpret Islamic tradition to adapt to the modern context. Contrasting Boko Haram's ideology (akin to the PLS) with the teachings of Abdulaziz Sachedina and Sherman Jackson (Modern Islamic Reformists), this essay proposes an alternative hermeneutics different from the approaches of the terrorist sects. It argues that the concept of human rights in the Islamic principle of *fitra* and religious pluralism and other modern Islamic approaches derivable from the teachings of Sachedina and Jackson are transformative leitmotifs for Boko Haram and ISWAP to engage the modern social order civilly.

The Faces of Modernity and Innovation

The Enlightenment refers to the seventeenth century's European ideologies and intellectual tradition that extol rationality as the sole panacea to human challenges. Michael Mazarr identifies three characteristics of modernity. The first pertains to economic development, industrialization, and urbanization. The second is a scientific worldview marked by the "positivistic assumption that reality can be understood and explained by humanly accessible means, through testing and experimentation – a way of thinking, often self-consciously hostile to the religious, the spiritual, and mythical and the organic."[2] The third is a secular liberal democracy characterized by a world of choice and opinions and religious tolerance. The Enlightenment's claims of rationality as the answer to life's questions have significant socio-religious implications, which according to Stephen Bevan and Roger Schroeder, include "the

[2] Michael J. Mazarr, *Unmodern Men, In Modern World: Radical Isalm, Terrorism, and the War on Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2007), 17.

eventual separation of church and state. Religion was relegated to the private sphere of opinion and belief, while secular affairs were concerned with the public arena of facts and knowledge."[3]

Also, modern rational self-consciousness promotes individualism and erodes traditional hierarchical and community-centered structures. The individual's self-consciousness is privileged as the starting point for knowledge and action. The Western colonial exploitation and expansion project disseminates these modern concepts as the normative way of being through western education. Thus, education acts as the nest where modernity spawns and hatches its ideologies for its subjects. Moreover, western liberal democracy and neoliberal capitalism dominate non-western cultures, assuming a new form of imperialism. These factors underpin some Muslims' perception of western-modernity as antithetical to Islam.

Muslims are, therefore, divided on the appropriate response to modern innovations and ideologies. On the one hand, some Muslims are aversive to modernity, advocating for a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and strict adherence to the Sunnah— the Political Literalist Salafists (PLF). On the other hand, others espouse reformist ideologies that foster adaptation to the modern world's contingencies—Modern Islamic Reformists (MIR). We shall closely examine these two movements/schools to understand their point of reference and implications to socio-political relations in contemporary pluralistic societies.

Political Literalist Salafism

The media often ambiguously address this group with nomenclatures such as radicals, fundamentalists, extremists, traditionalists, and jihadists without adequately observing subtle variations in their usage in different contexts.[4] Since we are examining sects that have a Sunni background, literalists in their interpretation of the Qur'an, and the use of militant *jihad* for political pursuit, we umbrella them under the caption: Political Literalist Salafists (PLS). According to Ramadan, this group "tends towards radical revolutionary action: It is about opposing the ruling powers, even in the West, and struggling for the institution of the Islamic

[3] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constant in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 207.

[4] For the complex issues with the usage of terms such as fundamentalist, Islamicist and others for this group, confer, Mazarr, *Unmodern Men, In Modern World,* 20-21.

State in the form of the caliphate."[5] Their penchant for violence to restore Islam's pristine tradition earned them notoriety as terrorist groups by some governments. They defend their aversiveness to modern innovation on a hadith thus: "Those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my Sunnah and that of the rightly guided caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is an error."[6] The PLS draw from a literal interpretation of this hadith to respond to any innovation in Islamic culture and context as *"bid'a*." Kamrava observes that *bid'a* is rarely mentioned in the Qur'an but became prevalent after the death of the Prophet. It refers to beliefs and practices that counter those endorsed by the *Sunnah* and the Qur'an.

Another feature of the PLS is the projection of the classical juridical description of socio-political worldviews (*dar al-Islam*) as the sphere of submission and territories administered by the Muslim state.[7] Groups with these ideologies have been sprouting since 9/11. They include al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, ISIS, al-Shabab, and ISWAP. They hold onto the literalist interpretation of the Qur'an to instigate militant *jihad* against those opposed to their radical convictions.

Origin and Ideologies of Boko Haram and ISWAP

Some scholars have traced the ideological provenance of Boko Haram to the antecedence of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio's (1754-1817) *jihad* that established the Sokoto Caliphate in 1804. Collaborating with this view, Virginia Comolli alludes to a letter by Boko Haram addressed to a former governor of Kano State, Rabiu Kwankwaso, in August 2011. In this letter, the group described Nigeria as a *kufur* (infidels') state and vowed to toe the steps of Fodio by restoring it to the path of "the creator where justice, discipline, good morals, love and care, peace and progress… will prevail".[8] While Boko Haram's ideological link to dan Fodio's caliphate is

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[5] Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2004), 27

[6] Abi Dawood Sulaiman bin Al- Aash'ath Al- Sijistani (202– 275 a.h. / 817– 888 c.e), cited in Mehram Kamrava, *Innovation in Islam: Traditions and Contributions* (California; University of California Press, 2011), 2.

[7] Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Root of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

[8] Open letter from Boko Haram, August 2011 reproduced in Sahara Reporters, 'Why We Struck Kano', Sahara Reporters 22 January 2012 http://saharareporters.com/2012/01/22/boko-haram-why-we-struck-kano, cf. Virgina

persuasive, other scholars attribute the emergence of Boko Haram to recent political and religious events in northern Nigeria. On this note, Brandon Kendhammer and Carmen McCain argued that Boko Haram emerged from the Hijra Group (a Salafist movement founded in the late 1990s by Imam Mohammed Ali) at Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri.[9] The group considered the Nigerian political system irredeemably corrupt, and following the example of the Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina, they relocated to Kanama, in Yobe State, to establish a separatist Islamic community guided by the shari'a. In 2003, a confrontation with security agencies led to their dislodgement.[10]

Also, Boko Haram is believed to have emerged from a Muslim Youth Organization, Shaaba, formed by Abubakar Lawan in 1995, to encourage Muslim youths to live an Islamic puritan life.[11] When Lawan left Nigeria for studies, Mohammed Yusuf became the leader, naming the group, Yusufiyya. By 2000, Yusuf had become famous through his teachings that attributed the social malaise in Nigeria to western education. He advocated for a boycott of western education and a return to Islamic tradition. In compliance, many university students abandoned their education, and some graduates publicly tore their certificates.[12] With time, the group came to be known as ***Boko Haram.*** The Hausa word ***Boko*** is translated as "western," and the Arabic ***Haram*** is translated as "forbidden"— Boko Haram means "Western education is forbidden"[13] The group, however, preferred to be called "Sunni Community for the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad" (*Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*).[14]

Comolli, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency, revd ed*., (Hurst and Company, London, 2017), 13-14.

[9] Brandon Kendhammer and Carmen McCain, *Boko Haram* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2018), 25.

[10] Following these events, the media began to describe the group as "Nigerian Taliban" because their *modus operandi* was akin to the Afghan Taliban.

[11] Muhammad Mann Shaaba, "Absolutism in Religion and Global Peace: Boko-Haram Factor in Nigeria and Its Educational Imperatives," *World journal of education* 7, no. 2 (2017): 11–.18

[12] Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, "Boko Haram: A Jihad Enigma in Nigeria," *Understanding Boko Haram Terrorism and Insurgency in Africa,* edited by James J. Hentz and Hussein Solomon (New York: Routeledge, 2017), 19.

[13] Yusuf never had the opportunity to embrace the public education system but only the Quranic school in Maiduguri when he lived with Alhaji Baba Fugu Mohammed, a family friend, after his father's death in 1980 during the Maitatsine uprising.

[14] Scott MacEachern, *Searching For Boko Haram: A History of Violence in Central Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University, Press, 2018),11.

Some moderate Salafist Islamic clerics opposed Yusuf's anti-western education rhetoric, especially Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam, leading to Yusuf's ex-communication from Ndimi Mosque.[15] Together with some returnees of the Nigerian Taliban, they relocated to Anquwan Doki, outside of Maiduguri, where they built a Mosque named Ibn Taymiyya Masjid. Yusuf's community developed to a state inside a state, employing its members, a governing body (the *Shura*), the police force (the *Hisba*), a brigade guard, and massive farms for food production. In 2009, a confrontation with the Nigerian security forces and Boko Haram led to the death of Yusuf.[16]

In 2010, Abubakar Shekau, the second in command to Yusuf, took over the group's leadership, rebuilding its militant force with financial support from other global terrorist groups like al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[17] Under the leadership of Shekau, the group launched horrific attacks on government institutions, civilians, the military, Muslims, and Christians. The bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja in 2013 and the kidnap of the Chibok Girls in April 2014 got the international community's attention. In 2016, Boko Haram was split into two factions. The new group is the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), led by Yusuf's son, Abu Musab al-Barnawi, while Shekau retains the leadership of the main faction.[18] The contention between the two is attributed mainly to Shekau's

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[15] Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam is an eminent scholar, a product of the Islamic University of Medina and the leading member of the famous Islamic Salafist sect in Nigeria, the Ahlussunnah (Ahl al-Sunna, or people of the Prophet's teaching). Unlike Yusuf, Adam was a progressive political advocate and suggested a proactive approach to the country's political challenges by encouraging Salafists to embrace politics to clean up the corrupt system. Unfortunately, Ja' afar Adam was gruesomely murdered in 2007, and every accusing finger pointed at the Boko Haram sect.

[16] The interview with Mohammed Yusuf allowed a little window into his ideology and life style. He rejected western education but accepted technology. He is against astronomy, because Allah forbid it. For a full translation of the interrogation cf. Comolli, *Boko Haram*, 56-58.

[17] Jacob Zenn, et al, "The Ideological Evolution of Boko Haram in Nigeria," *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 4 (August 1, 2013): 46–53.

[18] Atta Barkindo, et al, "Abubakr Shekau: Boko Haram's Underestimated Corporatist-Strategic Leader." *Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines: Analyses of Africa's Enduring Insurgency*, edited by Jacob Zenn, (Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2018): 53–73. It is important to note that Boko Haram in 2015, changed its name to ISWAP after Shekau pledged allegiance to Islamic State 'caliph' Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. However in August 2016, Shekau abandoned the name as a result of the chism. The Nigerian Army announced the killing of al-Barwani in October 2021. It remains uncertain the impact of his

excessive *takfirism*.[19] The fight between these two factions for domination led to the death of Shekau in 2021. Since the death of Shekau, ISWAP has controlled activities in the zone and developed a tax base system.[20] They also continue to attack military bases, killing the security forces and anyone they consider infidel.

The tenets of Boko Haram and ISWAP are antithetical to modernity. First, with the rejection of western education, the door to modernization is shut. Second, secular liberal democracy is opposed by the carving out of an Islamic state within a democratic state. Third, their violation of women's rights and religious freedom. However, like other terrorist groups, Boko Haram/ISWAP members believe that they respond to their religious beliefs. What is problematic is their rigid interpretation of the Qur'an and inability to adjust to the modern context. This neglect fuels the conflict between Boko Haram/ISWAP and the current Nigerian state.

Modern Islamic Reformists

This group consists of progressives or reformers who are open to modernity by interpreting the Qur'an and the Sunnah in light of modern society. Charles Kurzman writes:

> One defining characteristic of this movement was the self-conscious adoption of "modern" values— that is, values that authors explicitly associated with the modern world, especially rationality, science, constitutionalism, and certain forms of human equality. Thus this movement was not simply "modern" (a feature of modernity) but also "modernist" (a proponent of modernity).[21]

The reformists call for a recast of Islamic tradition to enable contemporary Muslims to adjust to the reality of modern society. An examination of the views of two modern reformists, Abdulaziz Sachedina and Sherman Jackson, will help shed light on the reformists' approach.

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death on the group and the return of peace in the region (cf. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/15/world/africa/nigeria-islamic-state-abu-musab-al-barnawi-dead.html).

[19] Takfirism classifies all non-practising Muslims as *kufur* (infidels) and calls upon its adherents to abandon existing Muslim societies, settle in isolated communities and fight all Muslim infidels. Cf. Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Takfirism: a messianic ideology," https://mondediplo.com/2007/07/03takfirism.

[20] Cf. Eurasia Review, https://www.eurasiareview.com/12062021-iswap-launches-hearts-and-minds-strategy-to-counter-nigerian-army-offensive-analysis/

[21] Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam 1840-1940: A Source Book* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

Abdulaziz Sachedina

Abdulaziz Sachedina espouses the compatibility and universality of human rights to Islamic teachings on respecting human dignity and religious pluralism. However, in his analysis of the1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Sachedina acknowledges:

> Human rights language is modern, firmly rooted in secular liberalism that safeguards and promotes citizens' rights and that demands privatization of religion from the public sphere to allow the development of a politics independent of religion. This secularization of the public sphere is absent in Islamic juridical and theological anthropology.[22]

Sachedina identifies three strands in Muslims' response to the Declaration. First are the traditionalists, who are critical of the western secular foundation of the Declaration because of its "hostility to divergent philosophical or religious ideas."[23] Traditionalists consider the Declaration as "morally imperialistic and culturally ethnocentric" for focusing on individualistic rights and "insensitive to particular Muslim cultural values, especially when it comes to speaking about individual rights in the context of collective and family values in Muslim society."[24] These traditionalists occupy prominent positions in Islamic thought because they live and teach in Islamic institutes in Muslim Arab nations, and their views are considered the most authentic in the Muslim world.

The second group is the secular intellectuals, who support the Declaration without any recurs to the observation of the traditionalists. This group is divided into two: the first is a small group of scholars who live and write from the Muslim nations with their native language. The second is in the majority, residing in western nations. Although the latter group has had tremendous publications, their works are not creating much impact because they are not written in Arabic, and when translated, they do not get to the grassroots.[25] Sachedina alludes to a third group in between the traditionalists and the secular intellectuals that pay special attention to foundational sources of Islam as well as critically argues for or against liberal interpretation of the Declaration, "the compatibility or lack of it by acknowledging substantial differences

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[22] Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenges of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6.

[23] Abdulaziz Sachedina, "The Clash of Universalisms: Religious and Secular in Human Rights," *The Hedgehong Review*, 9, vol.3 (2007) 49-62.

[24] Ibid, 50.

[25] Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Right*, 21.

between some of the fundamental principles set forth in the Declaration and Islamic tradition."[26] Sachedina identifies with this group.

Against this background, Sachedina underpins the contention between the traditionalist and secularists on the plausibility of the universal applicability of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He addresses this issue by analyzing Johannes Morsink's response to the criticism of western secular bias against the Declaration. Morsink notes Muslims' low representation at the drafting of the document but explains that the accentuation of natural law without reference to divine laws and the omission of religious idioms in the Declaration was necessitated by the pursuit of appropriate articulation of universal morality that cuts across all traditions to preempt the domination by a particular religious ideology or tradition over others.[27]

While acknowledging that the rationale given for the secularization of the Declaration may sound reasonable, Sachedina argues that paradoxically, it creates the challenge of pluralistic sources of morality tantamount to the relativization of human rights. Often, as noticed in some Muslim nations because of the separation of universal morality from foundational considerations, some political leaders have ignored the universal thrust of the Declaration on the pretext of cultural relativity to deny their citizens and others their rights.[28] On this note, Sachedina is not pleased with the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990), which could imply that Muslims have a different form of human rights other than that which flows from the universal essence of just being human. To preclude permitting each culture to determine the valuation of human rights, Sachedina avers that it is imperative to establish a theological basis "grounded in religious notions about human dignity and divinely ordained human freedom of will."[29] It should be a transcendental/theological grounds for human rights that acknowledge human beings' innate or natural dignity and intrinsic self-worth, that will bridge the traditionalist and secularist approaches, making it possible for Muslim societies to embrace the Declaration convincingly because of its foundations.

Accordingly, Sachedina observes that while the concept of natural law is not emphasized in Islamic theology, the Qur'an provides the "notion of [a] universal morality with which all

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Cf. Johannes Morsink, *Inherent Human Rights Philosophical Roots of the Universal Declaration* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[28] Sachedina, The Clash of the Universal, 53.

[29] Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge*, 27.

human beings are blessed and held accountable to God, regardless of their particular faith commitment or even lack of it."[30] God endows humans with the ***fitra,*** the capacity of discerning good from evil and knowing and seeking their creator. The *fitra* is "an "innate nature" that is capable of recognizing a moral good (al-khayr, al-ma'ru¯f) and the source of the very first qualities by virtue of which someone becomes human."[31] According to the Qur'an: "So set your purpose for religion, a human by nature upright—God's original [nature] upon which He created humankind. There is no altering [the laws of] God's creation" (Q. 30:30). While this text highlights what in Christian theology is described as the *imago Dei* (the image of God) in humans, another verse denotes the ability of humans' by their *fitra* to discern good and evil: "By the soul and that which shaped it and inspired it [with conscience of] what is wrong for it and [what is] right for it. Prosperous is he who purifies it, and failed has he who seduces it" (Q. 91:7–10). Thus, Sachedina establishes a common ethical ground that demonstrates Islamic compatibility with the modern secular ethical structure from the authoritative source of Islamic tradition. He asserts: "Islamic and secular presuppositions about universal human rights are in agreement about innate human dignity, human moral agency, and the role intuitive reason plays in ethical cognition."[32] Hence, the intuitive reason's universal ethical capacity corresponds with the universal human rights advocated by the Declaration. There is no guessing that this profound elucidation calls to question Boko Haram's violation of human dignity, the *fitra*, and human rights.

On secular democracy and religious pluralism, Sachedina "argues that Islam provides rich resources for a pluralistic, peaceful, democratic, and publicly moral society."[33] He regrets that the secular democratic society's relegation of religion to the private sphere undermines the invaluable role that religion ought to play in society's moral life. Religion provides the moral imperatives needed to maintain social cohesion since it is still essential in arousing people's social consciousness to oppose dictatorial governments and the establishment of civic societies

[30] Ibid., 38.
[31] Ibid., 50.
[32] Ibid., 53.
[33] Lewis E. Winkler, *Contemporary Muslim and Christian Responses to Religious Plurality:Wolfhart Pannenberg in Dialogue with Abdulaziz Sachedina* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2011), 126.

where individual liberty and fundamental human rights are respected.[34] In the practice of religion in modern society, Sachedina maintains that there should be respect for the freedom of conscience. He argues that "Any pluralistic social order requires the active articulation of rational as well as revelational sources of protection for individual autonomy in matters of personal faith within a society as part of the divine-human covenant."[35] This human agency endowed by God affords every human the power of responsible action. The *fitra* is the primary source of moral discernment, while revelation is supplementary: "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things" (Q. 2:256).

Unfortunately, there are instances where exclusivist religious practices have contributed to horrendous human rights abuses, dictatorial governments, and outright violence. Sachedina cautions Muslims to abide by the Qur'anic injunctions on freedom of religion, insisting that Islam is intrinsically a pluralistic religion because the Qur'an proposes a universal community of humanity: "Surely they that believe, and those of Jews, and the Christians, and those Sabaeans, whoso believes in God and the Last Day, and works righteousness—their wage awaits them with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow" (Q. 2:62). For Sachedina, this passage expresses the divine wish of one community of humanity. It not only confirms the validity of other religions but their salvific efficacy. It is an invitation to all religions to shun exclusivist tendencies that lead to conflict and the destruction of lives. Aware of how religion has been manipulated to create disunity through exclusivist interpretations, Sachedina sues for dialogue and unity: "In a world in which religious differences historically have been manipulated to burn bridges between communities, recognition and understanding of religious differences require us to enter into knowledgeable dialogue with one another, even in the face of major disagreements."[36] Given this explication, one wonders why Boko Haram would not collaborate with other religions and people of goodwill to wage war against injustice, corruption, ethnocentricism, and other socio-political ills besetting Nigeria. Could Sachedina's interpretation be a universalization of personal interpretation, which has no authoritative influence on some

[34] Sachedina, *Islamic Root,* 4.
[35] Ibid., 83.
[36] Sachedina, *Islamic Root,* 35.

sects of the Muslim umma? Examining these issues from a different scholar focusing on Islamic legal perspectives would illuminate and deepen our discussion.

Sherman Jackson

Sherman Jackson observes that some western scholars believe that Islamic law (the shari'a) is incompatible with modern secular democracy because it is "anchored to a medieval vision of society that is woefully out-of-step with modern realities and sensibilities."[37] This idea is influenced by the view that "independent interpretation" (*ijtihad*) ended in the thirteenth century. With the end of *ijtihad*, there is the blind following of legal works produced between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries *ulama* and the founders of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*madhhab*). With the shari'a' inextricably tied to medieval legal propositions (*taqlid*), Islam may not comfortably engage the modern secular society's contingencies. For Jackson, such Western perceptions result from anthropological and scientific approaches to the shari'a instead of a legal approach. He maintains that western scholars are members of "the ascending civilization where philosophy and science dominate and thus only see their subject in anthropological terms."[38] Jackson argues that only when Islamic law is approached as legal science will all the faulty western perceptions give way to its compatibility with a secular democracy.

Furthermore, Jackson differentiates between the ***jurisdiction of law*** and ***jurisdiction of fact*** to specify the scope of the jurist's interpretative authority. Drawing profusely from fiqh Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi, Jackson explains how cultural change can alter legal precedents. According to al-Qarafi, a legal opinion remains valid as long as the custom on which it was deduced persists. Other than that, "Holding to rulings that have been deduced on the basis of custom, even after this custom has changed, is a violation of unanimous consensus (*ijma*) and an open display of ignorance of the religion."[39] He illustrates this view with a provision in the famous al-Mudawwanah, attributed to imam Malik, compiled in the ninth century, which states that if a man declares unto his wife a phrase as, "You are forbidden to me" (*anti 'alayya haram*), he enacted an irrevocable divorce. This custom derived from pre-Islamic Egypt was no longer

[37] Sherman A. Jackson, "Shari'ah, Democracy, and the Modern Nation-State: Some Reflections on Islam, Popular Rule, and Pluralism," *Fordham International Law Journal* 27, no. 1 (December 2003), 90.

[38] Ibid., 92.

[39] Ibid., 99.

observed by the thirteenth century. With this example, Jackson distinguishes between legal law and customs. It implies that Islamic law is dynamic, adjusting to a new context, and not synonymous with classical laws, giving impetus to Jackson's argument for the Shari'a's capacity to adapt to a new changing situation and compatibility with the modern context.

On Islam and secular liberal democracy, Jackson identifies three general categories of American Sunni Muslim's responses: The first is the liberal or progressive Muslims who consider classical Islamic interpretations - conceived as normative - as obstructive to progressive Islam, and therefore advocate the independent interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah without the mediation of the pre-modern precedents. The second is the Modern Islamic movement or the neo-fundamentalists, who find no problems with the classical Islamic interpretation; instead, they consider colonial domination and internal decay within the religion as the problems with Islam. Hence, they sought the purification of the religion from pre-modern and modern accretion. The third is the Modern Islamic Traditionalists or Neo-Traditionalists. They consider Islamic tradition a repository of intellectual and moral capital, and their role is to guard modern Muslims in propagating their belief to liberal society and providing intellectual and spiritual insight from the classical tradition.[40] Jackson associates himself with this last group. Recognizing the reality of the challenge between Islam and Western secular liberal democracy, Jackson proffers answers to four questions confronting the context.

The first is the legitimacy of Muslim residence in non- Muslim democracies. To address this question, Jackson chooses the work of Patricia Crone, who posits the classical Islamic legal principle of *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-Harb* as a "religio-legal" principle that makes it difficult for Muslims to coexist with other religions. According to Crone, the two worlds imply that the *dar al-Harb* or infidels must be dominated and conquered through *jihad* to establish an Islamic rule.[41] Jackson counters the view by stating that it is "an historically informed description born of actual experience."[42] Referring to the eleventh century Shafi 'i jurist, al- Mawardi, who in his legal writing defined *dar al-Islam* "as any land in which a Muslim enjoys security and is able to

[40] Sherman Jackson, "Liberal/ Progressive, Modern and Modernized Islam: Muslim Americans and the American State," *Innovation in Islam, Tradition and Condition, edited by Mehran Kamrava* (California: University of california Press, 2011) 170.

[41] Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[42] Jackson, Liberal/ Progressive, 174.

isolate and protect him or herself, even if he or she is unable to promote the religion through persuasion or violence."[43] Hence, Jackson maintains that *dar al-Islam* is a geographical description that has no scriptural prescription. However, it makes one wonder whether a place like northern Nigeria and other places where Muslims persecute fellow Muslims should be described as *dar al-Harb*.

The second is the legitimacy of Muslim loyalty to non-Muslim democracies. Jackson introduces another theological concept explaining why some Muslims will not accept a place like America or Nigeria as *dar al-Islam*. The concept of *al- hakimiyah* (exclusive rulership) was popularized by Sayyid Qutb (d.1966) and Abu al- A'la al Mawdudi (d.1979) and drawn from the profession of the *tawhid*—attributing obedience of human laws as a violation of Islam monotheism. In contrast, Jackson clarifies that historical practices allow kings and judges to enjoy discretional power in Islamic history. He refers to Ibn Qayyim al- Jawziyah (a reputable medieval jurist, belonging to Imam Hanbali school), who argues that "any means by which justice is served is to be considered a valid application of shari'a, even if such means should differ from the scriptural deductions contained in the manuals of Islamic law."[44] It is, thus, preponderant to say that Muslims living under a Christian president in Nigeria or the US are guilty of *shirk* (an apostasy).

The third is the legitimacy of Muslim solidarity with the government and citizens of non-Muslim democracies. Jackson explains that excluding *ibidat* (the part of the shari'a that deals with worship and religious duties), other parts of the shari'a, those dealing with human relationships and the society, are primarily non-scriptural. For this reason, "Islamic legal theory is just as often called upon to define and impose limits on the extent to which meaning that is discovered or created outside the text can be inscribed with Islamic authority and legitimacy."[45] Islamic law, therefore, obliges Muslims to be in solidarity with the state and their fellow citizens. Jackson cautions against those he describes as "alienated citizens." They are those Muslims who live in the US enjoy the country's benefits and safety and render their legal duties but refuse to participate in the socio-political life.

[43] Ibid., 175.
[44] Ibid., 177.
[45] Ibid., 180.

The fourth is the legitimacy of Muslims sharing common goals with non-Muslims in non-Muslim democracies. Jackson remarks the solidarity between African-American Muslims and Christians as built out of their shared history and common social concerns. [46] However, Jackson notes that under American liberalism, Muslims as equal citizens are entitled to make any demand through the "Public Reason" that is accessible to every American. However, 'public reason' in a liberal democracy would probably privilege the dominant culture; hence Jackson observes that reason can oppress and liberate. He cautions that Islam is neither monolithic nor American; thus, diversity should be allowed to flourish.

Jackson's analysis of shari'a law in the modern context is very informative for both Muslims and non- Muslims. However, there is a further need to elucidate how shari'a could be practically applied in a country where shari'a is only a subsidiary law. Would it imply that Muslims should self-regulate themselves in the issues of religion? How might this modernist approach be practiced in Nigeria, where shari'a and civil laws coexist? Notwithstanding, Jackson's views speak to the reality of modern context and explicate grounds for compatibility between Islam and western modernity.

Between Jackson and Sachedina

The examination of the teachings of Jackson and Abdulaziz reveals striking similarities and slight divergences. Jackson approaches Islamic modernity from the legal framework, while Sachedina approaches it ethically. The difference is not significant because shari'a/fiqh is both law and ethics.[47] Jackson was explicit of his audience, the American (Sunni) Muslims. However, his views could be applied to a broader audience. Conversely, Sachedina seems to be addressing Muslims in dominant Islamic countries, especially in the non-western world. Like Jackson, Sachedina's subject matter (human rights) could resonate with a universal audience. Jackson and Sachedina are respectively Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. They drew from both traditions in their

[46] Ibid., 182.

[47] Esposito draws out the clear link between shari'a and ethics in his definition of fiqh as "that science or discipline that sought to ascertain, interpret, and apply God's will or guidance [a shari'ah] as found in the Qur'an to all aspects of life." Cf. John L. Esposito, Islam: The Straight Path (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 79.

analysis, showing that Muslims can work together towards a just society despite the differences in sects' ideologies.

Both scholars adopted an inclusive approach to faith and beliefs. While Sachedina locates himself in-between secular intellectuals and traditionalists, Jackson takes a similar position with a different name, neo-traditionalist, a position in-between liberalists and neo-fundamentalists. They espouse the need for Muslims to embrace secular democracy, observe human rights principles, and become active citizens of their countries and the world. Here lies the nexus and nucleus of their insights for Boko Haram. They persuasively stress the need for Muslims to embrace modern pluralistic context by recasting old-held assumptions and embrace a world where everyone is a brother and a sister embodying divine-given *fitra*. For them, Muslims should actively participate in the social order of their societies, be loyal to the laws governing their states, work in solidarity with other religions in the dialogue of life and action for the realization of national cohesion, justice, equity, and prosperity. Muslims living under a Christian president should no longer be perceived as *al- hakimiyah*, nor modern innovation as *bid'a*, a mentality of returning to the medieval age or pre-colonial Uthman dan Fodio's caliphate governed only by shari'a law. Hence the appreciation of the excellent values of western education in our ever-changing and globalizing world and working toward religious solidarity for a just society for all is the way forward for modern societies like Nigeria.

Conclusion

The conversation in this article between Islam's militant fundamentalists and the modernist reformers elucidates grounds on which Nigeria's terrorist sects could appreciate an alternative hermeneutics of the Qur'an and other Islamic traditions congenial with the present Nigerian pluralistic and democratic society. Although, we noted that because of its western intellectual provenance, modernity is characterized by an emphasis on liberal subjectivity and rationality than religious and traditional authorities as frames of reference and normative ways of being. It also employs western education and colonial conquest as vehicles for disseminating the western-modern projects to non-western countries like Nigeria, obstructing pre-colonial cultures and religions. However, in a bid to obviate some of the social ills putatively attributed to modern influence and restore the caliphate legislated by the literal interpretation of the Shari'a law in

Nigeria, Boko Haram and ISWAP engaged in the war of terror against modern institutions; the democratic government and people of other faith.

Nevertheless, through the teachings of Sachedina and Jackson, drawn from authentic and authoritative teachings of the Qur'an and other Islamic traditions, one can affirm that Islam is compatible with modernity. For example, despite the modern secular and liberal influence of the construction of the Universal Human Rights Charter, the Qur'anic principle of *fitra* gives it a proper theological and universal grounding within Islamic tradition. Jackson's explication of differentiation between the ***jurisdiction of law*** and ***jurisdiction of fact*** accentuates the fact that the Shari'a is a dynamic law, not ossified to the medieval legal propositions (*taqlid*), but can adapt to modern context using "independent interpretation" (*ijtihad*), which is another Islamic legal principle. Furthermore, Jackson and Sachedina substantiated from the Islamic tradition that Muslims ought to collaborate with people of other faith traditions to freely and actively participate in the political process, even under the leadership of non-Muslim governments. Because wherever Muslims are given protection is a *dar-al Islam,* and Islam is intrinsically pluralistic. Above all, f*itra* endows each individual with the inalienable guidance towards making a moral judgment.

These teachings ought to have enormous transformative implications for members of Nigeria's terrorist sects and perhaps help them recast some of their anachronistic hermeneutics of Islam, which had led to the consideration of western education as *haram*, the abduction of schoolgirls, destruction of government facilities, imposition of a shari'a legislated caliphate, and the killings of people of other faith and even Muslims who oppose their practices. Paradoxically and indeed, regrettably, Boko Haram/ISWAP use high-caliber military wares like AK-47 to commit atrocities on a large scale, tantamount to embracing negative features of modern innovation (*bid'a*), they claim to be opposing. In sum, despite the seemingly negative challenges posed by modernity which are advanced as reasons for the activities of Boko Haram and ISWAP, I contend that a modern reformist approach to Islam offers a better perspective and appropriate application of Islam in the contemporary Nigerian context and is capable of transformative effect in the ideologies of Boko Haram and ISWAP Members.

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Making Sense of Conflicts in Africa: A Practical Theological Path for Transformation

By Donald Tyoapine Komboh, Ph.D.

Introduction

Divisions and crises in Africa offer a dual perspective. A critical approach both as a reconstruction of crises labeled religious and a testing of theories that interrogate conflicts, many of which ultimately help to explain the adverse effects of displacements, division and the disruptions of lives is quintessential. Quite a number of these theories will be highlighted and scrutinized in this piece. The conversation will further explores the secular age and engages religious systems while imagining and adopting new forms of dialogue that may adequately respond to the 'other' in these conflicts. It is the view of this work that a dialogue that is interpretative, critical, constructive, attentive and open to further dialogical possibilities is essential to transformation and social change in Africa. Ultimately, it is the firm belief of this study that a dialogue of action and life which is imaginative is key (central) to engaging appropriately any religion.

Practical Theology and its Relevance

Practical theology itself understands that theology has often been defined as faith seeking understanding, *'fides quaerens intellectum*.' However, local theologies make us keenly aware that 'understanding' itself is deeply colored by cultural context.[48] But what makes contextual theology precisely contextual is the recognition of the validity of another locus theologicus: present human experience. Theology that is contextual realizes that culture, history, contemporary thought forms and so forth are to be considered, along with scripture and tradition, as valid sources for theological expression.[49] The reason for adding experience/context to the traditional theological source as the revolution in thinking and understanding the world that is characterized as the turn to the subjective at the beginning of modern times is while classical theology understood theology as something objective, contextual theology understands theology as something boldly subjective. The subjective, however, does not refer to something private but

[48] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985), 75.
[49] Steven B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis,2002), 4

the fact that the human person or human society, culturally and historically bound as it is, is the source of reality, not a supposed value and culture free objectivity already out there now real.[50]

Practical theology builds on this understanding and privileges experience and context as a principal interpretative tool. The goal is to adopt a medium that will promote human flourishing and transformation. When it comes to Inter-religious dialogue on the other hand, it is dialogue focused on building understanding and respect between people of different religions. Such dialogue attempts to bring divided peoples together through open discussion, by healing past hurts and by straightening out misunderstandings.[51]Dialogue often conjures images of a leisurely conversation and friendly exchange of ideas among intellectuals at colleges and universities, or conferences and symposia, where new ideas and research results are expounded and challenged, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and a genuine quest for truth.

> This image of dialogue as an intellectual give and take is often transferred to interreligious or interfaith dialogue with intellectuals being professional theologians, experts in religious matters and religious officials such as rabbis, bishops, priests, monks and nuns, and imams and mullahs. Needless to say, such intellectual exchange is both necessary and useful for peacemaking and reconciliation, since the religious dimensions of conflicts more often than not arise out of ignorance and misunderstanding of the teachings and practice of other religions.[52]

It is important that steps be taken to interrogate this situation because it affects the lives of the people and creates human suffering. This human suffering impedes human flourishing which is what the people desire and also the desire of God.[53]

Conflict Management and Theories

Conflicts may suggest a technical response to the problem of pluralism that continues to ravage us. There are plurality in ideas, identities and theories. A critical view suggests engaging in a hermeneutics of suspicion, as futher probe of the narratives is undertaken. This will be

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[50] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 4

[51] Anna Zaros, "Interreligious Dialogue and the Issue of Jerusalem in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict," *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 33, no. 2 (2009):7.

[52] Peter C. Phan, "Peace building and Reconciliation: Interreligious Dialogue and Catholic Spirituality," in *Peace building: Catholic Theology, Ethics and Praxis*, Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby & Gerald F. Powers (eds), (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 334.

[53]Komboh, Donald Tyoapine. "Healing Social Violence: Practical Theology and the Dialogue of Life for Taraba State, Nigeria."(2017), 77.DOI

carried out by adopting several measures including theories and resolutions that are cardinal to the conversation. As possible approaches are discerned for the distillation of these conflicts in Africa and beyond, the question that remains on our lips is who is gaining and manipulating this situation? What is actually happening? Perhaps, many of the conflicts, as the literature reveals, still revolve around such issues as the right to identity, right to internal self-determination, right to group existence, right to land and to the control of resources, among others.[54] Perhaps too, it may be noted at this point that other reasons really overshadow the main issues that breed this violence. A possible reason points to the access to power and control which usually takes precedence over any other factor that often causes conflicts is access to power through rigged elections. It must be said that nothing provokes violence and conflicts in Africa as flawed elections do, and they feed a vicious cycle of instability. It is fairly certain that if there is socio-political chaos after an African election, the legitimacy of the election has been deeply compromised.[55] If one attempts a cusory look at the list of African countries and the elections that have taken place in recent times, it may attest to this fact. Zimbabwe's parliamentary election of 2002 scored forty-four over one hundred in legitimacy ratings. This is the lowest election ever rated on the Elklit-Reynolds scale (a method for assessing the quality of a national election, its freeness, fairness and administrative efficacy),[56] and in 2008 the overall legitimacy of the elections were even worse (yet to be scored using the same methodology). Kenya's 2007 parliamentary and presidential elections engendered a devastating ethnic conflict that spread like wild fire across the Rift Valley, and while the degree of outright vote fraud is disputed, these elections scored a disappointing fifty one over one hundred on the quality of elections scale overall.[57]

Africa has the highest rate of outside intervention in conflicts, higher even than the Middle East, which also experiences a great deal of external intervention. For the most part, conflicts in other regions more often remain uncomplicated by outside parties. This aspect of

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[54] Olajide O. Akanji, "Group Rights and Conflicts in Africa: A critical Reflection on Ife-Modakeke, Nigeria," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 16(2009):31.
[55] Andrew Reynolds, "Elections, Electoral Systems, and Conflicts in Africa," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* Vol. XVI, Issue 1(Fall/Winter, 2009): 78.
[56] Jorgen Elklit & Andrew Reynolds, "A Framework for the Systematic Study of Election Quality," *Democratization*Vol.12, no.2(April 2005): 147.
[57] Reynolds, *"Elections, Electoral Systems, and Conflicts in Africa,"* 78.

Africa's conflicts, it has been argued, is related to the fact that because aspects of the internal form are projections of the external environment, they are easily manipulated from the outside. In other words, there is a continuity here with the interference by outside powers of the colonial and neocolonial periods.[58] This is a claim that can hardly be over ruled if we consider how things may have turned out in many other countries were it not for such interventions. Simply put "external intervention can either be neutral or partisan.Partisan intervention occurs when an outside party puts pressure on one of the disputants to act in a particular way."[59]This means that the vision of conflicts and violence are imagined within a particular category and position.[60]Therefore, many theories have been alluded to as responsible for these conflicts in Africa.

A huge challenge exists in understanding and interpreting the nature of conflicts in Africa. As a result many theories will be examined. They are recognized as social theories and serve as analytical frameworks or paradigms used to examine social phenomena. The term social theory encompasses ideas about how societies change and develop, about methods of explaining social behavior, about power and social structure, gender and ethnicity, modernity and civilization, revolution and utopias.[61] So, it is hardly a surprise to observe that, at least since Aristotle, theorists have believed that political discontent and conflicts depend not only on the absolute level of economic wealth, but also its distribution. The difficulty remains even more when applying 'foreign hypothesis' and foreign findings into the African context. This was noted by John N. Collins, for instance, who referred to the 'empirical complexity' of attempting to apply the Rummel's factor analysis approach.[62] Factor analysis summarizes data so that relationships and patterns can be easily interpreted and understood. It is normally used to regroup variables into a limited set of clusters based on shared variance. Hence, it helps to isolate

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[58] Richard Jackson, "Managing Africa's Violent Conflicts," *Peace & Change* Vol. 25, no 2(April, 2000): 212.

[59]External Intervention, *IntractableConflict.Org.* accessed on 5th July, 2019 www.intractableconflict.org/www_Colodo_edu_conflict/peace/.../extintvn.htm

[60]Komboh, Donald Tyoapine. *"Healing Social Violence,"* 87.

[61] J. Devan, *"What is Social Theory?"* accessed 24 April 2015. www.socialtheoryapplied.com/what-is-social-theory/

[62] Baffour Agyeman Duah, "Military Coups, Regime Change, and Interstate Conflicts in West Africa," *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 16 no 4(Summer 1990): 548.

constructs and concepts.[63] Whereas the relevance of this to the African situation may not be clearly evident in some cases, there are many occasions that merit the utilization of some of these construct and concepts. Engaging some of these theories is absolutely crucial. In what follows is an examination of these theories, their usefulness and applications to some of the conflict situations highlighted, with a view to provoke better understanding, promote new insights and resources for addressing these conflicts.

Many studies of inequality and conflicts relate to the theory of 'Relative deprivation.' This theory argues that while absolute poverty may lead to apathy and inactivity, comparisons with those in the same society who do better may inspire radical action and even violence.[64] There are actions relating to this theory can be discerned from the activities of many unemployed and restless youths, who are ready at the slightest provocation to result to arms, and violence as can be witnessed in the accounts of narratives from different countries presented earlier on in the work. They fall easy prey to religious bigots who are ready to exploit and manipulate their vulnerability for cheap gains. They become easy targets as recruits for some of the most atrocious conflicts that have been identified around Africa thus far. In addition, ethnicity may have contributed to crisis in Africa but not as often projected. While the ethnic group is the predominant means of social identity formation in Africa, most ethnic groups coexist peacefully with high degrees of mixing through interethnic marriage, economic partnerships, and shared values.[65] The misdiagnosis of African conflicts as 'ethnic' ignores the political nature of the issues. People do not kill each other because of ethnic differences; they kill each other when these differences are promoted as the barrier to advancement and opportunity.[66]

Closely related to the above is the psycho social assessment theory which deals with identity, called Social Identity Theory (SIT) to explain some conflicts in Africa. "According to SIT, people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as organizational membership, religious affiliations, gender, and age cohort. As these examples

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[63] An Gie Yong and Sean Pearce, "A beginner's guide to Factor Analysis: Focusing on Exploratory Factor Analysis," *Tutorials in Quantitative Methods of Psychology* Vol. 9, no 2(2013): 79.
[64] Gudrun Ostby, Ragnhild Nordas & Jan Ketil Rod, "Regional Inequalities and Civil conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa," *International Studies Quarterly* 53 (2009): 303.
[65]Clement Mweyang Aapengnuo, "Misinterpreting Ethic Conflicts in Africa," *Joint Force Quarterly* Issue 58, 3(2010): 14.
[66] Aapengnuo, "Misinterpreting Ethic Conflicts in Africa,"14.

suggest, people may be classified in various categories and different individuals may utilize different categorization schemas."[67] However, it is pertinent to note that social classification serves two functions. First, it cognitively segments and orders the social environment, providing the individual with a systematic means of defining others. A person is assigned the prototypical characteristics of the category to which he or she is classified. Second, social classification enables the individual to locate or define him-or herself in the social environment.

According to SIT, the self-concept is comprised of a personal identity encompassing idiosyncratic characteristics (e.g., bodily attributes, abilities, psychological traits, interests) and social identity encompassing salient group classifications. Social identification, therefore, is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate.[68] This may in part explain the fury that is generated when groups or an individual in many of the African countries we have explored perceive that their differences are largely been promoted as barriers to advancement and opportunities, the resultant effects of this kind of practice always leads to conflicts.

More insights can be drawn from conflict theory which in many ways accounts for a sociological ground to these conflicts. Conflict theory emphasizes the role of coercion and power in producing social order. This perspective is derived from the works of Karl Marx, who saw society as fragmented into groups that compete for social and economic resources. Social order is maintained by domination, with power in the hands of those with the greatest political, economic, and social resources. When consensus exists, it is attributable to people being united around common interests, often in opposition to other groups.[69]

Conflict theory is when inequality exists because those in control of a disproportionate share of society's resources actively defend their advantages. The masses are not bound to society by their shared values, but by coercion at the hands of those in power. This perspective emphasizes social control, not consensus and conformity. Groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources. Those with the most resources exercise power over others with inequality and power struggles result. There is great attention

[67] Blake E. Ashforth & Fred Mael, "Social Identity Theory and The Organization," *Academy of Management Review* Vol. 14, no 1(1989): 20.
[68] Ashforth and Mael, "*Social Identity Theory and the Organization,"* 20-21.
[69] Ashley Crossman, "Conflict Theory: An Overview," accessed on 15th April 2015. www.sociology.about.com/od/sociological-theory/a/conflict-theory.htm

paid to class, race, and gender in this perspective because they are seen as the grounds of the most pertinent and enduring struggles in society.[70] Today, conflict theorists find social conflict between any groups in which the potential for inequality exists: racial, gender, religious, political, economic, and so on. Conflict theorists note that unequal groups usually have conflicting values and agendas, causing them to compete against one another. This constant competition between groups forms the basis for the ever-changing nature of society. Critics of the conflict perspective suggest that it glosses over the complexities and nuances of everyday life and relationships of power.[71] However, many of the findings in conflict theory may stand as one of the strongest reasons for social conflicts in the continent of Africa based on the thick descriptions provided for the context of several crises.

The interpretations that emerge from the survey of these theories present probable cause of the many conflicts in Africa. Also, the understanding that emerges for this reveals and strongly suggests the followings: Power as the underlining point that promotes conflict around the continents while deprivation, identification, and coercion serve principally as collaborators. Consider, the specific case of extremism which is recently gaining ground in many of the countries of the world and has been allegedly sponsored by groups with dubious intentions like the Al Shabab, a franchise of Al Qaeda or the Boko Haram, with links and ties also to Al Qaeda which consistently claim responsibility for the many attacks and disturbances carried out in some of these African countries and neighboring borders are disturbing cases in point. The efforts to manage tension and conflicts on mutual ground and negotiate for better understanding and transformation remains the concern of this paper as it assesses the contribution of practical theology method. Interpersonal relationships are the foundation and theme of human life, and most human behavior takes place in the context of the individual's relationships with others.[72]

Theology of Relationships

Wisdom in a sense phronesis relevant to practical action implies both good judgment and excellence of character and habits, sometimes appropriately referred to as "practical virtue" suggest that in dealing with the reality of the problematic of pluralism we will have to attend to

[70] Crossman, *"Conflict Theory: An Overview*," accessed on 15th April 2015.
[71] Crossman, "*Conflict Theory: An Overview*," accessed on 15th April 2015.
[72] Harry T. Reis W. Andrew Collins and Ellen Berscheid, "The Relationship Context of Human Behavior and Development," *Psychological Bulletin* , Vol. 126, No. 6, (2000) 844

relationships. This is religious but uppermost. It is the way of wisdom. Human interactions and engagement has to do with hermenutic actions as they are manifested and justapoxed within a particular understanding namely 'horizon.' Horizon means the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. When this is applied to the thinking mind, it speaks of the narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizon and so forth.[73] The Chalcedonia settlement, with its theology of the hypostatic union, offers a way forward. We find here an approach as to what reconciliation means and should be: "union of complex spheres of realities which does not destroy 'what' they are." Like the divine and human spheres of reality united in Christ without destroying the identities, people caught in identity-based violent conflicts can be challenged, to go and do the same. to crystalize the theology of relationships in contemporary African conflicts.[74] This entails the retrieval of some African concepts to draw implications for life and society. Such a doctrine is surely a practical one: it is about life, life before God, with one another and in the world. Such an understanding can also be drawn from the loving relationship between the Father and the Son that is an essential feature of the reality of the Trinity.[75] Hence "the communitarian nature of the Godhead gives us, we suppose, sufficient theological warrant to define human being in terms which stress mutuality, relation and community."[76] In Africa, the concept of *ubuntu* is generally recast and translated as

> humanness … In its most fundamental sense it translates as personhood and 'morality'. Metaphorically, it expresses itself in *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, describing the significance of group solidarity on survival issues so central to the survival of communities. While it envelops the key values of group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity, conformity to the basic norms and collective unity, in its fundamental sense it denotes humanity and morality.[77]

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[73] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method, Revised 2nd Edition* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 302.
[74] Raymond Alina, "Catholic Theology of Post-Conflict Restorative Justice: The Doctrine of Hypostatic Union as a Viable Inspiration," *Journal of Moral Theology* 5, no. 2 (June 2016): 81-98.
[75] Neil Pembroke, "Participation as a Christian Ethic: Wojtyla's Phenomenology of Subject-in-Community, Ubuntu, and the Trinity." *Religions 10*, no. 1(2019): 57.
[76] Alistair McFadyen, "The Trinity and Human Individuality: The Conditions for Relevance."*Theology* 95, no. 763 (1992): 11-12.
[77]I. Keevy, "The Constitutional Court and Ubuntu's Inseparable Trinity," *Journal for Juridical Science* 34, no. 1(2009): 64.

This privileged combination of the African understanding of *ubuntu* and it attractiveness to the Trinity is a creative process that includes not only linguistic borrowings but also that the language and grammar of Trinitarian theology has been developed in the context of debate.[78] This is key to the social analogy of a lot of African conflicts and it practical concerns. There are push and pull factors, which keep shaping the internal dynamics in the African arena. African people have not remained static, even though there are some retrogressive tendencies. The majority, whose perspectives are hardly captured in western media or academia, have made great leaps, in a number of areas, including their level of political awareness and popular participation in the political processes. The leadership dilemma and many other governance related malpractices are being challenged more and more from within, as people begin to understand the broader implications of bad politics and the consequences of governance structures that are autocratic and oppressive.[79] A case in point is Mali in Africa, after a critical dissection of the issue of conflicts driven by a supply induced scarcity, certain conclusion can be made, one of such will be "this lack of appreciation for pastoral life and production, the lack of self-determination and involvement in political life, and the fact that northern Mali was governed from the south are clearly the root causes of the rebellion."[80] This means more often than not the space where relationships are strained and potentials of engagements suggest that "the third space is not the either/or location of stability; it is the both/and space where borderless territory and free movement authorize the capacity to simultaneously theorize practice, practice theory, and allow the mediation of policy."[81] Hence, a situation where individual African leaders focus on the maintenance of informal networks of political support to such an extent that programmatic policy goals and economic analysis are ignored because most African governments gained power backed by movements rather than political parties; the logic of movements, with their emphasis

[78]Teddy C. Sakupapa, "The Trinity in African Christian Theology: An Overview of Contemporary Approaches." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 7.
[79] Ong'ayo, Antony Otieno. "Political instability in Africa: Where the problem lies and alternative perspectives." Amsterdam: The African Diaspora Policy Centre. Under: www. diasporacentre. org/DOCS/Political_Instabil. pdf (accessed October 15, 2009) (2008): 3.
[80] Benjaminsen, Tor A. "Does supply-induced scarcity drive violent conflicts in the African Sahel? The case of the Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali." *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 6 (2008): 832.
[81]Nnaemeka, Obioma. "Nego-feminism: Theorizing, practicing, and pruning Africa's way." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, no. 2 (2004): 360

on enthusiastic commitment to a common goal and limited tolerance for dissent, contribute to authoritarian tendencies.[82]

In Africa like elsewhere this call for a path to end the frequency of this instability and conflicts through a different means in particular an engagement with other forms of theological paths. It must be said that relational matters have become arguably the most painful and shameful arena where our failure as human beings is visible. Whether it entails races, cultures, sexes, or churches – our inability to cope with "otherness" is paramount. We marginalize, oppress, isolate, disparage, alienate; the vice–catalogue is endless. Most interesting is the fact that conflict connotes tension, division, and displacement. Highlighting the strategies of a practical theology methodology which builds on the hermeneutical circle method as an interpretive approach becomes illuminative and transformative. The hermeneutical circle therefore is the interpretive process wherein the scholar moves backwards and forward from 'whole to part and back to the whole'. Similarly, one can also show how tension may facilitate creativity in the management of conflicts and promote healthy dialogue.

Engaging Practical Theology and Transformation

Practical theology utilizes a variety of methodologies and in a way, a wide range of accompanying methods. The model of practical theology that we have developed here is deeply embedded with the hermeneutical/interpretative paradigm.[83] As a result, practical theology brings to this conversation on conflicts, displacement and dialogue an interpretive task.[84] It also privileges religious experience and contemporary situation in a critical engagement which may potentially lead to transformative dialogue. A number of reasons for why these conflicts and divisions persist have been identified. We have isolated some theories from different sources and placed the burden at the feet of modern societies and the 'public scripts' it continues to play. It is important to note that practical theological method adds to these findings and offers further

[82] Poteete, Amy R. "African Politics in Comparative Perspective by Goran Hyden" *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne De Science Politique* 42, no. 4 (2009): 1082-083.

[83] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,* 75.

[84]Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*, (Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 4. ***See also*** The four core tasks of practical theological interpretation, the descriptive empirical task; the interpretive task; the normative task and the pragmatic tasks are simply critical to the understanding of how conflicts, division may be seen from these diverse perspectives.

engagements with other properties: context, judgment, practice, trial and error, experience, common sense, intuition and bodily sensation.[85] Furthermore, since, interpretation involves understanding, dialogue and much more, the intention is to draw insights, methods, skills from different sources, disciplines and aspects of discipline in order to attain understanding or effect change.[86] However, dialogue is not simply about representatives of two or more different faith traditions sitting together and discussing their doctrines and practices. Dialogue actually has four main forms. These forms are the dialogue of theological exchange; the dialogue of religious experience, and the dialogue of life and actions.[87] For our purpose this last two are extremely important, the dialogue of life and the dialogue of action. The dialogue of life as we know it is a dialogue that comes to fruition in the day-to-day activities of people's lives.[88] Similarly, there is the dialogue of action, which is present when people of different religious traditions work together on social justice issues to bring about peace in our world and to help those in need.[89] These modes of dialogue, are opened to all people irrespective of educational level, their social standing and religious status, and have the advantage of avoiding the dangers of elitism and intellectualism inherent in the dialogue of theological exchange. Furthermore, they alone are able to correct biases and prejudices, ease deep seated hatreds, heal ancient wounds and forge a new way of life because they promote day to day communication and sharing, grassroots activism for justice and above all, common and communitarian experiences of the Divine or the absolute.[90]

Since, the practical theology approach serves as an interpretative tool. It draws from context that privileges human experience. It also takes cognizance of the labors that result from the dialogue of life and actions in understanding the pains of conflicts, divisions, and displacement experienced in Africa and elsewhere. This can be properly discerned from an

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[85] Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter,* 23.
[86] Stephen Pattison, *The challenge of Practical Theology: Selected Essays* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007), 256.
[87]Dialogue and Proclamation: *Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of*
the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and Congregation for the
Evangelization of Peoples, 1991): 42.
[88] Zaros, *"Inter religious Dialogue and The Issue of Jerusalem,"* 8.
[89] Zaros, "*Inter religious Dialogue and The Issue of Jerusalem*," 8.
[90] Phan, "*Peace building and Reconciliation,"* 334-335.

intense reading that reveals a complexified and multidimensional picture of 'what is going on'.[91] Despite, the various theories that have been examined, there are still measures that can be adapted for use in dealing with the prevailing conflicts that Africa continues to experience even today. Perhaps, one of the more recent conflict resolution method is transformational approach. Transformational conflict resolution is a new concept that provokes minds to look inwards generally taking into consideration the social trends and ensures that things are done in order to change the society by being more proactive, rather than being destructive. Some people are complaining of being suppressed and of not being listened to. If there is problem facing someone and he/she is complaining, there is a need for all the parties to sit down and discuss. That is, nobody should impose anything on another person. There should be mutual negotiations.[92] Here, attention is brought back on theology itself which can be and indeed should be the subject of critical reflection and challenge.[93] God's action mediated through human action is the theological center of gravity of practical theology.[94] Therefore, God is relying on human agency to witness to a truth that can only be displayed nonviolently. God can rely on human agency because God directs history with truth and power that 'refuses to compel compliance or agreement by force'. The truth God offers puts limits on the actions Christians may perform. Christians have the great luxury and dignity of witnessing to a truth they did not create, and cannot defeat, but which claims them only when they renounce the temptation to promulgate it violently.[95] A Trinitarian approach as indicated above proofs to have a distinctive impact. The problems that lead to many of these conflicts which we recognize as power and self-interest more than anything else, leads us to identify key features from the point of practical theology and dialogue. It is important to note that domination is crucial and has a perspective. It is not just the dominance of foreign

[91] Christian Scharen & Aana Marie Vigen (ed*), Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (New York: Continuum , 2011), 20.
[92] Bolarinwa Kolade Kamilu, Oluwakemi Enitan Fapojuwo, Foloruso Ibrahim Ayanda, "Conflict Resolution Strategies among Farmers in Taraba State Nigeria," *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development* 05, 01 (2012): 12-13.
[93] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,* 90.
[94] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory and Action Domains* (Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 8.
[95] Joseph M. Incandela, "Playing God: Divine Activity, Human Activity and Christian Ethics," *Crosscurrent* Vol. 46, issue 1(Spring, 1996): 64.

intervention in this case western capital and culture, but also the dominance of local elites in the third world.

In Africa, elites often gain extraordinary personal power and wealth by brokering national resources (both raw material and human labor) on the global capitalist market.[96]Even more disturbing is how we allocate imagined categories to navigate and align our impression on some given situations! Whereas, the study of fundamentalism is slowly making its way toward a humanistic appreciation of fundamentalism's "other world." Fundamentalism may itself have a particular wisdom to contribute to the human community.[97] Yet such a dialogue will never fulfill its unique mission until it recognizes inequalities found in Africa and elsewhere. Indeed, we may run short of itemizing them but these are many, such as basic human rights. From Lomé to Freetown, Khartoum to Kampala and Kinshasa to Luanda, there are mass arrests of peaceful protesters, as well as beatings, excessive use of force and, in some cases, killings. How offensive can it be that there is an insensitive recognition of autocratic rules, the likes of Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo is Africa's longest serving ruler? He has ruled Equatorial Guinea, a tiny, oil-rich West African country, since August 1979 when he overthrew his uncle, Francisco Macías Nguema, in a bloody coup d'état. Also, José Eduardo dos Santos is Africa's second longest serving president. He took the reins of power in September 1979 following the natural death of his predecessor Agostinho Neto. Another example would be Omar al Bashir, Sudan's president until his ouster in 2019. He seized power in 1989 in a bloodless military coup against the government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi- a government which was democratically elected by the people of Sudan.

Again, climatic changes emerging from one of those rapidly warming oceans, tropical cyclones Idai and Kenneth in March and April 2019 destroyed parts of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, with Kenneth following a particularly unusual path over Tanzania. By 2020, between 75 and 250 million people on the continent are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change. In the same year in some countries yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50 percent. Global warming of 2˚C would put over 50 percent of the continent's population at risk of undernourishment. Above all, endemic poverty

[96] Raines, *"The Politics of Religious Correctness: Islam and The West,"* 45.
[97] Peter A. Huff, "The Challenge of Fundamentalism for Interreligious Dialogue," *Crosscurrent* Vol. 50, Issue 1-2(Spring/Summer, 2000):100.

according to reports, people living in poverty in the region grew from 278 million in 1990 to 413 million in 2015. By 2015, most of the global poor live in sub-Saharan Africa caused by greed and supported by opportunist, sectarian cleavages financed by interest groups which allows the sectarian diversion of religious sentiment into violence. The search for short term gains for partisan actors is, fundamentally, a crisis of religion and religious leadership whose threat is compounded by its impact on a number of the pivotal states on the continent, thus threatening to turn some of the major pillars of continental stability architecture into liabilities.

All these fundamentalisms of the world are valued conversation partners. The way in which the academic study of fundamentalism has matured in recent decades can provide a model for constructive exchange between fundamentalists and members of other religious movements.[98] At the end of the post- modern era and as we head towards the transhumanist era, the future of dialogue is contingent upon its ability to find common ground with fundamentalists in all world traditions. It must seek the "moving hinge" between the old pluralism that was only exclusivist reconfigured and a genuinely new pluralism that embraces the major movements of the time. Such a proposal, of course, is bold. But if fundamentalism was the religious phenomenon of the twentieth century, the wider ecumenism can no longer afford to ignore it or abhor it. It may be the religious phenomenon of this century, too.[99] Indeed a conversation partner that must be considered seriously since it seems to be an obvious category that ranks first in the descriptions of conflicts in Africa. It may contain in its wake seeds of transformations and deep paths of positive trajectory.

Conclusion

The paper had briefly mentioned some of the various conflicts that have befallen Africa. It also emphasized the rise of extreme conflict activities in many parts of Africa. In the process, the paper highlighted some forms of conflicts in Africa, their particular persuasions and the reasons for these conflicts. The paper contends that although many are of the opinion that the scramble for mineral resources is a major factor for these conflicts, it is the belief of this paper that minerals are not the sole reason but a major factor in funding the conflicts. Other reasons brought forward are hunger, systemic corruption and a failure of leadership. Overall, access to power and control remain the underlining factor for these crises, in addition to 'foreign

[98] Huff, "*The Challenge of Fundamentalism for Interreligious Dialogue,*" 101.
[99] Huff, "*The Challenge of Fundamentalism for Interreligious Dialogue,*" 101.

interventions.' To understand these conflicts, theories from other fields were utilized to gain a perceptive appreciation of the conflicts. Negotiation and management of the tension remained a cardinal contribution which the method of practical theology highlighted.

Future work may well benefit from such an approach as the hermeneutical circle method. This would help reveal accompanying issues that breed conflicts and extremism or fundamentalism. The present study suggest that self-interest features prominently as a culprit paving way for the paper to insist on a vision, so that such sighting, position or perspective might help to clearly see this challenge. Practical theology in conversation with transformative dialogue offered an interpretative context and experience while bringing divided people to an open dialogue that will necessitate healing and strengthening misunderstanding. At the base of this paper is inclusion, a Trinitarian approach which builds relationships and is a fundamental key to transformation. Relationships that negotiate difference which includes listening, mutual understanding and dialogue.

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REEVALUATING THE AFRICAN APPROACH TO LITURGICAL INCULTURATION

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Abstract

The issue of inculturation or adaptation is something that has been a hot topic since the close of the Second Vatican Council. Several attempts have been made, and are still being made, in order to inculturate various aspects of the Christian faith: Catechesis, Canon Law, hierarchy, communion of saints and most importantly, the liturgy, to the genius of the African people to the extent that almost every innovation into the liturgy is said to be made in the name of inculturation without any regard for the authentic method of inculturation itself. This paper argues, therefore, that there is something fundamentally wrong with the African approach to the issues of inculturation so far which seems to stem from the misunderstanding of what inculturation is and should do in the first place. It argues that the method of approaching inculturation must change: from the fundamental conception of what constitutes inculturation, to the theological dimension of how inculturation is done and approached, and finally, to the understanding of who is responsible for and has the power to facilitate inculturation.

Introduction

The programme for inculturation in Africa since the Second Vatican Council has been in the process of implementation. Immediately after the Council, several efforts were made and these appeared in various places around the continent. In fact, it would seem that some efforts had already been made before the Council as the Mass of the Savanes in Upper Volta and the Mass of the Piroguieres, both of which appeared in 1956. This was followed by the *Missa Luba* in 1958, then the *Ndzon-Melen* Mass between 1958-1969 and some *All-African Eucharistic Prayers* in 1970, 1973 – for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and the *Igbo Eucharistic Prayer* in 1980. While most of these efforts are commendable, the reality seems to be that the efforts could hardly be classed as successful since almost 60 years after the efforts began, the receptibility of these efforts among the populace seems not to be as wide as should have been expected. It would seem, then,

that there has been some rush into undertaking some of these projects without really grasping, as much as is possible, what the whole process of inculturation entails.

Inculturation entails understanding various variables and being able to relate them to one another. It entails an understanding of what culture truly is, and what the role of culture is in the scheme of inculturation. But, not only culture is to be understood; also to be understood are the right relationship between faith and culture; the interaction within time, the history of culture and faith, which leads to cultural change; and the determination, based on this cultural change or propensity to cultural change, of which components are fundamental in the scheme of inculturation.

In this paper we shall try to explain the parts that all these variables have in the scheme of inculturation in order to evaluate what has been achieved so far in anticipation of future efforts.

1. Fundamentals of the Principle of Inculturation

1.1 Culture as an Element of Inculturation

The treatment of culture as an element of inculturation is necessary for any discourse on inculturation because the way that culture is approached as a sociological, ethnological, or anthropological principle, might not exactly be the same way that culture is approached as an element of inculturation. While these dimensions are necessary for understanding culture generally, they are not enough for dealing with culture as an element of inculturation. Incidentally, these ethnological or anthropological conceptions of culture are the starting-points for this broad-based understanding of inculturation. E.B Taylor, for example, defines culture as, "That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[100] This definition itself tells us many things about

[100]As quoted in Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Eugene Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers 1999), 4. Hereafter: Shorter, Inculturation.

culture as an element of inculturation: Firstly, culture is a "complex whole"; culture is not as simplistic as people want to have us believe these days. Secondly, culture is always acquired; according to Shorter, "Culture is what human beings learns or acquires, as a member of society. It comprises the learned aspects—as opposed to the inherited aspects—of human thinking and behavior".[101] What this means is that anything that is learned could also be unlearned, or, to some extent, modified, a fundamental principle upon which inculturation is based.

To understand the definition of E.B Taylor as shown above, and to further demonstrate that there has been something fundamentally wrong with the way we as Africans have perceived culture with regards to the principle of inculturation, it is good to look deeper into the concept as dealt with by Aylward Shorter in his book, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* which, for me, is still one of the best books available for understanding what inculturation entails. There, Shorter differentiates between the practical or material aspect of culture and the symbolical level of culture. While the practical or material level entails all that has to do with material life, technology, and behavior, the symbolical level relates to the realm of ideas. To demonstrate clearly that the symbolic level is superior to the practical one, he states that the symbolical governs the practical order. However, there is another level which is even more superior to the symbolic; the one which he calls, "the deeper cognitive level, the level of underlying meanings and values."[102] It is of this level that Shorter writes, **"In dealing with religion and the theological concept of inculturation we have to do with this inner level"**.[103]

[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid. 35.
[103] Ibid. Emphasis is mine.

In the same book, Shorter goes on to deal with the levels of culture as captured in the work of Bishop Donald Jacobs and the scheme provided here is quite axiomatic because it sheds more light on what the real object of inculturation. I shall try to illustrate in this table below

Level of Culture	**Name**	**Nature of Level**	**Practical Examples**
One (1)	The industrial-technical level	Does not affect human beings deeply or permanently; constantly in a state of flux	Fashion, technological savviness like driving cars, using phones, etc. The fact that I wear kaftan as an Igbo man, for example, does not make me one.
Two (2)	The domestic-technical level	Affects one more profoundly; more difficult to change than the first; level of cultural tradition	Family conventions, etiquette, special dishes, arrangement of the home
Three (3)	Level of Values (priorities and characteristic choices when one is confronted with alternatives)	Much deeper level still harder to change than the second	conservation and consumption; honour, sincerity, family loyalty, common good as opposed to individualism

Four (4)	Level of Worldview: the particular way of understanding and acting towards the world	Affects one in the most profound manner and is the hardest of all to change	A religious worldview that interprets everything as spiritual and a rationalistic worldview that interprets everything in terms of what is understandable

The scheme of these four levels does much to demonstrate to us that culture is complex. It also demonstrates to us that there are levels of culture and that there is a hierarchy of importance among the levels. As one descends more and more deeply to the innermost levels of the cultural personality, the resistance to change also grows. Added to this is the fact that when one speaks of cultural change, one does not really refer to the first and the second levels as demonstrated here but to the third and fourth. Is it right, therefore, when, in the scheme of inculturation all we are concerned with are elements that have to do with externals like ceremonies, drinks, food, clothes, fashion, mere gestures, postures, or etiquette?

1.2 How the Church views Culture as an Element of Inculturation

Incidentally, the way that the Church views culture as an element of inculturation acknowledges the principles outlined in Shorter above. For example, rather than define culture as "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time," like the Cambridge English Dictionary[104] defines it, a definition which limits culture to space, time, and to the externals, when the church speaks of culture, culture is typified in a completely different manner. According to Michael Angrosino, since the Second Vatican Council, when the

[104] The Cambridge English Dictionary, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Church speaks of culture, she speaks of it with "a free-floating 'ethos', rather than with specific actions, products, relationships or beliefs that might be observed 'on ground;'"[105] in other words, it is more interested in generals than in particulars. In a Pastoral Letter, "The Nigerian Church: Evangelization through Inculturation," issued by the Nigerian Bishop's Conference in 1991, for example, rather than speak of culture in particular terms, the Bishops talk of the 'Nigerian culture', as a typology rather than individual cultures such that certain structural and elemental constants exist in all the cultures of the nation.[106]

Furthermore, Angrosino quotes a statement from the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference "regarding a pan African substrate of religious experience that is defined without regard to the evident multiplicity of local expressions".[107] These are representative of the core teaching of foremost theologians on the tangents of inculturation. In his book, *Liturgical Inculturation*, for example, Chupungco consistently speaks of "Cultural Pattern" rather than culture. According to him, the cultural pattern is "the typical mode of thinking, speaking, and expressing oneself through rites, symbols, and art forms…it is a people's prescribed system of reflecting on, verbalizing, and ritualizing the values, traditions, and experiences of life."[108] To demonstrate that this "cultural pattern" is not something that is limited to small individual groups he states, "That is why we can speak in a generic way of European, African, Latin American, Asian, and South Pacific cultural

[105] Michael V Angrosino, "The Culture Concept and the Mission of the Roman Catholic Church." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 96, no. 4 (1994): 824-32. http://www.jstor.org/stable/682446. Here, 827. Hereafter, Angrosino, Culture Concept.
[106] *The Nigerian Church: Evangelization through Inculturation.* A Pastoral Letter issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (Lagos: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria Publications, 1991), 22.
[107] Angrosino, Culture Concept, 827.
[108] Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals Religiosity and Catechesis*. (Collegeville Minnesota: Liturgical Press 1992) 35. Hereafter: Chupungco, Liturgical Inculturation.

patterns, although each member of these major sociocultural groupings possesses a particular cultural pattern."[109] In fact, he goes on to state clearly that, *in the final analysis what matters is not whether we can define the nature and components of a particular culture but whether we can identify the principal elements that make up the cultural pattern.*[110]

This cultural pattern does not look for elements that differentiate people of a society but elements that are common to them. The "noble simplicity and sobriety" that is often ascribed to the Roman Rite as a product of the Roman culture, is not based on culture as such but the cultural pattern. On the other hand, the verbosity of the Byzantine Rite is also an assertion based on the cultural pattern. Does it make sense, therefore, when in a diocese or country with many tribes and cultural nationalities, one begins to think of inculturation only within the tangents of cultural forms explicitly peculiar to one tribe? For as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 23 states about the adaptation of the liturgy, "As far as is possible, marked differences between the rites used in neighboring regions must be carefully avoided."[111]

2. The Theological Concept of Inculturation

2.1 The Origins

There is no need to go deeply into the etymology of the term inculturation. For our purposes here, it suffices to note that the contexts in which the term, 'inculturation' is said to have first been used, do not suggest that the process is as simple as people want to make it look today. Shorter, for example, supplies us with its possible earliest documented uses by Fr. Joseph Masson, SJ before

[109] Ibid. 36.
[110] Ibid, 36.
[111] Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 4 December 1963: AAS 56 (1964) 97-138, in *Documents on the Liturgy* (Henceforth DOL 1), 1963-1979: Concilar, Papal and Curial Texts (Collegeville Minnesota: Liturgical Press 1982), 4-27; here 9. Hereafter, SC.

the opening of Vatican II in 1962. The context is not clearly illustrated, but it is clear from the bibliographical notes that it was within the context of a theme *"L'Eglise ouverte sur le monde"* where he stated: "Today there is a more urgent need for a Catholicism that is inculturated in a variety of forms."[112] Others have traced it to the Protestant missionary G. L. Barney who is said to have used it in 1973. The context here could be of a very great help to understanding what inculturation should be. Barney is said to have used this while addressing his conferees, probably in the missions, in a way that reminds them of the need to keep the core of the Christian message (supracultural components) intact throughout the course of cultural exchange wherever they find themselves as missionaries. While Barney did not deny cultural exchange, he nonetheless insists that the kernel of the Christian message should neither be distorted nor lost.[113]

2.2 Official Church Reception

Apart from the annotations of the Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* of Pius XII, and the association of inculturation with the principle of evangelization by Paul VI in *Evangelii Nutiandii*,[114] the best reception of the term inculturation, from the perspective of Church authority may have been done by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* of 1979[115] and *Slavorum Apostoli* of 1985.[116]

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[112] Cf. Shorter, Theology of Inculturation, 10.
[113] "The essential nature of these supracultural components should neither be lost nor distorted but rather secured and interpreted clearly through the guidance of the Holy Spirit in 'Inculturating' them into this new culture. (Cf. Chupungco, Liturgical Inculturation, 25)
[114] Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nutiandii*, 8th December 1975 (Nairobi: Daughters of St. Paul 1992)
[115] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in our Time *Catechesi Tradendae* (Boston MA: Daughters of St. Paul).
[116] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter in Commemoration of the Eleventh Centenary of the Evangelizing Work of Saints Cyril and Methodius *Slavorum Apostoli* (Boston MA: Daughters of St. Paul 1985).

Several authorities on the subject agree that *Catechesi Tradendae* is the first place where the word inculturation is used in an official papal Document.[117] But this is not the most important point. The most important point is how it was used there. Not only does John Paul II associate inculturation with acculturation and incarnation, he also relates inculturation to catechesis and evangelization: "We can say of catechesis as well as of evangelization in general," he writes, "that it has its purpose to bring the power of the gospel into the intimate ordering of human culture and the forms of this same culture."[118] What this means is that inculturation is at the service of evangelization and catechesis or, better still, that it is a way to evangelize and catechize. As he goes further to state,

> Genuine catechists know that catechesis "take flesh" in the various cultures and milieu…But they refuse to accept and impoverishment of catechesis through a renunciation or obscuring of its message, by adaptations, even in language, that would endanger the "precious deposit" of the faith, or by concessions in matters of faith or morals. They are convinced that true catechesis eventually enriches these cultures by helping them to go beyond the defective or even inhuman features in them, and by communicating to their legitimate values the fullness of Christ.[119]

This brings out one salient point about the principle of inculturation, as is taught by the magisterium of the Church, which is almost always ignored in discourses about the subject, the point that *conversion* is one of the tenets of inculturation. As John Paul II states in the same document,

> .. the power of the Gospel everywhere transforms and regenerates. When that power enters into a culture, it is no surprise that it rectifies its many elements. There would be no catechesis if it were the

[117] See Peter Schinella, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Press 1990), 21-22; Steven Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology, Faith and Culture Series* (New York: Orbis Books 1992), 43 and Shorter, Inculturation, 223-224. The pope himself here was quoting from an Address he had given to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, Cf. AAS 71, 1979, 607.
[118] Catechesi Tradendae, 53.
[119] Ibid.

> Gospel that had to change when it came into contact with the cultures[120]

In *Slavorum Apostoli,* John Paul II brings in another dimension to the principle of inculturation: the principle of *universality*. Inculturation is not achieved when it benefits only a small section of people without enriching the universal Church. Having stated that Saints Cyril and Methodius, missionaries to the Slavonic people, were pioneers in the work among the Slavs, he goes on to state that, the work of evangelization which they carried out, *"contains both a model of what today is called 'inculturation the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church".*[121] The basic tenet of inculturation here which John Paul II goes on to mention is the development of the paleo-Slavonic language, which, according to him, gave unity to the Slav peoples similar to the unity given to the western world by Latin.[122]This position seems to confirm and give authority to, perhaps, the best definition of inculturation ever to be given by Aary A. Roset Crollius, SJ, who had written in 1978 that, "Inculturation is the integration of the Christian experience of the local church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orientates, and innovates the culture so as to create a new unity and community, not only in the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal."[123]What is with us then still in Africa, when everything we know about inculturation is still clannish and haphazard, lacking this universal element?

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[120] Ibid.
[121] Slavorum Apostoli, no. 21.
[122] Cf. Ibid, no. 22.
[123] See Aary A. Roset Crollius, SJ, "What is so new About Inculturation? A Concept and its Implication", *Gregorianum* 59 (1978) 721-738. Here 735.

3. Some Examples of Attempts at Inculturation in Africa

Let us look at some efforts at inculturation that have been made from some selected African cases. Since liturgy is the most pertinent area of inculturation, especially in Africa, we shall limit ourselves to this sphere.

3.1 The proposed Eucharistic Liturgy based on the Igbo World-View

This liturgy is one proposed by Fr. Prof. Patrick Chibuko.[124] There are a lot of positives in this proposition like the singing of choruses before the procession, the procession itself accompanied by dance and the scheme for the Prayer of the Faithful. However, with some other elements like the "Welcome Rite", what he calls the *Emume Nnabata*, and the presentation and blessing of kolanuts, some problems begin to arise concerning some of the points I have raised above on the magisterial teaching on inculturation. For example, in the *Emune Nnabata*, there are prayers there like *Unu ga a-di, kaa nka,* "May you live till old age", *and "Unu a-nwuchula"*, "May sudden and premature death not come to you", that immediately seem out of place for an Introductory Rite to the tune of the *introductionis et praeparationis* as stipulated by the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (IGMR 2002)[125] which goes on further to state that the purpose of the introduction "is to ensure that the faithful come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's Word, and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily".[126]

[124] Patrick Chibuko, *Keeping the Liturgy Alive: An Anglophone West African Experience*. (Frankfurt am Main / London: IKO 2003), 55-73.
[125] *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (IGMR 2002) as published in *A Commentary on the General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, ed by Edward Foley, Nathan D. Mitchell and Joanne M. Pierce. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press 2007), no. 46 pp 134.
[126] Ibid.

Moreover, there is no element of blessing as such anticipated by the rite at this point as in the *salutatio et benedictio sacerdotis* spoken of in the IGRM 2002,[127] where this would have been more appropriate. The rite of blessing and breaking kolanut even makes it worse. Not only does the author situate the function of the breaking of kolanut within the tangents of a *social gathering,*[128] which is not what the Eucharistic celebration is, placing the presentation of kolanut at the place where it is presents a comprehension and duplication problem in the minds of Catholics who are familiar with the Eucharistic liturgy. How could there be physical eating or consummation/communion twice—kolanut and then the consecrated host—within one Eucharistic liturgy? What of the mystagogically and theologically sensible procedure from the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Eucharist? Does the breaking of kolanut as it is proposed constitute a rite that could enrich the Church universal as has been advocated for by *Slavorum Apostoli*? These are fundamental questions that should tell us that something is not right with the scheme.

3.2 Elements in the Zairian Rite

The origins of the Zairian rite can be traced back to 1961. The bishops of Zaire gathered in an assembly are said to have declared that the liturgy introduced to Africa is not yet adapted to the proper character of the populations and therefore remained foreign to them.[129] One point of difference between this rite and that proposed above is the fact that the starting point of the rite was not any particular form of external cultural practice like "breaking of kolanut" but the

[127] Ibid. No 90, pp 192.
[128] Ibid, "There is hardly any *social* gathering among the Ndigbo without the presentation of kolanut…" p 67.
[129] Cf. Conference Episcopale du Congo, « Apostolat liturgique – Adaptation du culte, » in: *Actes de la Vie' Assemblée Plénière de l'Episcopat de Congo* (Leopoldville: Sacretariat Général de l'Episcopat, 1961), 362.

character and genius[130]of the Zairian people. According to Egbulem who is probably the best English authority on this,

> It was a publicly professed position of the bishops at that time that to africanise the liturgy did not just mean adopting some customs usual in the African cultural context, but to create a liturgy which incarnates the mystery celebrated by the Christian community in an expressive and comprehensive manner.[131]

This conforms to the magisterial teachings and the principle of the "cultural pattern" which we have spoken of already.

The only problem with this rite arises from what Egbulem calls, "the starting point" for the inculturated liturgy which were three: the Roman Ordo, the role of a chief in a village assembly, and the model of an African assembly.[132] As I have already noted elsewhere, "one would wonder here, from the African perspective of worship…if the use of the model of village chief in an assembly was correct or adequate."[133] Do people really go to Mass on Sunday because they want to visit or commune with "a village chief"? Egbulem himself, in evaluating the Zairian liturgy, would state that there is a need to reconsider the models used in developing the Zairean Eucharistic Liturgy since the role of the village chief is self-limiting. Not only that, he goes on to state that there should be more reflection on the nature of African rituals of assembly, offerings, and sacrifices,[134]all of which correspond to the points we have made above.

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[130] « Au génie et au caractère du people du Zaire » See Jean Evenou, « Le Missel romain pour les diocèses du Zaire », in : *Notitiae* 24 (1988) 454-455. Hereafter : Evenou, Le Missel du Zaire.
[131] Chris Nwaka Egbulem, *An African Interpretation of Liturgical Inculturation: The Rite Zairois.* Found at: https://www2.bc.edu/~morrilb/Egbulem.pdf, 227-250. Withdrawn on 25.09.12. Here, 230. Hereafter, *Rite Zairois*.
[132] See Chris Nwaka Egbulem, *The Power of Afrocentric Celebrations: Inspirations from the Zairean Liturgy*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company 1996, 38. Hereafter, Egbulem, The Power of Afrocentric Celebrations.
[133] Cf. Victor Usman Jamahh, *A New Look at Liturgy and Active Participation*, Vol 2 (Abuja: Paulines Africa 2017), 70. I have done a more detailed analysis of various initiatives from pages 62-91 of the same book.
[134] Egbulem, The Power of Afrocentric Celebrations, 137.

4. Founding Inculturation anew in Africa

Most of the liturgical abuses we have today emanate from the erroneous conceptions of what constitutes inculturation: the exploitation of the superstitious sensibilities of our people, the unrestricted innovations, and the haphazard publishing of liturgical manuals and books. In order to get back to the right track of what really constitutes inculturation, and in order to facilitate authentic inculturation, the type that would stand the test of time and enrich the universal Church, the following points must be considered.

4.1 Inculturation must begin from the deeper levels of culture: the levels of value and worldview

Much of our failings at inculturation stem from the fact that we have tended to begin from the outer levels of culture, the material ones, which do not affect people profoundly, and are constantly in a state of change. Incidentally, the section on inculturation in SC deliberately uses the word *traditio*, which has more to do with the outer forms of culture, only after the use of the word *ingenium*, which typifies that adaptation should target the nature, innate quality, natural disposition, and character of the people involved and not merely empty externals.[135] Rather than choose forms which are limited in time and in geographical coverage like "breaking of kolanut," using fabrics peculiar to a tribe, or even the use of cassava flour to make hosts,[136] one should focus on the character of the people for such indices as verbal and gestural spontaneity, signs and

[135] The full title reads in Latin: *Normae et aptationem ingenio et traditionibus populorum perficiendam*, Incidentally, only the English translates this *ingenium* loosely as "culture". The translations of the other major Germanic and Romance languages render it more faithfully: In German, *ingenium* is translated as *Eigenart* (meaning character, temperament) and not *Kultur*, while *traditio* is translated as Überlieferung (something which is passed on). In Italian *ingenium* is rendered as *Indole* (also meaning character, temperament and nature) and not *la cultura* which has to do with learning; and in French, it is rendered as *caractère* meaning character, temperament, nature, and not *la culture* which is used more in connection with education.

[136] Here, the thesis of Eugene Uzukwu, "Food and Drink in Africa and the Christian Eucharist", in *AFER* 22 no.6 Dec 1980, 370-385, is worth reading.

symbols which are more verbose, and repetition.[137] This was the case at the beginning of the Zairian rite; however, when it came to implementation, they fell back to the image of a village chief which eventually became a problem in the authenticity of the whole process.

4.2 Inculturation is a Product of Acculturation and Conversion

The point that we have raised above gives birth to the second point which is the fact that inculturation is a product of acculturation and conversion. We have seen above that Pope John Paul II associates inculturation with acculturation. By **acculturation** is meant the encounter between one culture and another or the encounter between cultures to the extent that this encounter leads to cultural change.[138] When we describe inculturation as a dialogue between faith and culture, then we are really speaking about a dialogue between a culture and the faith in a cultural form; in other words, we are talking of acculturation which is the dialogue between two cultures on an equal level: the Christian *culture* and the *receptor* culture. This is very important to note. One must proceed from the fact, therefore, that Christianity itself, as it is today, *is* a culture, or at least has a culture, otherwise there would be no *a-cculturation* not to talk of an *in-culturation*. It is only when there is such that one could talk of an acculturation between the Christian culture and the receptor culture. This much has been stated by Shorter. However, as he (Shorter) says, "although evangelisation can only take place through the ordinary human process of acculturation, evangelisation must eventually transcend acculturation to a stage where a human culture is enlived

[137] For more on this, see also, Titianma Anselme Sanon, „Kulturelle Einwurzelung der Liturgie in Afrika seit dem Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil", in: *Concilium* 19 (1983) 137-145. Here 140. Hereafter: Sanon, Kulturelle Einwurzellung.
[138]Shorter, Theology of Inculturation, 7.

from within by the gospel,"[139] hence the need for inculturation where there is a truly critical symbiosis and the Christian experience is really integrated.

But we must not forget that the process of acculturation, which leads to cultural change, could also bring about conversion in a culture. As Laurenti Magesa has observed, the encounter between faith and culture is meant to enable the gospel *to claim* what belongs to God in a culture, and to enable the culture in its turn *to see itself in its true light as God's word, when indeed it is; or as an aberration from God's word when it is that.*"[140] In the case where a worldview, for example, is false, inculturation must demand conversion before adoption. The superstitious worldview of the African, then, is something that must yield to conversion if true inculturation must take place. The notion that there must be a spiritual cause to every problem, and that there must be a spiritual solution to everything, is something which must be subjected to conversion. The reason why several liturgical aberrations occur is because liturgy, the sacraments, and sacramentals are sometimes forced beyond their sacramental limits.

4.3 The Authority and Power to Facilitate and Implement Inculturation is not Individual

Inculturation is not an individual, a personal, or even a regional thing. Inculturation, by its very nature, when it is done well, is always universal. Incidentally, SC is clear on this. There are two words used to designate what is to be done in the text of SC: *aptare* or *aptatio* which occurs in articles 24, 38, 40 (3 times), 44, and 120; and *"accommodare"* or *"accommodatio"* which occurs in articles 34, 63, 67, 68, 75, 89, 101 and 119. The two words have essentially the same meaning,

[139] Ibid,12.
[140]Cf. Laurenti Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. (Nairobi: Paulines Publication in Africa [2]2007), 160. Emphasis added.

namely, *to adapt, fit, apply, adjust, accommodate, put on, fasten, prepare, furnish*. Chupungco has noted, however, that several books published after Vatican II distinguish between *aptatio,* used to designate the competence of Episcopal Conferences to make use of the possibilities offered by the official books subject to confirmation by the Holy See, and *accommodation*, used to refer to the competence of individual ministers to adapt the liturgy to particular assemblies, times, and places, according to the specifications of the official books, whether in the *Praenotanda*, or in the ritual itself.[141] It is pertinent to note here, however, that apart from article 75, dealing with the Anointing of the Sick, where the *onus* to adapt is reserved to circumstances *"pro opportunitate"*— invariably referring to the minister who celebrates the sacrament— all the other uses of *accommodatio* or *aptatio*, as the case may be, refer to the revision of liturgical books and the determination of the rite and measure of the rite by the competent authority since reference is often made to the provisions of articles 37-40 and particularly 22, where it is stated in § 2, that "no other person, not even if he is a priest, may on his own add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy."

Furthermore, Kenneth Martin, writing about the fourth instruction on the right implementation of SC, *Varietates Legitimae*, reports of this document, that when *aptatio* is used within the instruction, it refers to structural changes within the rites themselves; for example, the ordering of the parts of the ritual celebration by the addition of new material, the omission of parts of the ritual celebration, and finally, the composition of new ritual celebrations which are reserved only to the competent authority.[142] The instruction then goes on to state explicitly in no. 36 that "The work of inculturation does not foresee the creation of new families of rites; inculturation responds to the

[141] Chupungco, Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy, 49.
[142] Cf. Kenneth Martin, *The Forgotten Instruction: Roman Liturgy, Inculturation and Legitimate Adaptations* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 2007), 101.

needs of a particular culture and leads to adaptations which still remain part of the Roman rite." Where then, do all the creativity spring from?

Another dimension to this is the haphazard production of liturgical books and materials today. Everywhere you go, liturgical books are not only being produced; they are being copied and recopied. The other day I saw a book where someone reproduced the Divine Office in some volumes giving all sorts of names, or the production of a Naming Ceremony Manual approved only with the *imprimatur* of a Bishop, and the *Nihil Obstat* of some other theologian. All Church authority since 1588, when the Sacred Congregation of the Rites was established by Pope Sixtus V to regulate liturgical matters in the universal Church, have been clear on who has the authority to publish liturgical books. SC 22 § 1 and 2 reserves the authority to regulate liturgy solely to the Holy See and only "within defined limits" to territorial authorities. This is restated in the First Instruction on the Right Implementation of the Liturgical Constitution, *Inter Oecumenici* of 1964[143] where the document adds that "The Holy See has the authority to reform and approve general liturgical books…to approve or confirm the *acta* and decisions of territorial authorities, and to accede to their proposal and requests."[144] The same issue, although in the context of publishing translations, is dealt with in *Liturgiam Authenticam*, where the approbation of liturgical texts even *ad experimentum*, and the granting of *recognitio* to the works of the Episcopal Conferences, is reserved to the Apostolic See.[145] The rights and process for publishing any

[143] SC Rites, Instruction (first) *Inter Oecumenici*, on the orderly carrying out of the Constitution on the Liturgy, 26 September 1964: AAS 56 (1964) 877-900. In DOL 23, 88-110.
[144] Ibid. No 21.
[145] Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Fifth Instruction "For the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Scared Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council" Liturgiam Authenticam, in Peter Jeffery, "Translating Tradition" A Chant Historian Reads Liturgiam Authenticam (Collegeville Minnesota: Liturgical Press), 123-160, Numbers 79 and 80. Although the *Motu Proprio* "Magnum Principium" of 2017 by which Pope Francis

liturgical book is further set out in numbers 109-125, emphasizing the fact that an *imprimatur* is insufficient for publishing liturgical books. The act of copying and recopying, which is becoming rampant today, is even tantamount to piracy!

Conclusion

Inculturation is one of the best principles to have been rediscovered by the Second Vatican Council. However, like many other principles that have emanated from the same Council, it has been pulled out of its joints to mean the leverage to admit anything into the scheme of things in the Church, especially in the liturgy, from the slightest of frivolities to the worst ones. Incidentally, the Second Vatican Council itself is clear that the process of inculturation must be carried out carefully because all that emanates in the name of inculturation must be faithful to the *lex credendi* and grow organically from previous practices. Moreover, inculturation is done only where there is an advantage for the universal Church and not where it is of advantage only to a privileged few. Most of our efforts in Africa have failed to see the light of day simply because of this principle. If our being the present capital of the Catholic Faith, together with the church of Asia, must be reckoned with in the scheme of the Church, then we have to go beyond surface manipulations which we call inculturation to deeply thought-out organic receptions of forms that are a product of studious multidisciplinary interactions.

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modified CIC 1983 can. 838 transfers more autonomy to the Bishops' Conferences in the pursuit of vernacular translations, the place of the Holy See still remains intact.

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COMPARISON OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMS IN ISLAM AND CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ILORIN: A RESPONSE TO ILORIN METROPOLITAN MENACE

BY

ABIONA Lawrence Adekunle

Abstract

The colonies of beggars contesting for every available space within Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State in Nigeria, ought to strike human conscience. The beggars' colonies reveal the degree of poverty, which is contrary to the will of God in a country blessed with enormous human and natural resources in addition to a strong presence of Muslims and Christians and adherents of the African Traditional Religion as well. Could the Catholic Church and Islam exist without responding to the basic needs of the poor within their environment? Using the comparative and expository approaches, this paper evaluated the poverty alleviation institutions in Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin. Data were collected through participant observations, unstructured interviews, and library consultation. Findings showed that mosques, churches, and poverty increased in a correlative geometrical progression in Ilorin. Islamic teachings about *zakat, waqf, sadaqat*, and Islamic Banking influenced Muslims' responses to poverty alleviation, while Catholics responded to poverty alleviation through institutions such as St. Vincent de Paul, Justice Development and Peace Commission, and Schools. Poverty alleviation strategies were hampered due to lack of funds and database on the poor. The study suggested that the religious bodies should have a database for the poor for proper poverty alleviation. It also recommended that the poor should be engaged meaningfully through free vocational training and beneficiaries should be helped with non-interest loans in order to set up their small-scale businesses. Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin are encouraged to cooperate in the prosocial action and thereby serve as models of social solidarity towards poverty alleviation in Ilorin.

Key words: Religion, Poverty Alleviation, *Zakat*, St. Vincent de Paul, Justice, Development

Introduction

Poverty is a lack of security in life. It is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It is a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in the society (Barber 2012, p. 11). Poverty in the context of this research is the lack of the necessities of human existence such as food and drink, clothing, shelter, and medical care. The lack of any of these demeans the human being. It makes living meaningless, joyless, and it makes the human being vulnerable to crimes and immoral lives. Ilorin is the capital of Kwara State in Nigeria. Kwara State was created in 1967 by the Military government of General Yakubu Gowon (Oladimeji

2013, pp. 63-87).Ilorin is a Yorùbá land located geographically as a transitional city between the Northern and Southern Nigeria. This strategic location is attractive to people from the southern and northern Nigeria for various reasons ranging from religion, trade, agriculture, and the pastoralists who seek pastures for their animals (Danmole 2012, p. 4). Ilorin is ruled by an Emir, rather than an *Oba* (king), making it an extension of the Sokoto Caliphate. At the time of this study, Ibrahim Kolapo Sulu Gambari, who was enthroned in 1995, was the 11th Emir of Ilorin (Wikipedia 2021). Quoting A. K. Jimoh, Danmole (2012) noted, "The Core-Ilorin comprises of Afonja's Idi-Ape quarters, the Gambari, Fulani, and Okemale quarters" (p. 45). Other prominent places within Ilorin Metropolis include Tanke, Oke-Odo, Pipeline, Government Reserved Area (G. R. A.), Sabo Oke, Oloje, Sawmill, Geri Alimi, Oko Erin, Adewole Estate, Post Office, Challenge, Unity, Maraba, Taiwo Oke, Taiwo Isale, Ita Amodu, Adeta, Okelele, Kuntu, Ajikobi, and etcetera.

The phenomenology of religion within Ilorin Metropolis reveals the existence of Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion (ATR). As a Yorùbá land, ATR is the indigenous religion. Islam and Christianity came to land at a time in history. Although, Islam is the first to arrive and dominates the city, there is no agreement on the exact date of its arrival. While (Danmole 2012, p. 9) submitted that Al-Salih (Alimi), the first Emir of Ilorin, settled in the city and propagated Islam, Abdur-Razzaq (2013) opined that a prominent Muslim named Solagberu was already at Okesuna in Ilorin with his Muslim community before the arrival of Alimi (p. 2). Nevertheless, one of the effects of the Fulani Jihad of 1804, that began in Hausa land, and led by Usman Dan Fodio (Aremu 2011), is the dominance of Islam in Ilorin and in Kwara State generally. Therefore, it can be inferred that Islam arrived the city during the early 19th century. Nonetheless, Danmole (2012) asserted, "As a Muslim state, the leadership did not only promote

Islam within the Emirate, it adopted policies and attitudes that encouraged the development of Islamic culture" (p. 36). Such policies could have led to the erection of mosques in nearly all government establishments in the city.

Moreover, Omotoye (2013) noted that the attempt to introduce Christianity to Ilorin in the 19th century was unsuccessful due to the strong resistance of the Emirs. Rev. Jefferson Bowen of the Baptist mission and Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther of the CMS reportedly visited the city in 1855 and 1857 respectively during the tenure of Emir Shitta, but their request to establish churches in the Emirate was rejected (pp. 94-115). However, it is reported that the advent of colonialism and rail transportation led to the influx of Christian missionaries to Ilorin, and this brought about the establishment of Saint Barnabas Anglican Church, Sabo Oke (1910), the Methodist Church Taiwo Isale (1932), and both the Baptist mission and African Church came in 1936 (Omotoye, 2013, pp. 94-115). Historically, St. James Catholic Church Sabo Oke was born due to the first Mass that was celebrated at Ilorin in the 1940s (Adesoba & Odeyemi, 2012, p. 228).

Having significantly depleted ATR and forced it to operate underground, Islam and Christianity remain the conspicuous religions in Ilorin. Because the cardinal teachings in both religions are based on the love of God and neighbours, abject poverty is not an admired virtue. On the contrary, there is a high presence of beggars in Ilorin, which contradicts the teachings of Islam and Christianity. Some of the reasons that can be adduced for the explosion of indigent persons in Ilorin include the insecurity in the Northern part of the country that forced people, who hitherto should have been on their farms, to seek refuge in a safer place such as Ilorin. These victims of insecurity resorted to alms begging as a quick means of economic survival. The lack of appropriate laws against street begging in Kwara State also encourages some people to adopt street begging as a profession in Ilorin metropolis. It seems that the Kwara State Government pretends to be blind to the menace of beggars' colonies in the metropolis or it lacks political will to address the problem.

Moreover, the Catholic Church and Islam specifically have teachings on how to respond to poverty, yet poverty is increasing geometrically in the city with its resultant antisocial behaviours. The internet reveals that some studies have been done on poverty alleviation or reduction in Christianity, Catholic Church, and Islam, but a comparative study of poverty alleviation in Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin is unknown to the best of the knowledge of the researcher. The hope of this comparative study was to serve as a model of social solidarity for Catholics and Muslims towards a common mission of promoting human dignity through poverty reduction.

Therefore, the objectives of the study were to: (i) comparatively examine the teachings in Islam and Catholic Church relating to poverty alleviation; (ii) evaluate the poverty alleviation

strategies in Islam and Catholic Diocese of Ilorin; and (iii) suggest at least a solution to the problem of poverty alleviation.

The study adopted the qualitative research design using the comparative and expository approaches. The non-probability purposive sampling method was adopted for choosing respondents (Foley). Data were collected through unstructured interviews, participant observation, and library consultation including the use of the internet. Some Catholics and Muslims in Ilorin were interviewed and the beggars were observed in their colonised areas in Ilorin metropolis. Data were analysed contextually and comparatively while conclusion was drawn.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the theory of structural functionalism and the basis of prosocial behaviour. The theory of Structural functionalism was said to have grown out of the writings of the English philosopher and biologist, Hebert Spencer (1820-1903), who was noted to have discovered the similarities between society and the human body. Spencer reportedly argued that just as the various organs of the body work together to keep the body functioning, the various parts of the society must work together to keep the society functioning. Spencer reportedly believed that social institutions or patterns of beliefs and behaviours such as government, education, family, healthcare, religion, and the economy were meant to meet social needs and hence must work together (Lumen). Furthermore, prosocial behaviours are behaviours that are intended to help other people because they involve concern for the rights, feelings, empathy, and welfare of other people. The behaviours involve helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating (Cherry) and they are beneficial for social support, social security, and poverty alleviation. Religion as an important social institution has often served to sustain the hopes and

aspirations of most Nigerians in the midst of poverty. Karl Marx is noted to have said that religion acts as a powerful sedative, "the opium of the people" (Omoregbe 2002, pp. 9-11). However, the theory of structural functionalism and prosocial behaviours serve as basis for Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin to cooperate and work together towards poverty alleviation for better functioning of the society.

Functionality of Religion in Poverty and Poverty Alleviation: Issues in Nigeria

Observations in Ilorin revealed that as churches and mosques were trying to 'save' the souls of the masses, poverty was waging its war to 'destroy' the dignity of the masses. Beggars had colonised and continue to colonise some strategic locations in Ilorin metropolis due to poverty. Examples of such places include Tanke/Tipper Garage, Post Office, Maraba, Emir's Road, Taiwo Road, Unity, Offa Garage, Asa-Dam Road, Murtala Road, Challenge Bus Stop, Geri Alimi Roundabout, General Hospital, Adewole Estate Road, Oja Oba, Oja Gboro, Ipata market, Gaa Akanbi/Pipeline, Sango, Kilanko junction, and etcetera (L. Abiona, personal observation, November 11, 2020).

Fig. 1: A beggar's colony at Tanke/Tipper Garage, Ilorin; **Source**: Researcher, 2/7/2021

The aim of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the year 2000 was to tackle poverty and its related issues by 2015. Some of the proposed means of realising this aim included eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, ensuring all children are able to complete elementary school, promoting gender equality and giving women more control over their lives (Barber 2012, p. 10). The picture above showed some children who should have been in schools, but were operating as beggars. This was an indication that the MDGs of the year 2000 was not even realised in 2021 in Nigeria.

Moreover, the amount required for people to have a minimum standard of living is often defined as the poverty line (Wikipedia 2018), or poverty threshold. Barber (2012) noted that this amount varies from country to country (p. 8). Based on the 2005 purchasing - power parity (PPP), the World Bank established a world poverty line of $1.25 a day. In October 2015, the World Bank updated the international poverty line to $1.90 a day (Wikipedia). The National Bureau of Statistics revealed in 2016 that about 112 million Nigerians were living below poverty level. This means that such Nigerians lived below $1.90 a day. Ahiuma-Young (2016) said such Nigerians represented 67.1% of the country's total population of 167 million. The World Bank 2017 Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals showed that 35 million more Nigerians were living in extreme poverty in 2013 than in 1990. Among the ten most populous countries for which data was available, only Nigeria recorded an increase in the number of citizens living in extreme poverty over the period of the study. The Atlas defines extreme poverty as living on less than $1.90 a day (Kazeem 2017).

The report from the National Bureau of Statistics as from 4th May 2020 revealed,

> More than 82 million Nigerians live on less than $1 a day. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in a report about poverty and inequality from September 2018 to

> October 2019, said 40 percent of people in the continent's most populous country lived below its poverty line of 137,430 naira ($381.75) a year. It said that represents 82.9 million people (Aljazeera 2020).

The report from the National Bureau of Statistics adds to the basis of this research because it exposes the dysfunctional state of Nigeria. That is, despite its vast oil riches, Nigeria has not succeeded in lifting its people out of poverty over the past three decades as one can observe from the high number of beggars in Ilorin. Yet, churches and mosques are springing up at every nook and cranny in a nation that is noted as the "poverty capital of the world" (Obadiah 2019).

Religion is a double-edge sword. Religion is ambivalence in nature. Tomalin (2018) noted that religions contribute to poverty through the promotion of inequality and conflicts, yet they also alleviate poverty by motivating adherents to contribute toward helping needy members. It is important to state that religions help to set values, to make rules, and to strengthen social harmony and solidarity. When religious leaders prophetically condemn corruption within the society, they ultimately help to promote social change (Dzurgba 2017, p. 29). In Nigeria, both the positive and negative effects of religions are obvious. A pertinent question on the lips of most Nigerians is whether religions in Nigeria are functional given the persistent poverty in the nation.

In fact, Iheanacho (2009) observed that the proliferation of churches in Nigeria without checks continues to depict churches as a business whose focus is more on earthly concerns rather than spiritual concerns. He noted that due to the crass race for material acquisition, most pastors often present donation of big money as a prerequisite for bigger blessings from God. It is therefore easier to conclude that unscrupulous pastoral agents and church leaders are contributing to the problem of poverty in Nigeria through fleecing poor adherents of their meagre means of sustenance.

Mylek and Nel (2010) observed that the involvement of religions in poverty alleviation most often was tied to conversion or proselytism (pp. 81-97). The point the authors are making is

that due to the reality of competition among proselytising religions, poverty alleviation is often used as a means of converting the needy to the religion of the relief provider. Conversely, such competition also spurs the provision of reliefs to poor members of the religious bodies in order to keep their members from abandoning the religious groups. The ambivalent nature of religions is obvious in this instance where a religion tries to be functional and relevant in order to protect its interest and win members.

Osunwokeh (2010) noted that the early missionaries in Nigeria established schools and hospitals to alleviate poverty, but the indigenous missionaries have turned these schools and hospitals into profit making ventures, thus taking them away from the reach of the poor. Therefore, he advised the Catholic Church to combine concrete developmental programmes with its constant teachings about kindness, charity, and love in order to combat poverty. The Catholic Church has not ceased to teach the importance of charity. However, the high cost of tuition in some Catholic schools in Nigeria should be a thing of concern because it is believed that the church primarily exists to serve the poor in the footstep of Jesus (Luke 4:18, Christian Community Bible). Once its institutions are beyond the reach of the poor, it is doubtful if the church can proclaim any meaningful good news to the poor. However, the dwindling numbers of individuals who are willing to donate to charitable causes often affect the operations of these institutions.

Onah, Okwuosa, and Uroko (2018) examined the issue of poverty in Nigeria and the various efforts of the government that failed to stem its tides due to poor design and implementation. The authors therefore called for the intervention of other stakeholders such as the Catholic Church because the poverty alleviation from the perspective of the Catholic Church is theologically rooted in the teaching about option for the poor and social teaching that

pastorally cares for the poor. However, constraints such as paucity of funds, conflicts of interest with the government, and internal bureaucratic structures were listed as having negative effects on the poverty alleviation efforts of the Catholic Church. The present study agrees with Onah, Okwuosa, and Uroko but differs because it contextualises the poverty alleviation to Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin.

In a further study on poverty alleviation, Sakanko and David (2018) discovered that tithing, charity (*waqf*), scholarships, and the provision of social amenities by religious bodies were poverty alleviating mechanisms in Nigeria. They recommended that clerics should emphasise and encourage adherents to give alms, provide social amenities, scholarships, and comply with *Zakat.* Religious bodies engage in poverty alleviation as noted, yet the study fails to supply the correlation between tithing for instance and poverty reduction in Nigeria and especially in Ilorin. Adebayo (2011) enumerated the various programmes that successive Nigerian governments instituted to eradicate poverty without success. The study mentioned such programmes as the Green Revolution of former President Shehu Shagari (1983) that aimed to boost food production, Family Support Programme (FSP) of late General Sanni Abacha (1997) that aimed to raise investment and alleviate poverty at the grassroots and others. Adebayo asserted that these governmental initiatives failed to meet their targets. Therefore, he suggested the adoption of *Zakat*, which is an Islamic solution to alleviate poverty. He presented *Zakat* as a means through which *Allah* enjoins the rich to care for the weak, orphans, and poor. Since *Zakat* is an Islamic religious obligation, Adebayo does not seem to envisage the religious tension and other challenges, which its adoption by the government might generate in a multi-religious society such as Nigeria.

Dutsinma and Dansabo (2017) agreed with Adebayo on the adoption of *Zakat* and *Waqf*

as alternative solutions to poverty in Nigeria. It was stated that *Waqf* (*Al-waqf*) (endowment) was aimed at providing support for the poor in terms of education, health, and to reduce inequality in the society. Elesin (2017) submitted that *Al-waqf* was a form of charity in Islam that involved the transfer of property from the original owner to the cause of *Allah*. Such properties like orchards, house, etcetera, can generate funds to build hospitals, schools, and other social services to alleviate poverty. However, the author regretted that the practice of *Al-waqf* is no longer popular as it used to be. Nevertheless, he suggested the integration of *Al-waqf* into the *takaful* (insurance) practices because it can lead to development and poverty alleviation; nevertheless, he failed to enumerate the reason (s) why *Al-waqf* is no longer practised. One is confused whether what rich Muslims are unwilling to practise can serve the cause of development unless the rich are compelled, and once it is by compulsion, it is no longer a religious act.

The work of Ashafa throws light on the challenges facing administrators of *Zakat* in South-West Nigeria. Ashafa (2014) discovered poor responses from *Zakat* payers and that *Zakat* eligible payers circumvented the payment. Findings also reveal that *Zakat* eligible individuals did not like to disclose their real asset, and this made the determination of *Zakat*'*s* value difficult. Other finding included inadequate record keeping by the administrators. The discovery of Ashafa is a revelation on the effects of religious teachings on most Nigerians. Even though Zakat is an obligatory charity, some Muslims still circumvent contributing to Zakat.

While studying the challenges facing *Zakat* and *Waqf* in Northern Nigeria, Ahmad (2019) found out that *Zakat* and *Waqf* had not achieved their objectives in Northern Nigeria because members of the public had little or no trust or confidence in the institutions. Another discovery was the lack of trust between the potential *Zakat* payers and *Waqf* donors in the administrators appointed for *Zakat* and *Waqf*. Nevertheless, the author fails to state the reason(s) for the lack of

confidence in *Zakat* and *Waqf* to alleviate poverty. The current study hopes to find the reason. Meanwhile one can posit that people are opposed to the appointment of the institutions' managers by the politicians because of the nepotism and corruption that taint governance in Nigeria.

Literature has exposed the challenges facing the poverty alleviation institutions. As a contextual study, this research hopes to fill the gap in literature through a comparative examination of the poverty alleviation initiatives in Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin in order to chart an alternative map for the laudable religious act.

Doctrinal Foundations for Poverty Alleviation in Islam and the Catholic Church

Barber (2012) opined that philosophically it is believed that poverty and suffering are injustices that one can help to overcome and it is equally accepted that human beings are equal irrespective of race, colour, language, culture, or religious affiliation (pp. 4-54). Njoku (2012) noted that theologically, helping the needy is obedience to the command to love God and one's neighbour with the hope of eternal reward. According to him, the social teachings of the Catholic Church serve as the basis of its poverty alleviation and its opposition to structural injustices created by human beings (pp. 386-408).

The Quran teaches that Allah specifically directs the rich to cater for the poor in order to escape eternal torment (Sura 63:10-11; 69:30-37). In the *Hadith,* Prophet Muhammad reportedly said that charity protects the giver from calamity; it opens the door of paradise (*Al-Tirmidhi*) and it will be a shade on the Day of Resurrection (Muslim). Zakat Foundation (2021) quoted the prophet, "Protect yourself from hell-fire even by giving a piece of date as charity". In fact, all Islamic scholars in Salleh (2018) held that poverty must be fought to a standstill.

The study shall proceed to examine the Catholic Social doctrine as contained in some of the social encyclicals and the theological foundation of poverty alleviation in Islam.

1. *Rerum Novarum* (On the conditions of workers)

Pope Leo XIII wrote this first social encyclical in 1891 (Glazier & Hellwig (n.d.), pp. 279, 281). The encyclical revealed that the Pope protested strongly against the harsh conditions that industrial workers had to endure. Karl Marx and Engels had suggested class struggle as the only means of eliminating class injustices created by capitalism in the society. They propounded socialism as the ideal form of economic relations, and the elimination of private ownership of property, which they considered as the root cause of the exploitation of the workers. However, the Pope protested against the exploitation of the poor workers, but rejected the elimination of private property (Leo XIII 1990, nn. 16-17, 33-34). Thus, Leo XIII commits the Catholic Church as a mediator between government and Labour everywhere in the world.

2. *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope)

Gaudium et Spes is a document that originated from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The document holds that the church offers God to human beings as the only person that can satisfy the longings of human beings and that the Gospel is the only powerful means that can safeguard the freedom and personal dignity of human beings (Flannery 1988, n. 41). Bokenkotter (1986) opined that based on this document, the church needs to have a profound commitment to the cause of human dignity based on her belief in human beings as created in the image and likeness of God, thus the church cannot stand aloof from the struggle for greater human dignity and human rights (pp. 366-367). This document supports *Rerum Novarum* and it charges the Catholic Church to be prophetic against injustice anywhere it is found. This means that the

church must not compromise itself with the politicians if it must be prophetic.

3. *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work)

Pope John Paul II issued this encyclical on 14 September 1981. The Pope stressed that poverty is the creation of human beings through greed, and he charged the Catholic Church to be prophetic in condemning situations that violate the dignity and rights of workers (John Paul II 2002, n. 1). In a way, the Pope wanted the church to be in solidarity with the workers as a solution to poverty and hunger (n. 8). Since a commercialised church cannot be a vanguard for the liberation of the oppressed, the challenge for the church in Nigeria is to reexamine its conscience on its position with regard to the liberation and oppression of the poor. Comparatively, the doctrinal foundation for poverty alleviation in Islam is found in the Qur'an and *Hadith*. Islam considers social welfare services as part of faith and these services must be discharged by the rich to the poor, the needy and the weak so that the rich may not incur the torment of *Allah* after death (Sura. 63:10-11). It is stated that any rich person who fails to feed the poor is chained and thrown into the blazing fire (Sura. 69:30-37). The Qur'an records that *Allah* commands the prophet, "Take *sadaqah* (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it, and invoke *Allah* for them... (Sura. 9:103).

The Qur'an verses have shown that poverty alleviation has a theological foundation since it has an eschatological intention of preventing the rich from eternal punishment. Hence, helping the poor is not an option in Islam. In fact, *Zakat* is one of the pillars of Islam. In the *hadith*, the Prophet was reported to have said, "The upper hand is better than the lower hand (he who gives is better than him (sic) who takes)..." (Al-Bukhari).

Evaluation of the Poverty Alleviation Institutions in the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin and Islam

The following poverty alleviation institutions in the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin and Islam were evaluated in order to assess their weaknesses and strengths in performing their functions.

1. Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC)

JDPC represents the Social Ministry of the Catholic Church. The commission is concerned with issues of Human Rights through capacity building for civil society organisations and the general citizens. Its areas of concern include Democracy and Good Governance, civic education, and all issues involved with social transformation. In the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin, Adetutu (2011) noted that the JDPC was involved in micro-finance, which involves the micro credit programmes for rural and less privileged people, most especially women. It was stated that JDPC helped to improve farming practices of the peasant subsistent farmers. D. Omotosho (personal communication, November 20, 2020), the project manager, reported that the JDPC was involved in Rural Agricultural Development in Ekiti, Irepodun, Isin, Oke-Ero, and Edu Local Government Areas of Kwara State. Some of the villages where its agricultural activities were operative included Eruku, Isare, Ajuba, and Aare Opin among others.

D. Omotosho (personal communication, November 20, 2020) revealed that the challenges facing the operation of JDPC included the slow implementation of government policies that discourages partnership with the government, climate change including low rainfall, and the economic downturn in the nation. Findings showed that lack of finance is a serious impediment to the functions of JPDC in the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin. This is one reason why it has been silent in other areas such as Democracy and Good Governance and civic education.

2. Education

Ignorance is a fundamental source of poverty. Therefore, the Catholic Church alleviates poverty by establishing schools for the eradication of illiteracy and acquisition of skills that are necessary to earn a decent living. In this regard, Most Rev. Ayo-Maria Atoyebi, O.P., the Emeritus Catholic Bishop of Ilorin, established some schools such as St. Joseph Centenary

Catholic College, Ilorin (2012), Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Private Secondary School, Oloje (2007), Notre Dame Girls Academy, and Amoyo (2007) among others. Through the office of the Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Ilorin has been offering scholarship to indigent children in St. Joseph Centenary Catholic College, Ilorin (L. Abiona, personal observation, 2017-2019) and in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Private Secondary School Oloje, Ilorin (A. Adeoye, key informant interview, March 23, 2019).

Findings at St. Joseph Centenary Catholic College Ilorin corroborated the opinion of Osunwokeh concerning the high cost of Catholic Education that prevents the poor from accessing it. For instance, the students resumed in September 2020 for the new academic session 2020/2021 after the COVID-19 lockdown. A parent whose daughter was promoted to the Junior Secondary School Three (JSS 3) said her daughter paid One Hundred and Thirty Thousand Naira ($314.78 as at November 13, 2021) as tuition and feeding fees (B. Ashaolu, key informant interview, November 12, 2020). It is difficult for the poor who are struggling to feed their families and pay house rents to afford such exorbitant school fees. Investigations revealed that the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin intends to make its schools cheaper and affordable, but it is constrained by lack of funds.

3. Catholic Charity Organisations

One of the most prominent Catholic Charity Organisations is St. Vincent de Paul Society. Some of the regular duties of the society are regular visit and donations of food and personal hygiene items to prisoners, visits to the orphanages, hospital visitations, and payment of medical bills, among others. Akinnawonu (2013) revealed that the Ilorin Central Council of St. Vincent de Paul Society established the Adewole Estate Relief Centre in 2009 as an environment where

the poor, the discharged prisoners, the needy, and the hungry can find comfort and relief (p. 17). It was discovered that the Catholic Relief Centre has become a Vocational Training Centre where the needy are trained on different skills such as baking, sewing, shoe making, and so on in order to make the needy self- reliant. However, acquisition of these vocations is not tuition free. Students have to pay a minimum of Fifteen Thousand Naira ($36.53 as at November 13, 2021) depending on the vocation of interest. This is a disincentive to the poor and needy who are struggling to make ends meet.

Findings showed that members of St. Vincent de Paul society distributed palliatives to the poor in Ilorin to cushion the economic effects of the COVID-19 lockdown (L. Abiona, Personal observation April 2020). The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin, through the St. Vincent de Paul, donated food items, soaps and other items to the inmates at Okekura prison at Ilorin on Good Friday, April 10, 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown (P. Opadokun, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Furthermore, assessing the activities of St. Vincent de Paul society during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Adeboye (personal communication, July 31, 2020), the President of Ilorin Central Council of St. Vincent de Paul Society reported, “St. Vincent de Paul did their best by distributing foodstuffs to their clients at home”. However, the Catholic Church did not have the statistics of the poor, which means that the church did not know the size of its target group for proper planning. Therefore, the church might be enriching the rich rather than alleviating the impoverished condition of the poor.

Comparatively, Onisabi (2011) had said the Islamic institutions on poverty alleviation have been functional. Therefore, the study investigated how functional these institutions have been in Ilorin.

1. Zakat

The Qur'an uses two terms for alms - giving, *Zakat* and *Sadaqat*. *Zakat* is the fourth pillar of Islam that teaches that every Muslim who has his savings for a year is obligated to pay a fixed portion of it to the needy, the poor, and those who are under debt. Wealth sharing is believed to have the capacity to purify the giver's wealth from greed and stinginess and reconciles the hearts of the recipients (Sura 9:60). *Zakat* is the obligatory tithing of 2.5% of wealth, which *Allah* made compulsory for the wealthy and rich people to transfer to the poor annually. *Sadaqat* is the voluntary charity beyond what is legally required (Sura 2:263). *Zakat* and *Sadaqat* can enhance economic and social development and promote unity, solidarity, and harmony. *Zakat* is as important as *salat* (the five – time compulsory prayer). It is a compulsory payment by the wealthy to the economically under privileged (Onisabi 2011). The Quran teaches that *Zakat* is to be taken from the rich man's wealth and given to the poor and the needy in order that wealth may not circulate among the wealthy alone (*Sura* 59:7).

From the teaching on Z*akat*, it is obvious that the 'secularity' of Nigeria is a serious obstacle to the realisation of its poverty alleviation intention in Ilorin. How the Z*akat* will be taken from the rich who do not part with it voluntarily is the problem. Kwara State has not enacted *Sharia* law. Even the northern states in Nigeria that adopted *Sharia* have not succeeded in achieving the *Sharia* objectives of *Zakat* as Ahmad (2019, pp. 338-356) discovered in his work. The *Sharia* has thus become a politico-religious 'sword' that the elites use to win elections rather than a tool to alleviate poverty and promote equality among citizens. The high number of beggars in Ilorin metropolis shows that the intention of Z*akat* has not been realised.

2. Islamic banking

Islamic banking is the banking system that is based on the principles of Islamic law (*Sharia*) and guided by Islamic economics. Two basic principles behind Islamic banking are the sharing of profit and loss and, significantly, the prohibitions of the collection and payment of interest. How it works is that for some types of loans, the borrower only needs to pay back the amount owed to the lender, but the borrower can choose to pay the lender a small amount of money to serve as a gratuity. The Dubai Islamic Bank is the world's first full-fledged Islamic bank formed in 1975 (Investopedia 2018). Stanbic IBTC Non-Interest Islamic banking is the only *Sharia*-compliant bank so far in Ilorin. According to W. Mohammed (personal communication, January 12, 2018), since Islamic banking does not collect interest on loan or give interest on deposits, it is unattractive even among most Muslims.

3. *Waqf* or *Awqaf*

It is an Islamic endowment of property to be held in trust and used for a charitable or religious purpose, or Muslim religious or charitable foundation created by an endowed trust fund (Meriam-Webster Dictionary). Religious *Awqaf* focuses on maintenance of religious institutions, like mosques and *madrasas* and their adjacent premises and properties. Philanthropic *Awqaf* aims at providing support for the poor, such as health services, as well as education. It is reported that Prophet Muhammad initiated *Awqaf* with the objective to reduce the disparity and inequality among the social strata (Onisabi 2011).

It is apparently clear that *Zakat,Awqaf,* and Islamic financial institutions can play a formidable role in poverty alleviation programme and eradicate persistent poverty affecting a large percentage of the population. However, Nigeria is not an Islamic country. Moreover, the

mutual suspicion among Christians and Muslims over the fear of domination can stifle the operation of Islamic financial institutions.

Responding to the research question, M. Ganiyu (personal communication, January 12, 2018) noted, "Every Muslim struggles for his own pocket. No one helps the other. There is nothing like charity even when the Quran commands Z*akat*". This seems to indicate a reason why needy Muslims resort to begging as a means of sustenance in Ilorin. Supporting the opinion of Ganiyu, another respondent insisted, "Rich Muslims do not want to give *Zakat*; they do not want to help the poor" (W. Adigun, personal communication, February 2, 2018). The opinions of Ganiyu and Adigun summarise how and why majority of Muslims in Ilorin are struggling under the weight of poverty with no hope of a Good Samaritan.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the study recommends that:

1. Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin need to give tuition free vocational training to the poor.
2. There should be constant emphasis on the benefits of charity in order to motivate the rich to help the poor.
3. Islamic bodies and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin should have a database for the poor in order to have a proper design and implementation of their poverty alleviation.
4. There should be collaborative effort between Islamic bodies and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin with regard to poverty alleviation.
5. More research should be done on the possibility of having a joint policy between Islamic bodies and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin concerning the collection and disbursement of *Zakat* and Tithes towards poverty alleviation in Kwara State.

Implications of the Study

Theoretically, the study was based on the prosocial behaviour that emphasises helping others and structural functional theory that emphasises working together for better functioning of the society. The study supports the theories because both Islam and the Catholic Church have doctrinal foundations for poverty alleviation, which supports solidarity with the poor and needy. Practically, both Islam and Catholic Diocese of Ilorin have a common mission in poverty alleviation. Hence, both can design policy for joint action to eradicate poverty in Ilorin metropolis. The government of Kwara State can initiate collaborative policy that enjoins both mosques and churches to contribute towards poverty alleviation through *Zakat* and Tithes.

Summary and Conclusion

This study was a comparative evaluation of the poverty alleviation in Islam and Catholic Diocese of Ilorin. Based on the objectives of the study, it was discovered that the poverty alleviation in Islam and Catholic Church is based on sound doctrinal foundations. Helping the poor and the needy is a demand of both Islam and the Catholic Church for the benefit of the giver and the receiver. However, there was no enforcement body in Islam and Catholic Diocese of Ilorin charged with the task of compulsorily collecting funds from the rich to help the poor. The study discovered that the poverty alleviation institutions were constrained financially because the rich were unwilling to part with their wealth to help the poor.

Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin did not have data on the poor The lack of statistics about the poor was an obstacle to designing an effective poverty alleviation strategy and execution. Therefore, the study suggested that the religious bodies should have a database for the poor for proper poverty alleviation. Observations revealed that the usual method of sharing of

food items has been ineffectual in poverty reduction. Therefore, the poor should be engaged meaningfully through free vocational training and beneficiaries should be helped with non-interest loans in order to set up their small-scale businesses. Islam and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin need to explore the window of joint action and solidarity in poverty alleviation. Such collaboration can reduce poverty in Ilorin, restore dignity to the poor, restore the social and environmental beauty of Ilorin metropolis, and make our religions functional.

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The Advent, Impacts, Challenges, and Prospects of Catholicism in Nupeland, Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Nupeland in Kwara State is a multi-religious society where African Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity coexist. There are many Christian denominations in the land competing to establish themselves. The arrival of the Roman Catholic Church brought verifiable positive impacts, notwithstanding the challenges it faces. The aim of the study was to assess the advent, impacts, challenges, and the prospects of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland. Data were gathered through interviews, participant observation, and library consultations. Findings showed that the Roman Catholic Church arrived in Nupeland in the middle of the twentieth century, and since then it had contributed to the spiritual, social, and economic development of the land most especially in the education and health sectors. It was discovered that the church's evangelisation mission was facing numerous challenges because the land is predominantly Islamic and converts from Islam to Christianity faced strong oppositions. It was found that the Roman Catholic Church did not have a clear pastoral plan for its mission in the land and its pastoral agents lacked adequate pastoral care. The ordination of an indigenous Nupe priest who was rendering pastoral services for his people, the two Nupe students who were undergoing training for the Catholic Priesthood, the presence of many catechists who were working assiduously to evangelise the land were boosts to the mission and prospects of the Roman Catholic Church in the land. The study recommended that solid pastoral plan should be drawn in order to enhance proper evangelisation of Nupeland.

Key words: Roman Catholic Church, Islam, Nupeland, Challenges, Prospects

Introduction

Geographically, the area referred to as Nupeland in Kwara State of Nigeria consists of the Nupe people as the dominant indigenous ethnic group whose language is Nupe, and the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin is synonymous with Kwara State (Odeyemi & Adesoba 2008, p. x). Kwara State comprises three senatorial zones: Northern, Southern, and the Central Senatorial zones. The first Holy Mass was reportedly celebrated in the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin at Offa on June 16, 1912 (Odeyemi & Adesoba 2012, p. vii). Offa is situated in the Southern Senatorial zone of Kwara State and it a Yoruba-speaking zone. Historically, the Catholic faith has been in existence in Kwara State for a hundred and nine (109) years.

Nupeland exists in the Northern Senatorial zone of Kwara State. The indigenous religion in Nupeland is the African Traditional Religion (ATR), but the religious landscape in the land at the time of this study revealed Islamic dominance with appreciable Christian presence. The challenges facing the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland were situated within the historico-religious situation in the land.

Islam came to Nupeland before the advent of Christianity. Amao (2018) believed that by 1750 the 15th successor to the Etsu (king) throne, Etsu Jubril, accepted Islam (p. 78). Even though ATR and Islam coexisted at this time with Islam being the minority religion (Olaniyi 2017, p. 46), the advent of Mallam Dendo (Fulani Islamic preacher and charm seller) in Nupeland during the reign of Etsu Ma'azu changed the religious situation in the land dramatically. Dendo was reported to have led the Jihad in Nupe kingdom after the death of Etsu Ma'azu, and thereby brought Nupeland under Islamic dominance (Amao 2018, p. 78).

In contrast, Christianity made three attempts before it was established eventually in Nupeland in 1902 through the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) missionaries. The first attempt was

made by Walter Gowans (a Presbyterian), Rowland Bingham (a Baptist), and Thomas Kent (a Congregationalist) on December 4, 1893 (Fleck 2013, p. 207). The sole aim of these missionaries was to evangelise the Sudan, which means the land of the blacks; the name the Arabs gave the area (Crampton 2004, p. 2).

Nupeland is located within the Sudan, and historically speaking, the missionaries made three attempts before it was penetrated. The first attempt (1893) and the second attempt (1900) reportedly failed, but the third attempt that brought A. W. Banfield and his group to Patigi in 1902 succeeded and Christianity was planted in the land (Olatayo 1993, p. 6). From 1902 up until the present time, several other Christian denominations have been established in the land notwithstanding the presence of the SIM that metamorphosed into the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA).

Nigeria has a constitution that theoretically adopts religious freedom, but the practicality of the constitution in terms of freedom to change one's religion usually generates tensions. While Christians can change their religious affiliation without much difficulty, Muslims in predominantly Muslim dominated areas in Nigeria have freedom to change their religion only if they are prepared to seek asylum outside their place of birth to a safer place.

Within this background, this study examined the advent, impacts, challenges, and the prospects of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland in order to help the church respond strategically to the pastoral mandate of making disciples among the Nupe people of Kwara State in Nigeria. Two research questions were designed for this study: 1. What are the challenges facing the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland? 2. Does the Roman Catholic Church have prospects in Nupeland? The objectives of the study were to: 1. discover the challenges facing the

Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland; and 2. predict the prospects of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland.

The study has the following sections: Theoretical Framework, Methodology, The advent of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland, The Impacts of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland, The Challenges facing the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland, findings and discussion. How the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland can get more converts and prevent its members from being "harvested" by Islam and other Christian denominations is the concern of this study.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Religious Competition as propounded by Gary D. Bouma, Rod Ling, and Douglas Pratt (2009) forms the basis of the theoretical framework of this study. Gary D. Bouma, Rod Ling, and Douglas Pratt observed that religious groups behave like commercial organisations, biological organisms and sports teams, which compete, consolidate, and adapt in any given environment.

Christianity and Islam are proselytising religions and hence rivals. Adherents of both religions compete for members, and they strive to keep their members in the same manner as business organisations make efforts to keep their customers. As rivals, they present themselves as better alternatives to get converts from one another, and they use strategies such as establishing schools, health centres, and worship centres, without neglecting their interaction with the government of the day. The Roman Catholic Church operates within the same "religious market" where Islam and other Christian denominations exist as its competitors. Therefore, it is expected that its expansion is challenged.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative research that investigated the advents, impacts, challenges, and prospects of Catholicism in Nupeland, Kwara State in Nigeria. Nupeland in this study comprises the two Local Government Areas, namely Edu and Patigi. The predominant people in the geographical space are Nupe and the language of the people is Nupe. The study drew respondents from St. Paul's Catholic Church Patidzuru, Christ the King Catholic Church Bacita, St. Michael's Catholic Church Bokungi, St. Peter's Catholic Church Patigi, St. Gabriel's Catholic Church Lafiagi, and St. Lawrence Catholic Church Patiko.

Data were collected through key informant interview, participant observation, and library consultation. The interviews were conducted through face-to-face and telephone conversation. Those interviewed included Catholic priests working in Nupeland, Catechists working in Nupeland, and other non-cultic functionaries from the sampled villages using the purposive sampling method, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling method (Alchemer 2018). In purposive or deliberate sampling method, researchers deliberately choose participants based on the qualities the participants possess (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim 2016, pp. 1- 4). In this study, the researcher deliberately chose the participants that were willing to provide knowledgeable information based on their experiences. Through participant observations, the researcher observed Nupe Catholics during liturgy, their responses to spiritual activities, their knowledge of the Catholic beliefs and practices, and participated in the evangelisation of Nupeland. Through library consultation, the researcher discovered what scholars had written about religions in Nupeland including the history of the Roman Catholic Church in the land.

The data collected were analysed using thematic analysis, which involves the identification and interpretation of the recurring themes from the responses to research questions.

Inferences were drawn from the results of data analysis and the implications of the study were stated.

The Advent of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland

Records show that the first place where the missionaries of the Society of African Missions (SMA) birthed in Nupeland Kwara State is called Eyeforogi (also popularly called Emiworogi) in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. The initial mission of the SMA was to establish a primary school in order to educate the people of the area. The missionaries were reported to have established the primary school under a tent at Eyeforogi. Eventually, for easy accessibility for the people from other villages, the school was relocated to a central village named Patiko (T. Raphael 2014, p. 8).

Evangelisation at Patiko led to the conversion of Baba Ibrahim from African Traditional Religion (ATR) to the Catholic faith. After his conversion, Ibrahim spread the Gospel to others and some people eventually embraced the faith in Patiko within a period of one week (T. Raphael 2014, p. 8). Thus, it can rightly be said that the Catholic faith in Nupeland of Kwara State started in Patiko, Edu Local Government Area of Kwara state.

Through the efforts of Fr Tubi (SMA), a place of worship was erected at Patiko; Ibrahim was trained as Catechist, and he worked in Patiko (T. Raphael 2014, p. 8). The evangelising mission of Ibrahim was reported to have led to the establishment of the second Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland, St. Peter's Catholic Church Ankoro, Edu Local Government Area in November 1965. Another Catholic Church that was noted to have been established through the mission of Ibrahim is St. Michael's Catholic Church, Daracita in 1973 (T. Raphael 2014, p. 8).

From this initial planting, the Roman Catholic Church has spread in Nupeland such that the first parish, Christ the King Catholic Church, Bacita was erected in 1966 and the first parish

priest was Rev. Fr Beansang S. M. A. (Adesoba & Odeyemi 2012, p. 90). What this means is that at the time of erection, the priest in charge of Christ the King parish was the only one responsible for providing pastoral services to the whole Nupeland comprising of Edu and Patigi Local Government Areas.

However, on November 10, 1994, St. Gabriel's Catholic Church, Lafiagi was carved out of Christ the King parish, Bacita (Adesoba & Odeyemi 2008, p. 50). From St. Gabriel's Catholic Church, St. Paul Parish Patidzuru was created in September 2013 (A. Okure. Telephone conversation, May 6, 2021) , while St. Lawrence Parish Patiko was carved out of Christ the King Parish Bacita in August 2020 (T. Raphael, personal communication, May 6, 2021). Each of these parishes has many outstations. This is an indication that the Roman Catholic Church has grown appreciably in Nupeland beyond its initial planting.

The Impacts of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland

The advent of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland has led to many positive impacts in the land. Spiritually, some adherents of ATR in the villages where the influence of Islam was not very strong have been converted to the church. Foremost among them was Baba Ibrahim, the father of the first Catholic Priest (Fr Thomas Baba) in Nupeland, Kwara State. Ibrahim embraced the Catholic faith in Patiko, his hometown, in Edu Local Government Area, when he was an adherent of ATR (T. Raphael 2014, p. 8), and he served the church as a Catechist in different villages until his death while in active service at St. Michael's Catholic Church Bokungi in 2016 (personal observation, 2005-2016).

Apart from the four parishes noted above, some of the numerous outstations in Nupeland are Holy Cross Catholic Church, Shonga, Our Lady Mediatrix of all Graces, Kutukpa, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Share, Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Zambufu, St. Peter's Catholic Church,

Ankoro, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Gbugbu, St. Michael's Catholic Church, Bokungi, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Patigi. Divine Mercy Catholic Church, Polewire, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Kanta, and others (personal observation, 2005-2021).

Health is necessarily associated with wealth, and it is incontrovertible that without sound health, human beings cannot contribute to the Gross Domestic Product of any society. Therefore, the pioneer Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin, William Mahony, SMA (Jan. 1961-Oct. 20, 1984) established St. Brendan's Catholic Hospital in Bacita (1972) to cater for the health of Nupe people. The hospital is "highly patronised by good percentage of Nupe Muslims and Christians" (T. Baba, key informant interview, May 3, 2021).

Ignorance is a fundamental source of poverty. Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church alleviates poverty in Nupeland through the establishment of schools for the eradication of illiteracy and the acquisition of skills that are necessary to earn a decent living. Most Rev. Ayo-Maria Atoyebi, O.P., the Emeritus Catholic Bishop of Ilorin Diocese (1992-2019), established Christ the King Nursery/Primary Schools, Bacita (Oct. 2, 2002), Christ the King College, Bacita (Oct. 2, 2006), Ave Maria Nursery/Primary Schools, Lafiagi ((2002), Ave-Maria Secondary School, Lafiagi (Oct. 2, 2007), Queen of the Holy Rosary Nursery/Primary School, Bokungi (2004) (Adesoba & Odeyemi 2012, pp. 14-23).

The incumbent Bishop Paul Olawoore established St. Brendan's College of Health Technology Bacita (2020) (T. Raphael, key informant interview, May 5, 2021). Catholic institutions contribute to the human capital development in Nupeland. They brought development to their host communities and provide gainful employments for both skilled and unskilled labour in the land.

The Challenges facing the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland

The Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland faces some challenges irrespective of its impacts in the land. Some of these challenges from the responses of the interviewees are grouped under the following themes:

1. **The Islamic dominance**

Islam has existed in Nupeland since around 1750 (Amao 2018, p. 78), and from the time of the Fulani Jihad in the 19th century, Islam has been firmly established in the land. It is indisputable that Chapter IV article 38 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states,

> Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance.

However, it was discovered that in Nupe towns such as Lafiagi, Patigi, Shonga, and Tsaragi religious freedom in terms of freedom of Muslims to change their religion publicly is not permitted even while the constitution allows it. Reports indicated that strategies such as financial inducement and promise of employment were utilised to lure some Christians to Islam. Thus, a key informant stated, "Any lazy Nupe Christian can easily be induced with money to convert to Islam" (S. Peter, personal communication, May 3, 2021). A. Janet (key informant interview, August 23, 2018) reported, "Financial inducements are used to convert Christians to Islam. Three weeks before your arrival, some Christians were converted to Islam at the villages known as Gbagede and Gada. Some Igbo boys in Patigi also converted to Islam due to poverty".

The statement of one of the key informants, "We are surrounded by Islam and its influences affect the Catholic Church in Nupeland in the area of beliefs, mode of worship,

intermarriage and accepting the Catholic teachings" (J. Raphael, personal communication, May 3, 2021) is instructive. The dominance of Islam is so strong as noted from the response of a key informant, "For decades that the church has been planted in the land, their response is still cold. May be because of their culture, which is basically linked with Islam" (L. Joseph, personal communication, May 3, 2021).

Islam is a serious challenge to Christianity in Nupeland because both religions are proselytising. Adherents of both religions seek for members and they act as aggressive competitors. For this reason, Muslim women are not permitted to marry Christians. Renouncing Islam for Christianity is highly condemnable and any Muslim convert to Christianity especially in Nupe towns most often emigrate from the land in order to avoid persecutions.

2. Competition from other Christian denominations

In Nupeland, other Christian denominations coexist with the Roman Catholic Church. These include the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), the United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA), The Apostolic Church Nigeria (TACN), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Anglican Church, Baptist Church, Cherubim and Seraphim Church, The Lord Chosen Charismatic Church, Deeper Life Bible Church, The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel), Nupe Kalvari Church, and etcetera. As ecclesial communities, they also share in the mandate to "Make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). Therefore, they compete with the Roman Catholic Church for members and try to lure some Catholics to their folds. This agrees with the assertion of T. Raphael (key informant interview, May 3, 2021), "Other churches are trying to steal members from us."

3. Inadequate knowledge of the Catholic faith

Most Nupe Catholics have shallow knowledge of the Catholic faith. A key informant noted, "Most Nupe Catholics do not know the meaning of the Catholic faith since they tend to follow the teachings of the predominant church around them, the United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA)" (B. Aderonke, personal communication, May 1, 2021). It was gathered that inadequate catechesis contributed to the challenges facing most Nupe Catholics (E. Saba, personal communication, May 1, 2021). However, one of the key informants claimed, "Nupe Catholics need more than basic Catechesis. They need to know how to defend their beliefs and practices with Biblical quotations. The priests must quote and cite the Biblical passages during Mass, and the laity must know these passages and be ready to use them to defend their faith" (J. Raphael, personal communication, May 3, 2021).

Findings revealed that Nupe Catholics felt disappointed whenever they were unable to defend their faith by quoting the passages from the Bible to support their beliefs. Catholic priests are not used to quoting different passages of the Bible at liturgy during homilies to support their views and the laity does not go to Mass with their Bibles unlike their Protestant counterparts. Something needs to be done to prevent Nupe Catholics from drifting away from the Church due to this challenge.

4. Problem of marriage

Generally, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the marriage covenant must be between a man and a woman (The Code of Canon Law 1055 $1. It will subsequently be referred to as Can.), the irrevocability of marriage consent (Can. 1057 $2), the sacramental nature of marriage between baptised Catholics (Can. 1055 $2), and therefore the indissolubility of sacramental marriage (Can. 1056). Most Nupe Catholics do not celebrate sacramental marriages.

The challenge of polygamy is germane in Nupeland. Africans generally marry many wives due to their farming occupation that requires many hands in the farm, and Islam favours polygamy if one can cater for them. Being mostly farmers living in the midst of Islam, some Nupe Catholics find monogamy difficult. They prefer the polygamy of Islam because it guarantees more hands in the farm and more economic power due to higher production. Hence, most men are living with more than one wife and they thereby exclude themselves from the Holy Eucharist.

Majority of the Nupe Catholic women marry outside the church because of their inability to get suitors within the church. This is a serious challenge to the future of the church (E. Saba, personal communication, May 1, 2021). Furthermore, some Nupe Catholic women enter into mixed marriages or disparity of cult. In African societies, a woman has no faith. The men may sign the consent form to allow his intending wife to practice her Catholic faith after marriage, but this is merely a formality to get married. After marriage, the African culture takes precedence and the woman practices the faith of her husband. Notably, Muslims in Nupeland do not allow their women to marry Christian men, but they do all in their power to marry Christian women in order to convert them to Islam.

5. Poverty

Nupeland is economically backward. The government of Kwara State has not prioritised the zone for development even though it can serve as an agricultural basket for the state. Poverty contributes to the challenges of the Roman Catholic Church in the zone. Most Nupe are generally peasant farmers that farm seasonally and in the absence of any marketing board to protect the farmers, merchants buy the produce at cheaper prices during harvest when the supply is high in order to sell at exorbitant prices during the planting season when the demand is higher than supply. At that time, most Nupe farmers are already in poverty waiting for another harvesting

season. Because of poverty, most Nupe Catholics still have the mentality of the priests financing everything in the church (L. Joseph, personal communication, May 3, 2021).

6. Language barrier

In this age of inculturation, pastoral agents in Nupeland must be able to speak Nupe language. Most of the priests working in the land do not speak Nupe. This means they depend on interpreters during homilies. This is a challenge to meaningful evangelisation. Priests who engage in missionary activities in Nupeland need to learn the language of their host. A pastoral training in Nupe language before posting to the land is sacrosanct for effectiveness. Sending priests to Nupeland without equipping them with the tool of communication is useless because Nupe people will never trade away their language for anything.

Muslims that converted most Nupe traditional religious adherents to Islam have not been able to replace Nupe language with Arabic. In fact, Islam has adopted Nupe language and it has incorporated other Nupe cultural celebrations such as the *Ndakogboya* (the tall masquerade) for the entertainment of worshippers during the Islamic festivals (personal observation, August 2019).

7. Illiteracy and Diabolism

J. Dufia (personal communication, May 3, 2021) claimed, "Most of my people are illiterates and most are involved in diabolism while some are witches and wizards". One of the accusations of Omoleye (2012) against Yoruba Traditional Religion is that it pays obeisance to and acknowledges the 'powers' of witches and wizards (p. 17-18). Witchcraft is a mystical power that is used to harm others. Most of the documents on witchcraft are not evidence based because witches do not expose their mystical powers to non-initiates, notwithstanding the

opinion of Fuller (2017) who noted that witchcraft could be inherited, purchased, and that some people could be coerced into witchcraft (p. 76).

It is difficult to identify a witch even though the cult is believed to be dominated by women. One often reads,

> An act of witchcraft is a psychic act; witches do not use medicine; they harm by thinking their victims harmed. Those who possess witch-substance are not really aware that they have it, but it gives them great power to act and to succeed in their actions (Magesa 2011, pp. 167-169).

These submissions are controversial. If witches have powers to change themselves into spirit-like beings at night and go to witches assemblies while their bodies remain at home as one is made to believe (Magesa 2011, pp. 169-170), the question then remains how witches are not in full control of themselves when they harm their victims. Therefore, whether it is possible for witches to cause illness in people by mere intentions remains a puzzle that is difficult to unravel by empirical studies.

The Prospects of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland

Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland is growing even though it is not as rapid as one would have expected. E. Saba (personal communication, May 1, 2021) believed, “The future of the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland is bright”, and all the respondents for the study noted that the Roman Catholic Church has a bright future in the land. However, B. Aderonke (personal communication, May 1, 2021) advised that in order to sustain the growth of the church, there is a need for a consistent availability of priests to cater for the pastoral needs of the people.

Commenting on the prospects of the Catholic Church in Nupeland, T. Raphael (personal communication, May 3, 2021) was very certain about its bright future when he asserted, “We have more converts from Islam and paganism. There is high number of childbirth. A good

percentage of Nupe Christians and Muslims believe in the Catholic institutions". Even though one cannot doubt the opinion of Raphael, personal observation showed that he was speaking from the experience of his location in Nupeland where the influence of Islam is not very strong. Notwithstanding, it is not in doubt that the future of the Catholic Church is bright in Nupeland.

Findings and Discussion

The theory of religious competition is obviously at play in Nupeland. Except the African Traditional Religion that does not proselytise by nature, Islam and Christianity are missionary religions that have the mandate to increase their memberships. Members of the various Christian denominations compete among themselves and present their denominations as better means of salvation than the Roman Catholic Church. They often go the extra mile to convert Catholics to their folds. As the members of other ecclesial communities try to lure Catholics away, Muslims also try to lure Christians into Islam.

It is very difficult for Nupe Muslims to abandon Islam for Christianity especially in Patigi, Lafiagi, Tsaragi, and Shonga because of the fear of persecutions (Adams, key informant interview, 2018). The Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland needs to devise a plan to help Nupe Muslims who intend to embrace Catholicism. Findings showed that the Apostolic Church Nigeria (TACN) and the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) had devised the strategy of relocating Nupe Muslims who converted to Christianity in their churches to a safer environment where their basic needs were being provided (B. Dadi, personal communication, May 2, 2021).

The Roman Catholic Church does not have any pastoral plan for Nupe Muslims who intend to convert to the Roman Catholic Church (J. Lawani, personal communication, May 2, 2021). Even in the schools established by the Roman Catholic Church in Nupeland, the Catholic

Diocese of Ilorin has not initiated any scholarship schemes for the children of indigent Muslims as means of possible evangelisation.

Findings revealed that the principal of Christ the King College, Bacita had been providing scholarships to some indigent students as a personal charity. Such individual initiative is unsustainable because the transfer of the principal from the college might lead to the death of the scholarship initiative. The decision of the principal to close his boarding facilities because the parents of boarding students were unable to meet up with the financial demands is indicative of the lack of pastoral plan (J. Lawani, key informant telephone conversation, May 6, 2021). It is important that the Roman Catholic Church invest in scholarships for indigent Catholic and non-Christian children as a way of evangelisation, otherwise poverty may drive some Catholics to other churches or Islam who have plans for them in such a competitive environment.

In the absence of men who are financially ready to marry Nupe Catholic women, they will marry whoever is ready regardless of religious affiliation. Therefore, the priests have to devise means of arresting the situation. The priests can organise youth seminars, retreats, meetings, revivals and expose the Nupe youths to Diocesan, Provincial, and National Catholic programs. Such exposure will help Catholic women to find suitors among Catholic men outside Nupeland if they cannot get among their Nupe Catholic men.

The influence of Pentecostalism is a challenge to Catholicism in Nigeria generally, and particularly in Nupeland. The Roman Catholic Church needs to response to the challenge by mandating Catholics to bring their Bible to every liturgical assembly. The priests need to change their style of homily by referencing the Bible. In this age of technology and social media, it is essential that every means must be deployed to serve evangelisation. The priests can be involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria (CCRN). The CCRN used to be strong in

Nupeland. A key informant noted, "It is the only viable channel of rural evangelisation we have in Nupeland" (J. Raphael, personal communication, May 1, 2021). Priests working in Nupeland have obligation to collectively revive and organise the CCRN as a joint parish movement.

Inculturation is derived from the idea that Christ should be at home in every culture because it has always seemed that African cultures and Christianity are in competition. Okafor (2010) stressed that in cultural encounter, inculturation seeks to adopt the values, institutions, and customs prevalent in a culture as a vehicle to express and communicate the gospel message and at the same time to purify cultural elements that are incompatible with the gospel (pp. 93-102). In addition, Bujo (2003) noted, "The whole essence of inculturation is the enthronement of the God of Jesus Christ as identical with the God of the African ancestors" (p. 16). Priests working in Nupeland have the obligation to imbibe inculturation and utilise it in Nupeland. They need to teach the Nupe to identify God in Christian understanding as *Soko* (God in indigenous Nupe religious system).

It is instructive to state that Nupe people will rarely jettison their culture. This realisation seemed to have motivated Muslims to adopt Nupe culture for the survival of their religion in the land. Banfield, the earliest SIM/ECWA missionary in Nupeland reportedly learned the Nupe language and translated the Bible and other Christian literature into Nupe language (Adams, n.d, p. 16). Roman Catholic missionaries cannot do less.

The difficulty that the Nupe Catholics find with monogamy is due to the influence of Islam and the demands of farming. This means more catechesis is needed most especially in order to conquer the fear of witchcraft. Couples who live in inappropriate unions need more pastoral care and presence. Hence, the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin needs to consider Nupeland as a mission land where investment on pastoral agents such as the Catechists is a priority. Providing

motor cycles for the priests and the catechists who have to go to the hinterland where cars cannot reach is not out of place.

Implications of the Study

Theoretically, the study was based on the theory of religious competition that emphasises the rivalry that exists among proselytising religions in Nupeland. The study supports the theory because the Roman Catholic Church, other ecclesial communities, and Islam are competing for members in the land. Practically, the study can help the Catholic Diocese of Ilorin in Nigeria to have a pastoral plan for robust evangelisation in Nupeland. Nupe Muslims need to be protected by the constitution on issues of religious freedom. Hence, the study can help the government of Kwara State to initiate policy that can guarantee that no one who desires to change from Islam to Christianity is persecuted.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the Roman Catholic Church operates within a predominantly Islamic society with a high protestant population that looks down on Catholics as unbelievers that must be converted. The Roman Catholic Church has established some educational and health institutions in Nupeland and their impacts on their host communities have been stated. However, the church is facing many challenges such as poverty, polygamy, intermarriage, catechesis, lack of pastoral plan, language barriers, and etcetera. Notwithstanding, Nupeland in Kwara State has produced a Catholic priest and there are other two Nupe students in training for the priesthood. The warm embrace that Nupe people show toward the Catholic institutions indicates that the Roman Catholic Church has a bright future in Nupeland.

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