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Islam and Social Change in Africa: Approaches to and Perspectives of Social Transformation Processes in Africa

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Chapter Three

Islam and Social Change in Africa: Approaches to and Perspectives of Social Transformation Processes in Africa[1]

I am going to limit the scope of my reflection on the above topic to Nigeria, a country into which I was born and on which I can claim competence to speak. By religion I am a Catholic Christian, by profession I am a Catholic Priest, yet at birth I was born into the caliphate Islamic Headquarters of Sokoto State in a little Muslim City called Gusau in Northern Nigeria. Until my 12th year, I lived in this Muslim North of Nigeria, moving with my parents as they moved around on occupational grounds to Kano, Gombe, Nguru, Bauchi, Jos — all cities located in the Islamic "Hochburg" of Nigeria. Permit me, therefore, to share my reflections with you as one who is concerned about the Islamic presence in Nigeria and its consequences on the scene of society.

The Problem:

It is virtually impossible to discuss exhaustively within these few pages the theme of Islam in Africa and the problems it poses in recent times to various countries and various programmes of development. Islam is a world religion with history, culture, mission and authority behind it.

First of all, Africa is a vast continent of 53 independent States as we write. On the geographical surface alone, Africa is larger than the entire United States of America plus the whole of Western Europe and the sub-continent of India and Japan.

Secondly, the historical, cultural and political development of Islam in Africa has lasted for over 1300 years in some parts while it is not yet a century in other parts, so generalizations about Islam in Africa must be avoided.

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[1] Presented at the International Symposium on Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa, organized by Konrad Adanauer Foundation, Germany on 27th – 30th July, 1992 in Dakar, Senegal.

For example, a once nourishing Christianity in North Africa (Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco) gave way in the 7th Century to an expanding Islamic and Arabic Conquest to the extent that today over 90% of the entire North African Region is Islamised.

This is not the case in regions around South Africa where the populations are mostly Christian and have traditional religions which are gradually waning. In countries like Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa itself, etc., Islamic incursions have been minimal in contrast to North Africa.

The situation in East Africa is completely different. There is a sizeable number of both Muslims and Christians among other religions in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya. Ethiopia, Malawi. etc. Yet Islamic – Christian tension was not seen to be a decisive polarizing factor in their historical—political development, at least not until recently. Thus, the teacher (Mwalimu) the former President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere, himself a strong, believing and practicing Catholic, would voluntarily resign from power and chose as his successor President Mwinyi, a Muslim believer.

In West Africa, the story is partly tension-free in such countries as Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana and tension-packed in countries like Nigeria and perhaps Senegal.

Nigeria, A Case Study:

The most populous black nation in the world is Nigeria, with about 100 million people. Divided into so many (30) states Nigeria is a pluralistic society with over 400 ethnic tribes, languages and several religious groups. Besides a British Colonial history, Nigeria has had several economic, ethnic and party political problems including constant military governments to cope with. In recent years, however, religious tension is rising and has caused violence and bloodshed on many occasions between the Muslims on the one hand, and against the rest on the other.

No doubt it has been proven that where Islam is only a tiny minority, peaceful co-existence with Christians and others is possible. Troubles begin when both religions meet in a missionary situation and have sizeable numbers.

With 38% Muslims, 45% Christians, 17% traditional African religions (general statistics of the National Population Bureau and the CBCN of Nigeria), Nigeria was in 1986 smuggled into the Organization of Islamic Conference single-handedly and without public consultation, apologies or qualms by

President Ibrahim B. Babangida, himself a Muslim, who took over power in 1985 by a Military Coup. Of course, the majority of the country would not hear of this and war on religious lines was threatened. The quarrel is still going on.

The Nigerian Federal Government Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, decrees that a country like Nigeria with its multiplicity of religions cannot have one state religion: "The Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as the State religion. Nigeria is a secular State so says the Constitution.

In recent times, however, the impression is being created that Islam is the religion of the Government of Nigeria. Mosques are built in State Government Headquarters. Appointments and promotions not only in the Civil Service but also within the military provide the psychological impression that we are an Islamic State as these favour mainly Muslims. The army for example, it is said, does not observe any more the rule of seniority and religious bias is used for promotions.

Thus, today policy-making positions are reserved for Muslims. The following posts show the manipulated power structure in Nigeria. It might be an accident, but this accident represents the factual situation, as it was in the period 1989-1992:

Head of State	Muslim
Chief of Army Staff	Muslim
Chief of Defence	Muslim
Chief of Air Force	Muslim
State Security Service	Muslim
Military Intelligence	Muslim
Inspector General of Police	Muslim
National Intelligence Agency	Muslim
Governor of the Central Bank	Muslim
Chief of Immigration	Muslim
Internal Affairs Minister	Muslim
Director of Customs	Muslim

2. The rights to plots of land to build places of worship is denied to Christians in some states.

They right to religious education of Christian children is denied in States like Kano, Sokoto, Borno, etc. There is a preferred status and government support for Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca. The right to freedom of ownership of schools by religious and voluntary institutions is denied while Islamic schools are opened. In fact, Government took over the missionary schools and expelled expatriate missionaries in the 1970's. However Muslim institutions or missionaries were not affected directly.

The law does not seem to ensure protection for Christians in many Northern States of Nigeria. Reports have been submitted about this to Federal Government Panels and Tribunals of Judicial enquiry over the years. Several documents and publications refer to this situation.

Extreme statements of religious fanaticism have been made by Muslims. The Secretary General of the Jamatu Nasril Islam in Zaria has said: "*There shall be no peace in Nigeria until Sharia is fully established*" (p.46 'Kaduna Religious Riot '87 a catalogue of events'. Publ. by CAN - Christian Association of Nigeria).

There have been several religious crises in cities populated by Muslims: 1980, 1982, 1987, 1990, 1991 (Oct), 1992 (Apr), 154 churches burnt, lives lost, property worth endless billions of naira destroyed. In most of them such as Kano, Bauchi, Katsina, Kaduna, Kafanchan, Sokoto, Lafia Gongola, among others, there have been troubles spanning over 10 years. The Government did nothing more than appoint an administrative panel of enquiry into the religious disturbances, one of which was headed by Mrs. H. Donli, The Ag. of Kaduna State. Not much has happened since then, not even the compensation for those whose entire life earnings were destroyed.

There is tension now in Nigeria as there is actual war and/or tension in Iraq, Algeria and elsewhere in the world. At present there is a push towards the return to the origins of Islam and towards a purification of the law. Today, Islam has many prophets preaching fundamentalist themes. Now that hard core Islamic teachers preach a return to the Sharia, there are those who brand as infidel any fellow Muslim who seeks compromise. Listen to a Nigerian Shiite. Zakzaky in the weekend Concord of 20th April, 1991.

Question: Are you saying the Islamic religion as it is being practiced today in Nigeria is not right?

Zakzaky: Yes, that is what we are fighting against. People are not practicing the Islamic religion according to the Holy Quran. Our sect stands for calling people to practice Islam according to the Holy Quran and the injunctions of Prophet Mohammed. We want people to understand that the practice of Islam does not only involve praying five times daily, fasting and Zakat. Islam is not confined only to these things. We are Muslim brothers who try to practice the Islamic religion according to the injunctions of the Holy Quran, we try to look at society through the Islamic focus, yet people are calling us fanatics, extremists and so on. We don't know why.

Question: Why are you condemning other Muslims?

Zakzaky: We are calling on people to practice Islam fully. People are only practicing Islam in part. This is contrary to the injunctions of prophet Mohammed. Muslims today are far apart from the actual message of Holy Quran. In this kind of mentality, of course, there is no room for other laws, for other religions, or for civic leaders who are not Muslims. Muslims, according to this view, form an *Umma,* a Community, that comes before anything else and uniformity in everything including dress is essential.
Listen to Zakzaky again in the said interview:

Question: Why did you insist that you do not recognize Government?

Zakzaky: We do not recognize Government: The Holy Quran is our only constitution as Muslims. We have the injunctions of the holy prophet Mohammed which is the jurisprudence of the *Ulama*... I say it again that all my followers do not recognize the Government whether Federal State or Local.

Question: What exactly is the goal of your sect?

Zakzaky: It is simple. We want Nigeria to become an Islamic country.

Question: Do you think this is possible in view of the secular nature of this country?

Zakzaky: *Inshah Allah.* If you are alive you will see, Nigerians must worship Allah. Our own task is to rebel against the system and Allah will complete the rest... Our own duty is to call people to rebel and struggle to the last drop of our blood. Anybody who dies in the course of pursuing Allah's cause

has not lost anything. We as Muslims realize this and that is why we give ourselves to Allah. Whether we survive it or not, ours is to carry out the will of Allah.

A library of books would not do justice to the topic, showing the century—old love/hate relationship between Christians and Muslims which has its origins already in the right or wrong interpretation of the Holy Book, Koran. Islam stands for peace! But many of her preachers and adherents have vetoed peace, in fact, the Nigerian and Sudanese situations stand out clearly as points of factual reference.

The Crusades is a case in point, a war of almost 200 years in the Middle Ages. Today's internal war of Lebanon is another example, amidst a world of religious fanatical turmoil as in Iran, Pakistan, India, Sudan, Burundi, Chad, Egypt, Algeria, among others. *Time Magazine*, the widespread American weekly of June 15, 1992 devoted the lead article to Islam: "Who is afraid of Islam?" We read opposing statements in one chapter in the Koran attributed to Mohammed himself saying:

> "You will find out that the worst enemies of the believers are the Jews and the pagans, while the most cordial neighbours of the believers are the Christians. This is also because among them there are priests and monks and these are not proud."

How can we reconcile this statement with another saying?

> "Believers do not ally yourselves with Jews and Christians. They work together and those among you who will become their allies will become like them. Truly Allah does not guide unjust people."

"THE CHRISTIAN IS TERMED INFIDEL"

The imposition of the Muslim law in many countries has seriously affected the lives of Christian communities.

The fact remains that while Islam professes to aim at the conversion of the world, it does not concede such rights to any other religion. Do we call this intolerance?

On a visit to Rwanda, Colonel Gadhafi of Libya accused the Christian churches of being "false, infidel and irreligious. Africa must be Muslim", he declared. Christians are intruders in Africa and agents of colonialism. We

must wage a holy war so that Islam will spread in Africa" (Published in Sunday Punch January 26, 1986).

Islam World-wide:
Islam has been in turmoil in many countries of the world. There is a growing religious fundamentalism and political extremism within this world religion which tries to reshape the Muslim faith. The phenomenon is the same in most cases: spread the Islamic faith to non-believers, purify syncretism within Islam itself, use political legal (sharia) and economic tools including violence to achieve Islamic power on a world plane, identify Arabism with Islam on a cultural symbiosis, confront Christianity and modernism.

Today there are nearly 908 million Muslims more than 17% of the world's population versus 1.7 billion Christians. It is projected that by the year 2000 there will be 1,200 billion Muslims world-wide versus 2.1 billion Christians or 1.1 billion Catholics. (David Barrett in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research 1989).

The position of the Christian Churches:
During his third trip to Africa in August 1985, Pope John Paul II stopped in Morocco and met with King Hassan II who is considered by many Muslims to be a direct descendant of the prophet Mohammed. The two men embraced, publicly proclaiming their belief in the many similarities between these two great religions. Before 80,000 Muslim youths gathered in a football field in Casablanca, the Pope said:

"Christians and Muslims, in general we have badly misunderstood each other, and sometimes in the past, we have opposed each other in polemics and in wars. I believe that today God invites us to change our old ways. We must respect each other, and we must encourage each other in good works on the path of God." (Pope John Paul II: 'Address to Young Muslims' in: The Pope Teaches, CTS London, 1985/89, p. 270).

The position of Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) Bishops on Christian – Muslim dialogue in Africa:

WE ACCEPT
"We respect Muslims and their religion. We appreciate the good aspects of Islam. We admire the prayerfulness of Muslims. We are edited by their ascetic fasting. We are inspired by their almsgiving and pilgrimage to Mecca. We want to be friends with Muslims. We Christians should have no enemies,

so the Lord commanded us (Matt.5:43)" (In Christianity and Islam in Dialogue communique. AECAWA meeting, 4th Plenary Assembly 20—27; 10.86).

WE REJECT

"However, in faithfulness to our own traditions we must reject many tendencies in Islam: the treatment of non – Muslims as second – rate citizens, the identification of religion with culture and politics, the classification of non – Muslims as infidels, the discriminatory nature of Islamic laws, the heavy penalties meted out to Christian converts from Islam or Muslim women who marry Christians. We cannot accept any situation where our rights as citizens of our nations are denied us because we are not Muslims. We believe in the unity and solidarity of mankind but this does not make us forget our duty to preach the gospel, welcome or unwelcome, in obedience to the Lord's own injunction (Matt.28:19-20)" 1.8 op. cit.

"In our African tradition a cherished value is that of religious tolerance. The gospel and the Koran have spread in our midst due to this openness and tolerance. God made us free. Our freedom, however, obliges us to accept the Good News when we hear it. We can and should invite others to hear the Good News but we may not oblige them to accept it." (WAKO).

Islam and Social Change:

The debate facing Islam today is to ascertain how a law written 1400 years ago can be understood and applied in a complex, modern and ever-changing society. In other words, how can the prescriptions written for desert nomads, rule the life of people who profess Islam in America, Russia, Nigeria, oil-rich Kuwait, etc.? Can there be 00 - existence and adoption?

How can one translate the disparity between Muslim men and women which decrees that only adult males enjoy full religious and social rights? How can a multi – religious and multi – ethnic society inhabited both by Muslims, Christians, non-believers, traditional worshippers, atheists, etc. manage to live in religious harmony where Muslims believe the law that insists on their living only under an Islamic State? These questions among others summarize the struggle of Islam in this century in Africa. There are many answers to the problem. Whereas some new Muslim inhabited nations accept constitutions that would respect the demand of the Koran for Muslim citizens on the one hand and of the modern age on the other, others insist on a more radical idea which sees Islam as a total political-religious entity. In fact, the policy states:

"Open an ever-growing number of centres so as to offer an alternative to the false promises handed out by Christian missionaries aiming especially at the children who are often seduced by Christian missionaries with gifts." (1990. Jan. New People No.4, p. 16).
Another policy statement reads:

"Official and popular organizations should be encouraged to subsidize Muslim associations in Africa, helping them to buy such things as vehicles and duplicating and printing machinery..." (New People, Jan-Feb. 1990, p.16, Pub. in Kenya [Dossiers Islam-Christianity in Africa]).

Sharia:
According to Muslims, the Islamic Law (Sharia) guarantees their religious rights and promotes their welfare as well as creating law and order in an Islamic ambient. This means that pluralistic societies must bend to the introduction of Sharia laws into the nation. A clash/conflict ensues and the constitution is undermined. This is the situation right now in Sudan, Nigeria (still boiling) etc. Sharia law is being gradually introduced and forced through, to the extent that non-Muslims are tried by it.

Approaches to Social Transformation process in Africa: The Tripod stand
Upon an original traditional African set-up and world-view there has developed over the past centuries a tripod spectrum of Islam. Christianity and nationalism. These three major 'belief systems' with their related 'new identities' have spread from small elites' literate in Arabic or European languages, to the rural masses of Nigeria as well as other sub—Saharan African countries at an accelerated rate during this century. These three inputs have not only altered traditional world views in rural as well as urban areas, but have interacted extensively among themselves in the process. The complexity of this interaction and its relationship with underlying socio-economic Changes, urbanization and industrialization are sufficiently complex to defy generalization. In place of analysis and understanding, too often, the term modernization with many inappropriate positivistic intrusions has been used. (Linden, L. and Clarke, B. 'Islam in Modern Nigeria':
Kaiser—Grunewald 1986. p. 7).

In analysing the three elements competing for the African soul in today's Africa, Clarke and Linden have this to say:

"Christians note the triumphal progress of Islam: Muslims oppose the growth of Christian, Western ways of life and states. Secular nationalist sees in Islam and Christianity the seeds of a nation divided. But it is clear that Islam has used Christian Institutions as a model in recent approaches to education and evangelization. And despite their claims to universalistic mission, both Christianity and Islam have been obliged to come to terms with the new nation-state in Africa." (op. cit. p.7).

To a great extent the nature of Nigerian nationalism has been adequately studied since it has proven a major problem in nation building. Similarly, the history of Nigerian Christianity is amply attested to in a number of scholarly monographs. The same is not true of Islam in Nigeria, least of all Islam since Nigerian Independence (Linden and Clark, p. 8).

There is unfortunately a focus on Islam in the Middle East with West Africa strangely neglected as something of a side-show in Islamic history. This of course is remarkably short-sighted.

In Nigeria, for example, Islam has provided a language of political discourse in many areas, a language in which issues of social justice have been articulated. Much fundamental discussion about the future of Nigerian society has been a religious discourse drawing on Islamic thought patterns, even before other languages took it up.

The major civil upheavals, insurrections and riots in the North of Nigeria in the last ten years have drawn sustenance from Islam. Islam has come to occupy a central part in Nigerian belief and thought; unfortunately, Islam has yet to learn to co-exist with others in a pluralistic society.

Similarly, the one major national debate which draws the attention of many educated Nigerians about the federal legal system was sponsored by Muslims. The major popular and elite demands in the last years have to a large extent been articulated in the language and belief-system of Islam. Islam is willing to debate what kind of Nigeria will emerge in the 1990s. That these debates have crisis-crossed political party boundaries shows that even in the future, deplorable as it may seem, any future discourse of class, law, political sharing of power among others, is likely to occur in the guise of religious ideology and be expressed organizationally in Christian and Islamic groups. Once politics calls upon religious factionalism, party membership becomes subordinate.

Here, the Nigerian Muslim power broker does not see any compromise with nationalists of the secular of Christian schools, as Islam occupies an important and growing part of their spectrum of beliefs. It is important at this stage to state that Islam is used here as an abstract concept. Muslim on the other hand is the "bearer" of Islamic world view while the term "Islamisation" is the process and the external expression of the Islamic practicing Muslim.

Perspectives of the Social Transformation Process in Africa: The Demographic Challenge

Economic realities are controlling the size of families in Africa today. Whereas pre-colonial African families were large in size, there is a noticeable departure from this practice in recent times.

In Islam, polygamy is allowed, a difference from Christian religions. Africans generally have a love for children and Muslim polygamous families definitely are large sized. This does not mean that the quality of education or life is higher than in small families. With the present trend in 'economic belt-tightening', some Muslims might have to rethink their policy of polygamy including a forced reduction of the size of their families.

In fact, the whole of Africa is distinguished by an extraordinary demographic growth. In 1992, the United Nations population projection for Africa was 600 million people. By the year 2010, eighteen years from hence, Africa's population is projected to about 1.2 billion people. Africa is the only world region which has not decreased its growth speed. If this continues, the continent might face consequences which are disastrous from a multi-dimensional perspective:

The desert living nomads who are mainly Muslims might be forced by unfavourable living conditions to rethink their population growth and reduce the size of their families. In fact, they are being forced to do so now. What do you do when you cannot feed all? You reduce, or you stay on and face the severe consequences including death! The reality is there today for all to see and world opinion is aware of it.

The polygamous practice of one man many wives in Islamic societies in Nigeria is already being affected and will continue to be affected, thus a trend to monogamy? Seen from the ecological point of View, characterized by a progressive degradation of the soil, desert advancement decline in food production, migrations might occur. (Examples abound of Sahel inhabitants en route to greener pastures e.g. Chad, Niger, Mali, Northern Cameroun,

Northern Nigeria Cow herds etc.) moving to the Southern parts. Violent clashes cannot be eliminated. My submission is that this situation will emerge as a great problem in the near future. How can we get population growth, environment and development in harmony in an Islamic changing society?

The Political Climate:

The wind of change *(perestroika)* blowing through Eastern Europe and in the defunct Soviet Bloc is not an exercise in isolation. The entire world is growing into a global political village. Events move fast in such continuity and discontinuity that the Islamic world cannot be left out and Africa is in the middle of the turmoil.

Islamic societies which by virtue of religion in many parts of Africa accepted 'theocracy', 'sharia' and a world order according to Islam, and its laws may have to face modernizing influences including multi-party democracy, pluralistic societal organization, international legal systems, and adaptation to a 'new world order'.

In the past, most African States gave themselves a structure which today 30 years after independence, becomes a problem especially for the younger generations. Many Muslim-populated states in Africa accepted or had imposed upon them the one party state model. Comparable to Leninism and Stalinism, these models are today in crisis and severely challenged by the younger generation who are looking for more freedom and democracy.

Earlier accepted patterns of political behaviour are under critical challenge. Already products of Nigeria's Northern University at Zaria, the Ahmadu Bello University, have emerged as Islamic radicals in a positive sense, challenging the *status quo* with the support of such teachers like Professor Bala Usman and others who are demanding freedom and democracy on international Western style models. Such a democratisation process turns already accepted systems upside down: The role of the Emirs is reduced to merely representative and purely religious functions. Their political, economic hegemony is curtailed. The masses are involved in decisions that concern their lives by means of a political sharing process be it in a Federal system or in a parliamentary system or in whatever other forms.

Established traditional teachings and powers are being threatened and questioned, e.g. Madaki versus Emir of Muri. People start taking their own destiny into their hands.

Freedom brings with it liberal tendencies including the ability to free oneself from religious bigotry. Anti-religious sceptics and outright atheists are therefore going to emerge and increase as a new group even in an Islamic dominated society if they are not already existing.

The Gap Between the Rich and the Poor

Although the founder of Islam wished for an egalitarian society where class and status were equally shared, there is a general tendency in many Islamic societies, though not only limited to Islamic societies, of a marginalization based on an antinomy of social inequalities.

To the untutored, Islam appears to favour by a *Fiat* of God's will the few who are scandalously wealthy, with a consolation prize of Heaven for the majority who are degradingly poor. This situation is gradually gaining the attention of researchers. Let me state here what I personally feel: "Wealth and poverty are man-made! They are not God-determined."

For a practical evaluation, many Islamic states of Nigeria contain the largest numbers of marginalized people. Whether it is in Kano, in Sokoto, in Homo, in Bauchi etc. the beehive of beggars, paupers, delinquents and dependents leaves much to be desired. They have a scanty rich few and a strikingly mammoth crowd of paupers.

Compared to Christian populated areas like Enugu, Owerri, Onitsha, Lagos, Benin, Calabar where begging is culturally and religiously abhorred, a sociologist could correctly describe an Islamic populated city in Nigeria as outwardly democratic but containing poverty and beggary as a necessary part of their faith. On the other hand, a Christian/traditional city would be self-helping and self-reliant, hard working and earning with a wealthier situation overall. Of course this analysis could be contested as it is not an absolute. Nonetheless, the casual social scientist and observer discovers this anomaly in the briefest unbiased study.

A one-day drive from Port Harcourt in the Christian-traditional Africa South to Kano in the Northern Islamic trading centre of old reveals a stark-clear difference. Why is this so? Does Islam encourage poverty? Why are Islamic cities predominantly populated by many poor people? Why is begging the order of the day in Islamic centres as against Christian centres in the same neighbourhood belonging to one country? There is a sharp contrast between Bauchi City and Jos City, between Kano and Kaduna. And when you find a few beggars on the streets of Enugu, they have often Islamic background!

Why? The Islamic societies in Nigeria tend to become unequal and unjust, and the trend towards marginalization and exclusion is well underway within such societies. There is an unwritten thesis that Islam and poverty are near identical! I do not agree with this thesis however even though I am alone in my view.

In public and in the religious places of worship, one hears the slogan of national unity, equality and such 'sweet nonsense' that is deceptive as it is not practiced when the real social situation of the populace is considered.
These newly created inequalities no matter for whatever reason in Islamic Africa make it evident that 'under-development' is not a uniform phenomenon, but it hits with special cruelty certain social categories. In Africa, rich people live next to others who are in total misery.
The social change I observe today is that the normally passive Muslim by virtue of Western education and exposure is beginning to question the *status quo.* Things cannot continue this way any longer. Either we have a solution or we shed off the religion that encourages such massive poverty, if it really does.

The belief in Allah and in destiny which such people took for granted as their lot with the hope of repayment in heaven is giving way for the fight for more justice today in Islamic societies. Champions of such social justice include people like Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola of Western Nigeria, himself a Muslim but with his wealth he is helped many out of poverty and empowering them to fight and change their seemingly accepted destiny.

The consequence is: if we want to face the challenges of the day we have to work for the betterment of these powerless 'have-nots' who are excluded from any possibility for betterment and development. These masses will prove to be a great problem for the state and for society. No wonder then that within the last five years, over 25 riots have taken place in these Muslim regions in the guise of religion. After all, the poor have nothing else to lose.

The Religious Factor of Intolerance

As has been said elsewhere in this lecture Africans are notoriously religious people, a religiosity which permeates every facet of life, including eating sleeping, celebration, rituals; from birth till death.
At the present time, Islamic as well as Christian Africa is experiencing a 'religious supermarket'. There are so many schools of thought, all giving ready-made answers to the problems of human existence that one is confused at their proliferation. There is even an invasion of movements of

mysticism. From Asia, Europe and America a new wave of teaching is wading through, challenging established teachings, calling for revolution liberating the minds of people or out rightly questioning the *'raison d'etre'* of all established religions. Behind these mysticisms there is not only the religious but also the social and political elements.

The consequence is that these movements favour fanaticism, intolerance and ignore an intellectual critical approach. They impose a mentality which is hostile to the requirements of true development which must be also intellectual and cultural. Because of the potential power of religion as a tool for social mobilization, there is a remote possibility that this religious boom could, if well controlled by tolerance, lead to a total re-definition of the spiritual and religious heritage of the continent. At the moment, however, politics has hijacked religion in some cases with trouble in Islamic societies.

The Youth

It is on record that Africa's youth on the range of below 15 years of age represent about 80% of the continent's population. This is a figure with a drastic consequence for youngsters. The problems of the continent fall on them squarely and it is their future which is at stake. Earlier on, the Islamic structures in the North of Nigeria disallowed British or Colonial or Missionary incursion into their domain. Thus, there is no education and no mixture on a social or religious framework. Today, the youth of the North including the government have discovered that time was held back and the future of youth in a modern state is at stake.

As young people experience the decline in jobs, the deterioration in and lack of basic education, they are at the same time growing restive. They no longer accept passively a situation which condemns them, like their fathers in the past, to manipulated slavery. The new generation is ready to question any form of totalitarian power. Demonstrations and mass rallies calling for radical changes have been held in the past and are constant features of our social-political scene.

Through these re-indications, young Muslims of today are trying to take charge of the socio-political transformations which their fathers denied them for religious reasons. Sometimes, the drastic expression of the frustration is unpredictable and irrational, nation would be held on the brink of social upheaval for such trifles as citing a market in the town or killing pigs and such trifling distractions due to a roadside preacher of the other faith as in

Kafanchan in 1987. But what do you expect an idle youth to do? Of course, cause trouble!

The young people are wooed by all the movements we have mentioned above. They are threatened from all sides by modern possibilities. Their restlessness does not only stem from the fact that they no longer know where they can look for what is right and good, but from the fact that they have lost their roots. Prostitution is on the increase in Islamic societies, alcoholism is there, sex crime has arrived and the general malaise of unbridled western youth had crept in gradually among Islamic youth in Nigeria. Western music, mode of dressing, recreational attractions, etc. have taken their toll here. Divided between two worlds, many of our youth today including normally conservative Islamic youth stand the risk of being ensnared by the manipulation of those mystical movements from abroad (India, Asia, America, Europe) which try to neutralize all the energy which they could invest in building their own future.

There are of course on the other side some positive developments; attendance in schools today is normal. Girls go out now in public, attend schools and universities, live the modern life styles influenced by the West including its liberties and are in search of their own identity, Muslim married women go out to vote today. It would have been unthinkable ten years ago. The MAMSER brought social changes into Islam and its world view. This is a potential social change in Africa's Nigeria.

Conclusion:

This paper has not dealt with the topic assigned properly because of the time limit for the lecture and the large amount of material which must necessarily be condensed. The few points raised however show that Islam has a great potential to contribute positively to the development of society in Africa. Logically seen, this positive contribution can only obtain in a situation of peace. Peace as we know is not possible without justice. And true peace can only be achieved upon the true foundation of justice. Development which is the fruit of peace makes the building of society possible.

We might, therefore, conclude that Islam as a powerful religion in Nigeria and Africa needs to undergo, in the spirit of the Koran and of religious purification, a reformation, experience and development which elements will guarantee stability for a united and dynamic nation. I wish Nigerian Muslims this Koranic peace!