

Islam in Nigeria between the North and the South

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Introduction

The advent of Islam in the socio/geographical entity referred to as Nigeria was and still is a turning point in her history and the socio-cultural milieu of her people. Nigeria is a country of about 450 ethnic groups with a population of over 160 million people. Islam predates modern Nigeria in her contemporary geography for about nine hundred years. It should be noted that Nigeria as we have it today is a brain child of the British imperialists who by amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 with Niger area (Nigeria) being suggested as her name by the wife of the then Governor General in person of Lady F. F. Lugard brought together different peoples or rather autonomous states that now make up the federation of Nigeria. The disparity in time and means by which Islam was introduced to each part of the country had left indelible mark which impacts remarkably on the people of each of the geo-political zones much as its effects and influence on their economic, political and socio-cultural milieu could be observed. Using simple analytical survey and adopting qualitative analysis, this chapter examines the differences that exist between Islam or rather the practice of Islam as well as its impacts between the Northern and Southern parts of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As observed Edwards, "all history begins with the necessary and inescapable observation of changes around us. Writing the history of anything, as he says, involves finding out the nature, extent and pace of that change and trying to explain it."¹ This is particularly true of the present study as it explores the advent of Islam and the changes or effects it has occasioned in the North and South of Nigeria bearing in mind the differential between the two parts.

Conceptual Background

Nigeria lies between latitude 4⁰N and 14⁰N. It is one of the Commonwealth (Anglophone) West African countries. It has a population of over 160 million people shared between two major world

¹ John Edward. "Cross Country" (Television Series) retrieved from TV.com, 2006.

living religions, that is, Islam and Christianity and a minority of traditional worshippers and equally a pocket of Asian religions' adherents. The annual population growth of the country is put at 2.8% per annum. Nigeria is divided into 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT-Abuja) with each of the states belonging to one of the six geo-political zones. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has a total of 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Covering a total area of 356,000sq miles, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the most populous in Africa and the 6th one in the World with Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo (Igbo) being the major and the most influential tribes in the federation. Although, vernacular is widely spoken across the country, English² is the official language of the nation, that is, language of transaction and instructions in schools and colleges. Nigeria shares common border with Cameroon to the east, Chad to the north east, Niger Republic to the north, Republic of Benin to the west and Atlantic Ocean to the south.

While the northern part of the country played host to Umayyad refugees and receives Islam as early as the 7th century, the south did not witness the advent of Islam until as late as 15th/16th centuries. Even at this time, it was only the South west (the Yoruba country) and what come to be known today as Edo North (the Afemai/Etsakoland) that could be said to have witnessed the arrival of Islam to their respective domains. The actual population figures of Muslims as well as any other religious group are difficult to determine since government has adopted the policy of not including such variables/details in her demographic data owing to controversy it usually generates.

Before the oil boom and industrialization that follows it, the major occupation of Nigerians was farming.³ The climatic differences between the North and the South and its role on human temperament cannot be over emphasized. It has played a significant role on the type of crops cultivated in each of the areas and impact seriously on their life style and or cultures. Each ethnic group has a distinct territory of its own which extends over an expanse of land. A great number of the smaller groups, as observed Udo, had little or no contact with other groups before the advent of Islam and the imposition of colonial hegemony.⁴ The people in the southern part of the country (the forest peoples) continued with their traditional religion and remained almost completely insulated from the influence of Islam up till the early years

² It should be noted that Arabic was the first language of literacy in Nigeria. However, with the arrival of the imperialists/colonialists English was foisted on the local people.

³ R.K Udo. "Environments and Peoples of Nigeria: A Geographical Introduction to the History of Nigeria in Ikime, Obaro." *Groundwork of the Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Education Books, 1980, p. 11.

⁴ R.K. Udo. p. 15.

of the colonial period.⁵ This is owing to a number of reasons. Such reasons as observes Balogun, is not unconnected to the fact that Tsetse fly attack⁶ could not allow most traders to stay long in this part as their beast of burden might suffer death. Hence Nupe was at a comparative advantage to receive Islam earlier than Yorubaland and the rest part of southern Nigeria as a result of the condition mentioned above.⁷

Giving the fact that the Christian Missionaries were the harbingers and agents of diffusion of the Western education, the coastal and forest peoples of the South have since produced the largest number of educated and highly trained personnel in the country's labour force.⁸ It should be stated that majority of such personnel are Christians. This is an opportunity that had placed them in a vantage position in the country as against their Muslim counterparts. This opportunity had been fully exploited as it has been used and still being used to convert several people including Muslims into Christianity. Observes Doi:

The Muslims of West Africa resented the white men, their religion and culture, and hence did not send their children to Christian schools for the fear of conversion (which was real), lagged behind in getting their fair share in the administration of the country. Thus, the local political power vested in the Western educated elites who swelled in numbers as time passed. The colonial master sent them for higher education in European countries and on their return they became masters of the destiny of their people.⁹

True to the observation made by Doi above, Ogun State (of Nigeria) had never produced a Muslim governor until 29th May, 2011 since it was created in 1976. If this could be said of Yorubaland where we have a sizeable number of Muslims, one could therefore imagine the situation in the South east and south-south that are predominantly Christians.

Of all the tribes in Nigeria, the Yorubas are generally observed to be the most urbanised group not only with respect to Nigeria but throughout the continent of Africa.¹⁰ African family system is essentially the extended type and this, as it seems, is a general feature of African society or civilization. Hence, the urbanisation of the Yoruba society as

⁵ R.K. Udo. p. 16. (The forest people, as used here, refers to those in the south-south of Nigeria, majorly the Edo speaking people.)

⁶ The devastating effects of killing their beast of burden as well as the difficulty of traversing the forest routes could not allow them to access the high forest terrains.

⁷ S. A. Balogun. History of Islam Up to 1800 in Ikime Obaro (1980), *Groundwork of Nigerian history*, pp. 219-220

⁸ S. A. Balogun, p. 221.

⁹ A. R. I. Doi. *Islam in a Multi-Religious Society: Nigeria as a Case Study*. Kuala Lumpur: A. S. Noordeen, 1992, p. 83.

¹⁰ A. R. I. Doi, p. 17.

well as their culture of living in agglomerations and or large compounds was later helpful in the spread of Islam amongst them. The Hausa political terrain was made up of a number of city-states which were never integrated until the Jihad of 1804 took place. It was after the Jihad that Islam became more generally adopted, although it had been introduced as far back as the 14th century.¹¹ Today, about 90% or more of Hausa/Fulani profess Islamic faith so much so that both their political and social life, including the land tenure and legal systems are very much influenced by Islamic principles.¹² Islam has been so established in the North at the time of the arrival of the imperialists to the extent that, the colonial Masters have to adopt 'Indirect Rule' in the Caliphate, that is the north of Nigeria, after they have subdued it unlike the other parts of the country where 'Direct Rule' system was adopted. In fact, it is reported that the difficulty of finding anyone with executive powers of any kind amongst the Tiv constituted a serious problem for the colonial masters in establishing 'Indirect Rule' amongst them.¹³

Nigeria as observed earlier is one of the countries with the largest ethnic principalities in the world. The total number of the ethnic groups in the country has been variously put between 350 and 450. It is also the country where competition between Islam and Christianity is most keen and pronounced in the world. Such religious competition and ethnic rivalry has impacted so greatly on the corporate existence of the country, even sometimes threatening to tear the country apart.¹⁴ Surprisingly however, the country and her people are so resilient that they have survived several onslaught posed by religion and ethnic nationality/loyalty, though not without their devastating effects. Observed Doi:

Both Islam and Christianity are essentially missionary religions and their rivalry is partly the continuation of the past history and partly a logical consequence of the fact that both religions are ambitious enough to convert the whole world to their own view of ultimate reality. Around nowhere else in the world, is competition as keen as in the continent of Africa where they operate their institutions for the work of Dawah and Missionary activities on a scale greater than almost anywhere else in the world.¹⁵

While the Northern part of the country is populated by the Hausa,

¹¹ A. R. I. Doi, p. 19. (Note that Islam had actually being introduced to Kanem Borno Empire by Ummayyad refuges as early as the 7th century; however, the impacts of these refuges were not much felt among the Hausa/Fulanis.)

¹² A. R. I. Doi, p. 19.

¹³ A. R. I. Doi, p. 20.

¹⁴ This reflected so clearly in the inaugural speech made by Major Gideon Orkar on 22nd April, 1990.

¹⁵ A. R. I. Doi, p. 78.

Fulani, Kanuri, Tiv and so on, and are predominantly Muslims; the South is predominated by the Yoruba, Ibo and Edo, Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio and others with majority Christians. However, the Muslims constitute about the average of the Yorubas of the South Western Nigeria. According Doi, they are about 50% of the Yoruba population.¹⁶ It is interesting to note, that Yoruba constitute the single largest ethnic group in the south if not the country as whole, with about 30 million people which according to the 2006 Nigerian population census constitute 21% of the nation's population.

Religious and ethnic loyalties are well pronounced among Nigerians. In fact, it is so pronounced that one wonders why the Federal constitution states that Nigeria is a secular state. This is why many scholars, rather than calling Nigeria a secular state prefer to refer to it as a multi-religious-multi-cultural/ethnic state which to my own mind best qualifies the obtainable situation in the country.

Nigeria and Her Geo-Political Zones

In order to address the problem of and complaints about marginalisation by certain ethnic nationalities,¹⁷ Nigeria was divided into six geo-political zones by the late General Sanni Abacha in 1995,¹⁸ with each one of them having at least five states. The question that may well be posed, one that is germane and apposite to our discussion which is equally begging for appropriate answer is, 'has this solved the problem and lay the hues and cries as well as the haggling and quarrelling to rest?' We shall see the answer to this question in the forthcoming paragraphs. As at 1966 before the January 15 coup, the country was divided into 4 regions, namely Northern Region, Western Region, Mid-Western and Eastern Regions. In May 1967, a counter coup was staged which brought General Yakubu Gowon to power as the Military Head of State. He divided the country into 12 states out of which 6 were from the North. In 1976, the military government headed by General Murtala Ramat Muhammad increased the states in the federation to 19

¹⁶ A. R. I. Doi, p. 235.

¹⁷ Marginalization or domination of one group and or clique over and above others form major part of the reasons advanced by the late Major Gideon Orkar for April 22, 1990 botched coup and also reason for excise of five core northern states from the Federation of Nigeria.

¹⁸ This was included in the 1995 Draft Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that was truncated by the death of the Head of State in June 1998 before being signed into law. In fact, the provision is contained in Section 229 (4) of the constitution which reads: 'For the purpose of subsection (1) of this section, the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria shall be set out in Part III of the First Schedule to this Constitution.' Then the zones were listed along with the states under them. See the table below for details.

namely: Anambra, Bauchi, Bendel, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Gongola, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers and Sokoto states.

The Advent of Islam in Nigeria

(a) Islam and Its Spread in Nigeria

Many reasons have been advanced for why Islam was able to make inroads into Africa particularly what come to be known today as West Africa. Among such reasons are: impacts of distance trade and efforts of traders, ability of the religion to meet the social, political, economic and spiritual need of people, introduction of literacy and new ideas, a wider worldview with universal outlook, a richer civilization, a new religion that did not imply a subordination to the white men who were beginning to intrude into the life of the various local communities looking down upon their cultures and traditions and enslaving their men while usurping their resources as well as a class of warriors.¹⁹ The pattern of the establishment of Islamic tradition in Nigeria shows that trade and traders whose practise of their religion as well as their probity and straightforwardness enticed their local customers in addition to the efforts made by the itinerant scholars, preachers and teachers have been very much instrumental. It therefore got to and established in different parts of modern Nigeria at different times and via different means and individuals or groups. Yet, a common trend could be observed. Islam was usually introduced wherever it goes first as a religion of aliens, then of an influential or ruling elites and later accepted by the people such that it becomes popular.²⁰

In a recent survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life of the Pew Research Centre in Washington, 20% of the global Muslim population are said to be from Africa while only 18% are Arabs the rest 82% are said to be non-Arabs. The Nigerian Muslims, according to the same survey constitute 5% of the global Muslim population. Among the areas of West Africa into which Islam was early introduced is Kanem-Borno Empire certain sections of which now form part of the present day Nigeria. Complex communication systems on land and water connected several areas which later came to be known as Nigeria. Islam may also have, therefore come via the Niger-Benue waterway which was a major carrier of trade.²¹ Some sources in Arabic written by alien travellers and indigenous Muslim scholars are indicative of this fact.²² Other sources include those compiled by

¹⁹ A. R. I. Doi, p. 236.

²⁰ S. A. Balogun, p. 219-223.

²¹ S. A. Balogun, p. 234.

²² S. A. Balogun, p. 236.

European explorers, merchants and colonial administrators, which give some additional information especially about the growth and impacts of Islam in Nigeria.

(b) Islam in Kanem-Borno

A Muslim party led by 'Uqbah b. Nafi' is said to have arrived Kanem Borno in 666AD.²³ Similarly, Al-Bakri in 1067AD made reference to the presence of the descendants of some Ummayyads in Kanem as refugees.²⁴ However, it was not until the late eleventh century, according to Borno records that Humai, son of Selemma, is said to have reigned as the first Muslim ruler in Kanem-Borno. It is quite probable therefore, that Islamic presence and influence had long been established in Kanem-Borno before the reign of Mai Humai. A close examination of the Borno *Mahram* reveals that specific mention was made of Humai as the first Muslim ruler which suggests the presence of Islam in the area long before his reign. The same *Mahram* suggests or indicates one Muhammad ibn Mani from Fezzan as the one who introduced Islam into Kanem-Borno. Since, the same source shows that Ibn Mani lived in Kanem long before Humai under such rulers as Mai Bulu, Mai Arki and Mai Kadia Hawani, one can therefore infer that a gradual Islamization of the area had taken place long before Mai Humai, more so, all of his predecessors were said to have learnt certain portions of the Qur'an from Muhammad ibn Mani which indicates their acceptance or profession of Islam.²⁵

(c) Islam in Hausaland

Come next in the spread of Islam in Nigeria is the Hausaland which is generally associated with the coming of the Wangarawa, a group of Mande Dyula Muslim merchants and clerics from Mali. According to Kano Chronicle, the advent of the Wangarawa in Kano and the introduction of Islam is said to be during the reign of Sarkin Kano Yaji (1349-1385). The document states that the Muslim migrants preached to the Sarkin who accepted and built a mosque. He, according to the source, appointed several of the Muslims immigrants to offices associated with the practice of Islam. Such posts include the office of the Imam, the Muezzin, and an official responsible for slaughtering animals. He was equally reported to have ordered all his subjects to adopt Islam. One of his chiefs was however said to have defile his order and

²³ S. A. Balogun, p. 239.

²⁴ Thomas Hodgkin. *Nigerian Perspectives, An Historical Anthology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 67 & 68.

²⁵ S. A. Balogun, p. 211.

consecrate the mosque and later become blind as a result of the efficacy of the prayer offered by Muslims against his unwholesome act. If Islam had become so consolidated during the reign of Yaji, it is difficult to explain or comprehend the non-profession of the faith by his son and second successor-Sarkin Kano Kanajeji (1390-1410) who is described in the Kano Chronicle as a 'pagan'? This had forced many scholars/historians to pose several questions prominent among which is: "Is it possible that Hausaland was completely closed to Islamic influence until the arrival of Wangarawa even though Islam had been spreading in Kanem-Borno not later than the eleventh century?"²⁶

The problems are resolved by information from a 17th century Arabic document on the Wangarawa-'*Asl al-Wangariyin*'. Rumfa was identified in the document as the reigning Sarkin Kano when the Wangarawa led by 'Abd al-Rahman Zagaite arrived. This is dated to be 1061AH (1650/51AD). Based on this document and the information it contains, Balogun therefore suggests that there could not be a complete isolation of the Hausaland from Kanem-Borno such that the coming of the Wangarawa only helped in consolidating the presence of Islam and its influence on the people.²⁷ This further find credence in the assertion contained in *Asl al-Wangariyin* that the visit to Kano of Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim b. Muhammad al-Maghili, the celebrated North Muslim scholar and theologian, coincided with the arrival of the Wagarawa in the city. Al-Maghili was said to have visited Kano in about 1492 after having attacked the Jews of Touat leaving behind a gloomy situation in North Africa more so when another attack launched against the ruling *Bani Wattas* had proved abortive.²⁸ Islamic tradition despite its earlier introduction to Hausaland began to be well established, especially in Kano and Katsina in the 15th century. At this time, it was not only the Wangarawa scholars/clerics that have arrived, the Muslim Fulani were said to have equally come with books of law and theology. Some of them according to the source, stayed in Hausaland while others continued their onward journey. Ahmad b. 'Umar b. Muhammad Aqit of Timbuktu, the great-great-grandfather of the celebrated Ahmad Baba, was reported to have stayed and taught in Kano in 1487. It was the same 15th century (about 1492-4) that Muhammad al-Maghili visited Kano and Katsina, at the instance of Sarkin Kano, Muhammad Rumfa. It was the same time al-Maghili wrote the '*Obligations of Princes*', obviously to acquaint the Sarkin Kano with the Islamic Principles of Public Administration. Details of the policies and activities of Sarki Muhammad Rumfa show how Islam was spreading such that the kingdom by the end of 15th century has become considerably Islamised. The

²⁶ S. A. Balogun, p. 211.

²⁷ S. A. Balogun, p. 214.

²⁸ S. A. Balogun, p. 214.

sacred tree symbolising the traditional religion was cut down in obedience to his order, while Mosque was built on the site, and a wooden shrine similarly associated with traditional religion in Kano was converted into a market 'Kurmin Jakara'.²⁹

In Katsina, it was stated that Sarki Muhammad Korau, somewhat a contemporary of Rumfa, was the first Muslim ruler of the state. His successor, Ibrahim Sura (c. 1493-8) is also reported to have been so devout a Muslim ruler that his name was mentioned by Al-Suyuti in his letter to the rulers of the Sudan.³⁰ Also, the 3rd Sarkin Katsina, Ali (c. 1498-1524) was equally said to be such a devoted Muslim ruler and reformer that he was given the honorific epithet/title of Murabus (al-Murabit). It was during his reign that Aida Ahmad of Tazakht (c. 1529-30) settled in Katsina after performing a pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca) during which he studied there and in Cairo. He was appointed Qadi of Katsina. In both Kano and Katsina as already observed in Kanem-Borno, the royal patronage accorded Islam through rulers' generosity to Muslim scholars, teachers and preachers, facilitated the emergence of a strong *creme de la creme* of 'Ulama which made the two city-states become Islamic intellectual hub in *Bilad al-Sudan*. This class of scholars, consisting of both alien/immigrants and indigenous men, were ably assisted by other Muslim traders, whose combined efforts culminated into continued spread of Islam progressively into various parts of the areas. By the end of 18th century, Islamic tradition was said to be stronger in Kano, Katsina, and probably Gobir and Zauzau than in Kebbi, Yawuri and Yorubaland. According to a source, the 1st Sarkin Kebbi, Muhammad Kanta, and some of his chiefs (Sarakuna) accepted Islam. Kanta is believed to have reigned between 1516 & 1554CE. He is said to be a former military leader under Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad Ture of Songhai, who could have been exposed to Islamic traditions and got influenced.³¹

(d) *Islam in Nupe and Yorubaland*

Owing to certain reasons which had earlier been mentioned, Islam reached Yorubaland much later than Borno and Hausaland and even Nupeland that forms her immediate neighbour. It was only at the close of the sixteenth century or a little earlier than that, that Islam was said to have reached the Yoruba country. This is primarily informed as a result of the powerful Old Oyo Empire which tentacles extend far and wide, though it does not cover the whole of Yorubaland but its fron-

²⁹ S. A. Balogun, p. 215.

³⁰ S. A. Balogun, p. 215. Also see J. O. Hunwick (1971). "Songhay, Bornu and Hausaland in the Sixteenth Century." In Ade Ajayi, J.F. and Crowder, M. (eds.). *History of West Africa*. London: Longman Group, Vol. 1, p. 216.

³¹ S. A. Balogun, p. 216.

tiers extends beyond it. The rapid spread of Islam in Yoruba country is said to have been as a result of the efforts/urge of the Muslims scholars/preachers to convert a whole family or even community to Islam at one and the same time sometimes through their rulers. This also account for why mosques are nearer to palaces, the king square and markets across Yorubaland. This is truer of Balogun Kuku's case at Ijebu-Ode whose momentous conversion to Islam was instrumental for the adoption of Islam by a large section of the society.

The home-coming of the ransomed slaves who had already acquired certain skills such as masonry, carpentry, tailoring, baking and certain level of literacy and had become relatively rich was a great boost for the spread of Islam in Yorubaland much as it was a source of inspiration for the existing Muslims. So, from early 1820 onwards, they served as fountainhead of inspiration and diffusion of European ideas and Western education among their fellow Muslims.³² This is a feature or factor that exposed the Yoruba Muslims to western form of education earlier than their Hausa/Fulani brothers as schools were built by these returning slaves. The Hausa traders and scholars have equally played substantial role in spreading Islam among the Yorubas. The exile of Kosoko-the then dethroned Oba of Lagos-was instrumental in the spread of Islam in Epe and its environs in 1851. The roles played by Mallams as men of God-preachers, teachers, scholars, traders, scribes, advisers and medicine men to the rulers in particular and members of the public in general was said to have been instrumental much as the role played by Ilorin and Nupe in spreading Islam among the Yorubas is also commendable.³³

It is observed that by the middle of the seventeenth century, a Muslim community existed in old Oyo. It has been suggested that it was probably this Muslim community that sought guidance from Katsina on how to determine the precise time of sunset, may be in connection with Ramadan fast. Probably in response, Abu 'Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Masani (Dan Masani) wrote '*Shifa' al-ruba fi tahrif fuqaha' Yoruba*. If, in fact, the document was written to guide Muslim community in Yorubaland, it could be said therefore that it attests not only to the age of Islam in Yorubaland but also to the level of commitment given to the practice of the religion as early as the seventeenth century. Trade and traders, itinerant scholars, preachers, teachers, the power of their prayers, literacy, and the fame it conferred on those who have the skill have been quite helpful in the spread of Islam among the Yorubas.³⁴ So, as observed Gbadamosi:

³² T. G. O. Gbadamosi & Ade Ajayi J.F. (1980). 'Islam and Christianity in Nigeria', in Ikimi, Obaro, *The Groundwork of Nigerian History*, p. 348.

³³ T. G. O. Gbadamosi & J. F. Ade Ajayi, p. 348.

³⁴ T. G. O. Gbadamosi & J. F. Ade Ajayi, p. 219-223.

The Jihad of 1804, and the political disintegration of the Old Oyo Empire, considerably affected the Muslim community, and tended to prejudice Yoruba society against Islam. However, in spite of the generally inauspicious circumstances immediately created, the Muslim community succeeded in regrouping itself, and before the turn of the century it had grown very remarkably in size, status and strength. It even essayed to introduce Islamic law and establish an Islamic state de facto. Drawing upon traditional social values, and adjusting itself to the new forces of Westernism, the Yoruba Muslim community constituted one of the major dynamic forces shaping the nature and course of Yoruba life and history.³⁵

Before the period of 1841 and 1908, as he further observed, Islam had been established in certain parts of Yorubaland and had developed certain features.³⁶ The trials and tribulation to which Yoruba Muslims were subjected is captured by Clapperton in the following words:

.....the Yoruba confirmed kaffers [infidels], on the invasion of the Fellatahs...put all the Mohametans (sic)[Muslims] to death whether natives or in caravan trafficking; quite denying the plea that God had given to the faithful their land and houses, and their wives and children to be slaves.³⁷

According to Shaykh Adam Abd-Allah al-Ilory (1985), Islam was introduced into Africa by the Arabs and later by the African scholars and traders particularly the Barbers who strove with their utmost ability to spread the religion. He advanced several reasons for the fast spread of Islam across Africa particularly Nigeria.

He observes that Ramadan and activities in the month which include: *Tarawih*, *Sahur*, *Iftar*, *Tafsir* Sessions, *Zakatu al-Fitr*, lectures, *Id-al-Fitr* and *Haj*-the ceremony marking the departure and arrival of pilgrims, the honour and respect accorded to Alhajis and Alhajas, as well as other celebrations were instrumental in the quick and vast spread of Islam among the Yorubas.³⁸ He stretched further that the establishment in 1927 of the 1st Madrash in Lagos by Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria³⁹ was equally helpful. The coming in 1924 of the Ahamadiyyah⁴⁰ with their missionary activities was equally beneficial

³⁵ T. G. O. Gbadamosi & J. F. Ade Ajayi, p. 219-223.

³⁶ T. G. O. Gbadamosi & J. F. Ade Ajayi, p. 219-223.

³⁷ H. Clapperton. *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*, London: University of London Press, 1829, p. 204. Also see T. G. O. Gbadamosi. *The Growth of Islam among Yoruba, 1841-1908*. 1978, p. 11.

³⁸ Abdullahi Adam Al-Ilory. *Al-Islam al-Yawm wa Gadan fi Nijiria*. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 1985, p. 55.

³⁹ Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria was founded in 1923 courtesy of the ransomed returning slaves. It was the first Muslim organization in Nigeria.

⁴⁰ It should be noted that although, Ahmadiyyah came to Nigeria and helped to consolidate Islam in Yorubaland, they were however unable to win much

not only because of their Da'wah activities but also as a result of their ability to establish schools where instructions were and still given on both Islamic / Arabic and Western patterns. Ahmadiyyah Movement of Nigeria was founded in 1924 as indicated above and was led by the first Muslim lawyer in Nigeria.⁴¹ Several other Muslim organisations were formed around the Yoruba country much as in other parts of Nigeria, they include: Anwar-ul-Islam, Anwar-ul-Deen at Abeokuta, Ansur-ul-Islam at Ilorin. It was later after all these that Jam'at Nasirul-Islamiy was founded at Kaduna in the North. Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria was also founded in Lagos in 1954 in order to protect the interest of Muslim students in schools and colleges and beyond. It was the first Muslim organisation in Nigeria with national outlook and membership across the nation. The proliferation of organization although help to certain extent, it later as observed by Shaykh Adam leads to problems. This is outside the scope of the current work and it is significant enough to form the theme of our forthcoming treatise.

Ethnic and Religious Affinity in Nigeria

It has been argued that the colonial masters favoured and compensated the northerners with political power for their loyalty and co-operation as against the agitation for independence and self-determination from the south.

To reward the north for their cooperation and compliance, as opposed to the agitation for independence in the south, the British made sure that the heirs of the Sokoto caliphate controlled the Northern Region. And the Northern Region was considered to have the majority of the population, so that it could rule the Federation alone.⁴²

While the three geo-political zones in the north-North Central, North East and North West-are predominantly Muslims, the south-South West, South-South and South East-is mostly Christians. The South East of Nigeria is actually described as the most dominant Christian region and the homeland of Christianity in the country.⁴³ It is made up of Igbo, Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw and Ekoi. History has it that, it was only in the 18th and 19th centuries that Hausa traders and commercial

followers to their ideology. In fact, they lost almost all their members to orthopraxy in 1974 when they were declared as non-Muslims by the Muslim World League.

⁴¹A. A. Al-Ilory, p. 69-70.

⁴²A. R. I. Doi, p. 235.

⁴³E. Echendu. *Igbo Culture and the Prospects of Islam in Eastern Nigeria*. Retrieved from http://www.egodiuchendu.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54:igb on the 5th February, 2012.

activities came to Igboland. As of 1931, there were only about 71 Muslims among Igbo nationals. Only from 1937 did indigenous Igbo start to be embracing Islam.⁴⁴ The Nigerian-Biafran (Nigerian civil) war between 1967 and 1970 was according to General Ojukwu 'the struggle of the Christian (Igbo) against the Muslim expansionism'. His 1969 *declaration* is an eloquent testimony to this:

The Biafra struggle is, on another plane, a resistance to the Arab-Muslim expansionism which has menaced and ravaged the African continent for twelve centuries.....Our Biafran ancestors remained immune from the Islamic contagion. From the middle years of the last century Christianity was established in our land. In this way we came to become a predominantly Christian people. We came to stand out as a non-Muslim island in a raging Islamic sea...[since 1960] the Muslims hoped to infiltrate Biafra by peaceful means and quiet propaganda, but failed. The crises which agitated the so-called independent Nigeria from 1962 gave these aggressive proselytisers the chance to try converting us by force⁴⁵

1966 marks the beginning of hostility against Muslims after the assassination of General Aguyi Ironsi, a Christian, an Igbo man and a former Head of States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. At this time, there were only about 400 Muslims among the Igbos against over 14 million non-Muslim fellow tribesmen. It has to be noted that Major General Johnson Thomas Umannakwe Aguyi Ironsi (1924-66) got to power via a coup d'état which led to the assassination of the 1st and the only Prime Minister of Nigeria (1957-66), late Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1912-66) and the Premier of the North and Saudana of Sokoto, late Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello who were both Muslims from the North. The fact that the corpse of the Prime Minister could not be found until the sixth day was an insult to the Muslims⁴⁶ if not a national disgrace. It should be mentioned here that the Minister of Finance, late Chief Festus Okotie-Ebo-a Christian from the south-was equally assassinated in the coup plot. The failure of General Aguyi Ironsi to bring the culprits to book more so, as they were Christians by faith and Igbo by tribe/extraction except one of them, paved way for the insinuation, at least among the Hausas and their fellow Muslim brothers, that the coup and the change of regime that followed it was a conspiracy of Igbo Christians against the Hausa Muslims. The January 15, 1966 coup d'état was led by late Major Patrick Chukwuma Nzeogwu Kaduna (1937-67), an Igbo Catholic Christian.

⁴⁴ E. Echendu. (As above)

⁴⁵ General Odinegwu Ojukwu's '1969 Declaration'.

⁴⁶ It is a well known practice among Muslims that (*janaza*/Islamic burial rites) washing of, praying for and lowering the bier of a faithful to the grave should not be delayed.

This had led to mutual suspicion between the Hausa and Igbo if not between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. It has equally continued till today to fan the embers of discord not only between the Igbos in the south and the Hausas in the North but also between Muslims and Christians across the country. At the wake of this hostility, there was therefore demand that all Igbo should drop Muslim/Hausa names and religion, that is, Islam. It should be noted that Islam, to an average Igbo man is Hausa religion while *Masjid* (mosque) even till the present time is referred to as Hausa Church. Destruction of Mosques and anything that has to do with Islam and the Muslims followed which forced some of the Igbo Muslims to flee for the safety of their dear lives. They were accused of being saboteurs who had connived with their enemies. This was the like of what happened to Yoruba Muslims at the wake of the 1804 Jihad when it extends to their country. There were allegations of harassment of Muslims by police and other law enforcement agents which later degenerates into killings and counter killings over the maltreatment of Muslims. Those that stayed behind had to under-play all religious manifestations and destroying all artefacts and sought protection from Federal Government of Nigeria via the Nigerian soldiers. The situation had paved way for mutual suspicion between brothers and sisters such that even in the Nigerian/Biafran war, that is, the Nigerian civil war, they could not be drafted into the army to fight against their fellow Muslim brothers in the north. As if to pacify the Christians, particularly the aggrieved Igbo and their allied, General Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from the North, became the Head of State and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Today however, Egodi Uchendu is of the opinion that a new dawn has come for Islam in the Southeast particularly in Igboland. She advanced several reasons for the assertion prominent among which as she says are:

1. Genuine spiritual quest and conviction that Islam is the appropriate way to God;
2. Perceived divine influence through dream and revelations;
3. Dissatisfaction with former religious group;
4. Admiration for Muslims' modesty (simplicity) and munificence;
5. Inter-marriages;
6. Right to choose amidst alternatives which finds credence in the constitution of the land;
7. Similarities between some Christian sects and Islam;
8. Curiosity and result of habituation;
9. Political and economic marginalisation of Igbos since Nigerian civil war (1967-70);
10. Desire for integration within the established Muslim financial and political networks;
11. Muslim proselytization among Igbo whose other goal is to bring about political unity in the country;
12. The pall of financial and other inducements.

The question that needs to be asked in respect of the observation made by Uchendu is, 'how ready are Muslims to take the advantage of the opportunities?' According to her, the common dictum among such ardent Igbo Muslims is, 'I have the right to choose my religion, it is my faith. It belongs to me'. She gave reasons for why Igbos are generally averse to Islam and any attempt to Islamicize their land. Their position as she observes, are based on the following arguments: that Igboland should remain completely Christian, that it will mark the fulfilment of the 19th century Jihad strategy of Islamising non-Islamic communities if Ibos revert to Islam, anxiety of losing members and traditional values to another ethno-religious group, lingering bitterness from the role of the Hausas during the Nigerian civil war, fear of religious balkanisation that may endanger Igbo socio-political interests, the media stereotyping of Islam and the Muslims as well as the global association of Muslims and Islam with violence. All these require special attention of the Muslims in order to forge a mutual understanding with their Ibo compatriots and convert them into Islam.

Islam and other Religions in Nigeria

The 1st contact of Islam with Africa was in 615AD when the first set of the Muslim refugees sought asylum under the Christian King in Abyssinia-Negus. Even, Bilal, the 1st Muezzin of Islam was an Abyssinian by origin. 'Uqbah bin Nafi' is revered to these days as the founder of Muslim Africa. The oldest extant Arab historians' works about Africa are said to have been written in the 8th century.⁴⁷

According to Doi, 65% of Nigerian population are Muslims.⁴⁸ The total area of Nigeria is 923,768 square kilometres out which the Northern states form the largest. The Northern Region was estimated in 1966 to be 281,782sq miles and it is inhabited by overwhelming Muslim majority. The common affinities among the Northern people, though of different tribes, are religion of Islam and Hausa language. Islam in particular has given them a common outlook and sense of belonging.⁴⁹ Islam is of comparatively recent origin among Igbos. Nonetheless, there are large communities of Ibo Muslims in Afikpo, Ugwuezike, Orlu, Owerri, Onitsha and other towns and cities.⁵⁰ It is estimated that about 50% of Yoruba people are Muslims.⁵¹

Shaykh Adam al-Ilory observes that in spite of the secular nature of the Nigerian Constitution, it allows each citizen to practice his/her

⁴⁷ A. R. I. Doi, p. 16.

⁴⁸ A. R. I. Doi, p. 1.

⁴⁹ A. R. I. Doi, p. 1.

⁵⁰ A. R. I. Doi, p. 2.

⁵¹ A. R. I. Doi, p. 2.

religion of choice. However, as he says, the Colonial Masters had worked out the modality of given their religion special advantage over and above other ones. He observes further how weekend that used to be Thursday and Friday particularly among Hausa/Fulani and Yorubas was changed to Saturday and Sunday which enables the Christians to have ample time for their worship whereas only about two hours is given to Muslims for Jumu'ah service on Friday.⁵² According to the Shaykh, one Muhammad Amin Qudsi and others came from Pakistan sometimes in 1946 and had meeting with Muslims. The then Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Adeniran Adeyemi II-the father of the present Alaafin, Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III-who equally attended the meeting, was made the Chairman as a mark of honour and respect for his office. After the meeting, a communiqué was issued. As a follow up of the meeting and the outcome therefrom, a Muslim political party was formed in 1946.⁵³ This development did not go down well with Alaafin's Christian subjects who started grumbling silently and later ganged up against him without letting him know their plans and scheming. So, as he says, many allegations were levelled against him and he was eventually dethroned on account of this.

In the beginning, the Northern Nigeria, that is, the Sokoto Caliphate gave a stiff opposition to the little British forces under the commandership of Lugard. However, following the death of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio and most of his lieutenants, the Caliphate had lost substantial part of her vigour, zeal and vitality with the urge for material acquisition as the major bane of the leadership. By around 1885, a treaty signed by Sultan Umar with the National African Company (later Royal Niger Company) is a true reflection of such wailing of determination and a deviation from the ideals and standards on which the Caliphate was established.⁵⁴ Since slave trade was substituted after the invention of machine for the quest for raw materials which the growing industries in Europe needed so dearly and since such raw materials or resources are available in large proportion in Africa, it is therefore natural that the Europeans beam their search light towards Africa especially the West Africa-south of Sahara. In 1807 British subjects were forbidden from keeping slaves and slavery was finally abolished in Britain in 1833. In 1840, Society for Extinction of Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa was inaugurated with Prince Albert as her President. It should be noted that the means of civilizing Africans by their own estimation is by imparting Western culture into them and weaning them for Christ. Observes Doi:

⁵² A. A. Al-Ilory, pp. 72-73.

⁵³ A. A. Al-Ilory, p. 75.

⁵⁴ A. R. I. Doi, p. 71.

Although, Christianity came late, it came, as we have seen with the blessings of Imperial Power of Western Europe. Wherever, Christianity came, they were provided with all the facilities by the former colonial masters, from anti-malaria drugs to dangerous weapons, educational facilities to the material means to bribe the natives, health services to highest position in government...well-planned co-ordination and support for the Missionary.⁵⁵

Although in 1903, Lord Lugard promised that his rule will be just and fair and that his government will not interfere with Muslim religion.⁵⁶ Yet, this promise to the Christian Missionaries does not imply that Lugard would exclude evangelisation from his territory, so as they opined, it only means that, he would not foist Christianity on them. This promise, as observe Doi, led to lethargy and inaction among the 'Ulama and the Muslim rulers. Arabic and Islamic Studies or rather Islamic education lost credibility owing primarily to lack of funds, proper co-ordination, and standardized syllabus and so forth such that English Language, the language of administration and the new rulers, the Bible and the Christian Missionaries then gain ascendancy. As Doi says, with the coming of Christian Missionaries and Christianity there crept in gradually the new form of Western way of life and its vices-alcohol, dancing, gambling, free sexual intercourse/relationship, tight-fitting-sex-inducing dresses among others become the norms among young Africans.⁵⁷ Similar observation was made by Edward Blyden.⁵⁸ Sir Gilbert Carter was said to have considered Islam as a bulwark against the 'gin disease' that was introduced into Africa by the British over Lords.⁵⁹

The duo of Christianity and Islam has always been at keen contest to dominate the public space in Nigeria. This competitions have even in some instance threatened to tear the country apart as it has led to animosity between Muslims and Christians which had pitched the north against the south as could be observed in the foregoing paragraphs. While the Muslims in the south particularly the south west have learn to live with their fellow Christian neighbours in peace with certain level of mutual respect and tolerance, this could not be said of the north which has been turned to a hot bed of religious imbroglio. Many reasons could be advanced for this difference between the two ends. While Islam was about to be established as a state religion before the advent of the British and Christian missionaries in the south west

⁵⁵ A. R. I. Doi, p. 83.

⁵⁶ 1902, Annual Report of Northern Nigeria, p. 98.

⁵⁷ A. R. I. Doi, p. 79.

⁵⁸ E. W. Blyden. *Christianity, Islam and Negro Race*. Edinburgh: 1967, p. 68.

⁵⁹ See E. D. Morel. *Nigeria, its People and Problems*. London: University of London Press, 1912, p. 260.

it had been firmly established in the north. Besides, and owing to the reason advanced above, the Muslim in the south west have adjusted themselves to circumstances in which they found themselves trying to do their best to cope with the obtainable situation. Moreso, almost every family in Yorubaland has adherents from each of these religions.

The North South Differential

We have seen in the foregoing paragraphs the disparity in the time and means by which Islam was introduced to different parts of Nigeria as well as the differences in its growth and development in the north and south of the country. The age and numerical strength of Islam in these parts of the country is equally responsible for the differential as the challenges varies from one part to another. Although, Muslim in Nigeria are essentially Sunni who follow Maliki School of thought (jurisprudence), yet certain differences have not allow them to properly harness their resources and take full advantage at their disposal, a situation which has rendered their numerical strength useless. According to Shaykh Adam Abd-Allah al-Ilory, the Hausas in Nigeria believe that, more than every other group in country, they are the custodians of '*Aqidah*' and thus look down upon other Muslims as being inferior, dirt and or pseudo-Muslims.⁶⁰ It should be noted that the learned Shaykh is himself of Hausa origin such that his observation is not borne out vendetta or rather to spite his fellow Muslims. In fact, immediately after this statement, he quickly adds in a parenthesis that he is an Hausa man himself. He condemns this habit and asserts that it is unfortunate violation of Qur'anic injunction particularly as contained in the following verse:

Those who avoid great sins and shameful deeds, only (falling into) small faults—verily your Lord is ample in forgiveness. He knows you well when He brings you out of the earth, and when ye are hidden in your mothers' wombs. Therefore, justify [praise] not yourselves: He knows best who it is that guards against evil.⁶¹

He further states that this habit is quite appalling considering the fact that there are good and descent Muslims among other groups just as we have them among Hausa/Fulanis. After all, as he concludes, just as we may have bad Muslims and those that do not profess Islam at all among other ethnic nationalities, so do we find them among Hausa/Fulani although with insignificant percentage. The case of the

⁶⁰ A. A. Al-Ilory, p. 75.

⁶¹ Qur'an 53: 32. Translation is as rendered by Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali. *The Holy Qur'an-Text Translation and Commentary* (New Revised Edition). Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989, p. 1381.

Maguzawa among the Hausa was used to buttress his argument.⁶² Thus, the observation made by Kenny is apposite in this respect. He says:

While northern Islam has been firmly reformist and separatist with regard to anything non-Islamic, Yoruba Muslims have been more accommodating. The Yoruba people are first of all Yoruba, secondly Muslim or Christian and lastly Nigerian, so that in one family you can find both Muslims and Christians and some involvement in the traditional religion.⁶³

The situation in the mosques particularly in the south west whereby the rich men are dominating as a result of their contribution to maintenance of their mosques and propagation of Islam is equally addressed by Shaykh Adam. So, as he observes, they (the rich men) have a dominant voice in the appointment of Imam as well as grip over them upon their appointment owing to their contributions.⁶⁴ It is a common phenomenon among the Yoruba Muslims to give certain titles to those they consider worthy in their Ummah, those who have contributed in one way or the other to the upliftment of Islam and the welfare of the Muslims. Such title as observed by Shaykh Adam al-Ilory include: Abubakar- Baba Adini, Hamza-Balogun Adini, etc the result of which, as he says, was that they later become the ones controlling the scholars and dictating to them. This is further complicated by the inability of some Imam to manage, maintain and administer their mosques. So, they used to call for donations some of which are later diverted to personal use which eventually leads to erosion of the confidence reposed in them by their Jam'ah. However, it is difficult to blame them since they are in some instances full time Imam without remunerations.

According to Shaykh Adam, the struggle for the post of Imam always pitched a party against the other such that one party would then seek the support of members of congregation in order to be appointed.⁶⁵ He therefore asserts that whoever is going to be Imam must be a specialist who understands the rudiments of his duties and position.⁶⁶

He buttresses this by quoting the following verses of the Glorious Qur'an:

Nor should the believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to

⁶² A. A. Al-Ilory, pp. 100-101.

⁶³ Joseph Kenny. *The Spread of Islam in Nigeria: A Historical Survey*. p. 9.

⁶⁴ A. A. Al-Ilory, p. 49.

⁶⁵ A. A. Al-Ilory, pp. 113-114.

⁶⁶ A. A. Al-Ilory, p. 116.

studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them-that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil).⁶⁷

When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they divulge it. If they had only referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have tested it from them (direct). Were it not for the Grace and Mercy of Allah unto you, all but a few of you would have followed Satan.⁶⁸

Muslim women in the south west unlike their counterparts in the north attend mosque for five daily prayers and Jumah service. The reason for this according to Shaykh Adam is that, Lagos is a place whereby competition as well as controversies among scholars and even the general members of the society are well pronounced. So, in order to face the challenges of the Christian missionaries who used to tease Muslim women while going to Church on Sunday that there is no worship for them, a consensus was reached by a group of scholars that women should be allowed to observe their Jumah, the five daily prayers as well as 'Idayn in the mosque. This is premised on the idea that Allah/Islam does not differentiate between men and women on matters of religion/worship or spiritual elevation. This claimed or argument find, according to the Shaykh, support in the following verses of the Glorious Qur'an:

The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His Mercy: for Allah is exalted in power, Wise.⁶⁹

For Muslim men and women-for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise-for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.

It is not befitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option about their decision: if anyone disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Qur'an 9:122.

⁶⁸ Qur'an 4:83.

⁶⁹ Qur'an 9:71.

⁷⁰ Qur'an 33:35-36. Also see Qur'an 60:10 & 12.

The resolution (*fithra*) or consensus (*ijma'*) was reached in Lagos in 1947. The following were the participants in the deliberations: Alhaji Abubakar Otun, Alhaji Mustapha Ekemode and Ustaz Shuraqah Ayodeji. All of them were members and scholars of Ansur-Deen Society of Nigeria.⁷¹

Sometimes, ethnic or regional loyalty or rather interest overrides religious concerns. It thus means that rather than Muslims being united upon the basis of universal brotherhood taught by Islam, they were divided along the line of ethnicity or cultural affinity. One needs to mention and appreciate here, the magnanimity of the Nigerian Christians who conceded to two Muslims as presidential candidates (Alhaji Bashir Tofa, the Presidential flag bearer or candidate of National Republican Convention and Alhaji M. K. O. Abiola of Social Democratic Party) in the June 12, 1993 presidential election with even one of them having Muslim as his running mate. However, the election that was described and generally accepted as being the fairest and freest ever in the Nigerian political history was annulled not by a Christian but by a fellow Muslim from the north. Although, the annulment generated a lot of hues and cries as well as haggling and quarrelling, yet the late Alhaji (Chief) Mashood K.O. Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the election died mysteriously while still being incarcerated by his fellow Muslim.

Shaykh Uthman Dan Fodiyo (1754-1817) worked assiduously with zest, zeal and vigour to established Islam, the universal brotherhood taught by Islam and the institution of Caliphacy in which the political authority of the Northern Nigeria rests before it was sacked in 1904 by the British imperialists. Since Sokoto caliphate was able to establish Islamic State before it was sacked in 1904 by the British, it constitute one major difference between the north and the south where a clear cut Islamic state was never founded.⁷² The Sokoto Jihad had left an indelible mark by breaking off the yoke of local and or ethnic loyalties and putting in their stead, to use Doi's gloss, cosmopolitan loyalty that cut across the narrow confines of the affinity of kith and kin. This, as argued Doi, had accomplished the primary step towards the unification of Nigeria.⁷³ Sokoto remains up till the present moment the vocal point of Muslim unity in Nigeria as the Sultan of Sokoto is revered as the Spiritual head of the Muslim Ummah-Amir al-Muminun and the

⁷¹A. A. Al-Ilory, pp. 138-140.

⁷²It should be noted that certain part of Yorubaland had adopted Shari'ah and become Islamic states before the coming of Christianity and colonialists. Such places included Ibadan under Olubadan Abbas, Ede under Oba Habib Olagunju, Ikirun much as in order part of Yorubaland. However, they are city-states that did not cover the whole of Yorubaland.

⁷³A. R. I. Doi, p. 44.

President General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Nigeria. However, many Muslims have queried whether the institutions left by Dan Fodio are still playing their expected roles. According to Ibn Taimiya, the foremost responsibility of an established authority or government is to facilitate *'ibadah*.⁷⁴ Events in the north have left many things to be desired, from the recent Boko Haram crises, the 2011 post election crisis, to even those of the al-Majiri system of education which had made it difficult if not impossible for most young Muslims to realise their full potentials and contribute meaningfully to human civilization. Besides, many Muslims have decry the power of Sokoto State and by extension Nigerian government to enthrone and dethrone/deposed or to hire and fire the Sultan particularly if he has to retain the leadership of the Muslim Ummah in Nigeria. The case of formerly Sultan Ibrahim Dansuki who was relieved of his office was a great embarrassment to the Nigerian Muslims if not the global Muslim Ummah. Many people have observed that no government has ever attempts to sack the President or Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) why then, they asked, should any government sack Amir-ul-Muminun, the President General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Nigeria and Amir-ul-Hajj in the federation.

Summary and Conclusion

This study is basically focused at examining the differential between Islam in the south and the north of Nigeria with respect to time and means of its transmission to each of the two parts of the country in order to ascertain its impacts not only on the two parts, but also on the general body of Muslims as well as the federation of Nigeria as a whole. The impact of Islam on Africa is so great such that the History of Africa, especially north and west is history of Islam. No wonder why all the manuscripts on Africa history were written in Arabic. This equally explains why the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan, the Nigerian premier university, has a section for Arabic manuscripts collected across the continent. It also indicates why the journal of the History Department at the university is christened *Tarikh*, an Arabic word which literarily means history. While the north was privileged to have received Islam as early as the 7th century and benefitted immensely from the civilization it brought with it, the south remained untouched by Islam until around 15th/16th century. The north unlike the south is predominantly Muslims. Since there is a keen contest between Islam and Christianity for the public space in the country, it is natural that there would be a serious competition between

⁷⁴ Ibn Taimiya *Siyasa Shari'ah* translated by Laoust, H. *Le traite de droit public d'Ibn Taimiya*, Beirut: 1948, p. 20.

the south and the north for political cum economic powers. This competition some of the times, tends to be unwholesome such that it has retarded the development and progress of the nation. Both south and the north, nay Muslims and Christians need to realise that it is only in an atmosphere of peace that religion could be practised and practised well, hence the need to have mutual respect and tolerance in order to give peace a chance. After all, 'truth is bound to triumph when left alone in the market of ideas'. 'Has the time not come for man put an end to war before war puts an end to man?'

Recommendations

Based on the findings availed by this study, the following recommendations are made:

- That the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs has a lot of roles to play some of which could be achieved by establishment of departments to oversee certain issues which may include but not limited to the following:
 1. Dawah and Irshad;
 2. Education and research;
 3. Logistics and planning;
 4. Women and Children Affairs;
 5. Shari'ah/Fatwa committee;
 6. Economic and Development bureau;
 7. Media and publicity.
- That other Muslim organisations need to be repositioned in order to play their complementary roles very well;
- That the current efforts by the Sultan of Sokoto his Eminence, Alhaji (Dr) Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III towards unity among Muslims in particular and Nigerians in general should be intensified;
- That media awareness should be created about Islam as efforts to check media onslaught of stereotyping Islam and the Muslim which is taking its toll on the image of Islam and its adherents not only in Nigeria but generally across the globe should be made and;
- That Muslims in Nigeria should coalesce into one homologous Ummah of Islam in order to contribute meaningfully towards building a better Nigeria and make the country a better place for all to live in peace and harmony.

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