CHAPTER TWO

ONE NATION, MULTIPLE FAITHS, AND CHALLENGES: IN SEARCH OF MUTUALITY

2.0 Background Issues

“To keep Nigeria One is a task that must be done!”¹ This was a defense for Nigeria’s action in the dark and turbulent period of the Nigerian Civil War. The Federal government of Nigeria (officially The Federal Republic of Nigeria) justified the Nigeria-Biafran Civil war as a necessity to enhance mutuality and coexistence, albeit by warfare. The task of fostering mutuality and peaceful coexistence did not end with the civil war. It remains an urgent task that needs attention in Nigeria today. Since this study aims at proposing a solution to the Nigerian crises situations, it is of paramount importance to chart the backgrounds to the tension and disruption of peace and mutuality in Nigeria. Only then can there be a necessity for a research that proffers a solution to these situations. This is the focus of this chapter. Nigeria, the acclaimed most populous black nation in the world is strategically located in West Africa. As a nation Nigeria has an estimated population of about 180,000,000 people.² Nigeria is significant in terms of its population, economic values, military strength, and its political role in Africa. In fact, Nigeria has been described as an ‘African megastate.’³

Nigeria shares a common boundary with Benin Republic in the West, Niger Republic in the north, Chad in the north-east, Cameroon in the east, and the Atlantic Ocean in the south. The size of the nation is estimated as two and a half times larger than the state of California and three times the size of the United Kingdom. Nigeria operates as a presidential

¹ This was a Radio Jingo that was constantly advertised during the period of Nigerian Civil War, July 10 1967 to April 22, 1970.
² Estimating Nigerian population is largely a matter of conjecture. Census figures have been falsified and debated for political and religious control since independence. The most recent census was held in 2006 resulting in a figure of 140 million people as against the 88.9 million figure of 1991. However, the current population is estimated between 178 and 180 million people. See World Population Review: Nigeria Population 2015 available at http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nigeria-population/. Accessed on May 28, 2015.
Having existed earlier as a separate entity, Nigeria was officially recognized as one united entity in 1914 with the amalgamation of the Southern colony, the crown colony of Lagos and Northern Protectorate. From that time, Nigeria existed as a single united entity under a national leadership and government. Nigeria obtained independence from the British government in 1960 and became a republican State in 1963. It operated as a parliamentary system of government in its first three years before changing to the Presidential system of government.

Nigeria is a vast nation of great diversity on ethnic, cultural, and religious levels. As a multicultural nation, it has more than three hundred and fifty sub-ethnic groups with three major ethnic peoples; the Yorubas in southwest, the Igbos live in the southeast, and the Hausa-Fulani live in the north. There is a long history of inter-ethnic relations among them on the social, economic, and religious grounds.

The nation is also endowed with natural resources such as tin ore, natural gas, zinc and petroleum. However, this has not been translated in practical terms to better the lot of the citizenry. Most of the citizens live below the poverty level, suffering in the midst of abundance.

Acknowledging this summary outline of the nation of Nigeria, this chapter will examine the religious landscape of Nigeria and analyze the religious interaction that takes place in Nigeria. This is necessary because religion is a synthetic cord for social fabric and has had visible effects in the Nigerian crises situations. This analysis will allow me to discover how religion and other factors have influenced an atmosphere of peace and to focus on various responses from both Christians and Muslims. Finally, the chapter will present

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4 The pre-historic existence of different parts of Nigeria (from South to North) is dated back to around 5th and 6th centuries. Some well-established kingdoms were identified as at then to include, Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, Edo and Igbo. By 1885 the British government had entered West Africa and made a gradual effort to establish the British colony in most of the West African countries so that in the year 1901 modern Nigeria was recognized as a British colony and part of the British Empire. Earlier than the 1914 amalgamation, the southern and northern parts of the country existed separately in leadership and administration. The name “Nigeria” was coined by Sir Lord Lugard the then Governor General to reflect the country as a united entity.

5 These resources were considered complementary for the nation’s economy until the discovery of the petroleum resources in the late 1970s when Nigeria entered the era of an oil boom; at that time other natural resources were abandoned and petroleum became the mainstay of the economy. As of 2007, the claim of 38.2 billion barrels of oil reserve makes Nigeria tenth largest in oil reserves in the world and number fourth in the list of the oil producing countries in the world.
some episodes of religiously motivated crises in four states of northern Nigeria as a background to the need for two Christological paradigms that will be developed in Chapter Five.

2.1 Nigerian Religious Landscape

Religion is characterized by plurality in Nigeria. There are three main religions: Christianity, Islam, and Traditional religions in different parts of the country. These religions are scattered along ethnic distribution in different regions of the nation. The west is known to be predominantly Christian, who are spread between different church denominations. There is also a considerable population of Muslims and traditional religionists in the west. The eastern Nigeria is largely populated by Christians, mostly Catholics. It has the smallest number of Muslims. The largest number of Muslims are located in the north. The minority ethnic tribes have an affiliation to Christianity and traditional religions. The reasons for these unequal religious distributions include historical events, cultural cum ethnic acceptance, methods of propagation and political influence. These elements will be discussed below in a brief discussion on three Nigerian religions, African Traditional Religions (ATR), Islam and Christianity.

2.1.1 African Traditional Religions (ATRs)

Long before the advent of the Nigerian missionary religions, Islam and Christianity, different brands of traditional religions existed in the North and South. Therefore, it is common to speak of the Yoruba religion(s), the Igbo religion and the Hausa religion. There are difficulties associated with the traditional religions in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. There is the problem of terminology and the appropriateness of identifying it as ‘African traditional religion’ knowing well that a section of Africa, Morocco, for instance, has Islam as its traditional religion. In view of this, terms such as “primal religions”, “preliterate religions” or

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6 Religion as used here involves the belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, supernatural or spiritual world and activities, and certain practices which are performed in view of such profession.

7 This is by no means a denial of some new religious movements in Nigeria such as the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), Grail Movement, the Eckankar and the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, etc. But I have chosen to limit myself to three major religions of which two are major and active players in the public space.

8 It is preferable to refer to ‘religions’ rather than ‘religion’ among Africans. This is because of the existing diversities in beliefs and practices among the religious practitioners.
“indigenous religions” have been suggested as possible alternatives.\(^9\) Again, there is the further problem associated with the lack of organized written records. Diversity of emphasis in the traditions of these religions poses more problems. According to Elizabeth Isichei, “For earlier periods, we must rely either on highly speculative reconstructions or on glimpses in travelers accounts, oral traditions or art, or sometimes in patterns of linguistic change.”\(^10\) In western Nigeria, for instance, Yoruba religious traditions have more than two hundred divinities in their pantheon that are considered associates of the Supreme Being. Each tradition focuses on one aspect of the divinity or deified heroes. In the eastern and northern Nigeria, the same trend is observable.

In the north, the traditional religions are not prominent as they are in the west and east. This may be as a result of a long history of Islamic invasion in their cultural and religious space through the jihad. But a study like that of Dean Gilliland has sufficiently informed us that despite the age long Islamic influence, it is equally valid to conceive the notion of reminiscences of traditional religions in different parts of northern Nigeria.\(^11\) The nature of African religious phenomena, although with some common themes, makes it unrealistic to talk about normative standards as in the religions of the Book. However, there are two major commonalities to all these religions. There is the belief in the Supreme Being and the supernatural world. The Supreme Being is differently addressed as the Olodumare in the west, Chineke in the east, and Ubangiji in the north.

In the traditional religious understanding, the Supreme Being has diverse deputies through whom He governs different facets of human communities. The traditional worship systems are organized around the many religious cosmogonies and belief systems of the Nigerian people. The other commonality is that the traditional religious systems have close affinity with culture and traditions. In most parts of Nigeria, it is easy to identify religionists by their traditional dress and costumes. When looked at from this perspective, traditional religious systems become ways of life. As ways of life, they spiritualizes every aspect of life with no demarcation between the religious life and social life. It draws insights from

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\(^11\) Dean S. Gilliland focuses his study on the intricate patterns of association, contact, interaction, integration and changes in religious structure as a result of Islamic presence on traditional religions in twenty northern tribes of Nigeria. He covers how these religious traditions responded to the influence of Islam. See Dean S. Gilliland, *African Religion Meets Islam: Religious Change in Northern Nigeria* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1986).
proverbs, songs, names, drums, dance, aphorisms, divination, and so on which are preserved through oral transmission. Traditional religions normally seek no converts, unlike Islam and Christianity. In most cases, the adherents are born into it. This last characteristic may be recognized as the reason it has remained less militant in the Nigerian religious space.

The process of modernization and social change, the influx of other religions and spiritualities have further influenced change and adaptation in indigenous religions. Some factions of these religions have equally sought new ways of adapting themselves to the constant social metamorphosis in the religious terrain. The social relevance of traditional religions is not readily found in large population of followership like Christianity or Islam. Rather, it is located in the certain belief systems in supernatural worlds, unseeing spiritual forces which inhabit the universe, the duality of the existence of good and evil. Some of the aspects of these beliefs are now appropriated in Christianity and even Islam for various purposes.¹²

2.1.2 Islam

Islam's entrance into Nigeria is dated back to c. 11th century with its first appearance in Kanem Borno, present day north-eastern Nigeria. History has it that the penetration was made possible through the contacts with the Muslim merchants from the former Songhai Empire and Mali. From there, Islam spread to the modern city of Kano.¹³ The spread of Islam at the beginning was not without many crises. It later spread to Maiduguri, Zaria, and other parts of the North through Trans-Saharan trade routes by the Fulanis. Initially, Islam was established as a court religion before forcefully advancing to the status of a ‘state religion’ without much separation between the secular world and religion. The spread of Islam was peaceful at first until the second half of the 19th century.¹⁴

The notion of conquest sets in and from that time many of the established Hausa kingdoms were forcefully taken at the edge of the sword. Notably, the Jihad of 1804 to 1808, a revivishist movement led by Uthman dan Fodio, was primarily aimed at purifying Islam of

The jihad remained an unforgettable experience because of the lasting impact it had on the pre-colonial and even post-colonial Nigeria. Islam had made a lot of converts in major towns while the villages were not attended to. Then, Islam flourished and cohabited with traditional religion so that most of the traditional religious practices were becoming synonymous with Islam. Chima Korie noted about the Jihad that, “like most religious revival movements of the period, the jihad did not aim just at driving the faithful back to roots; there was a political element of state formation and establishment of theocratic states.”\(^{15}\) The political aims of the jihad was particularly evident in that all the conquered Hausa kingdoms through the jihad had their Emirs replaced with the Fulani descendants. Elizabeth Isichei observes on the essence of the jihad that: “The most important legacy of the jihadist states was to be not new frontiers, but the growth of Islam in the general population, the spread of Islamic schools and legal structures.”\(^{16}\) This observation is valid judging by the legacies of the jihad. The jihad succeeded in the areas of purification of Islam and the formation of theocratic states governed according to the Islamic principles. The contact of Islam through the jihad with the old established Hausa Kingdoms led to the formation of the Sokoto Caliphate, a theocratic formation of Islamic religious states - extending from northern Nigeria to Ilorin, north-eastern part of Yorubaland (southwest).\(^{17}\)

The trades and other commercial activities aided the spread of Islam beyond the northern territories into the west and eastern parts of the country. The majority of Muslims in Nigeria are Sunnis but there are divisions such as Sufis and Shi’ites with their unique emphasis and teachings. The movements of Qadiriyya (in the north) and Tijaniyya (in the south) had much influence on the spread of Islam in the nineteenth century. In spite of the rapid spread of Islam in northern and southern Nigeria, doctrinal focus has remained a focal source of tension. In response to these groups, other Islamic bodies such as Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement and Ansar-ud-Deen Society which started in 1923, have advanced the course of Islam through educational goals. More recently, the emergence of Nasru-Lahil-

\(^{15}\) Korieh, “Islam and Politics in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives”, 112.
\(^{16}\) Isichei, The Religious Traditions of Africa, 64.
\(^{17}\) Sokoto Caliphate is a collection of a loose confederacy of conquered states covering the entire northern Nigeria, extending from Dori, modern day Burkina Faso, to some parts of Cameroon including Nupe land (over 1,500 kilometres in all). The Sokoto Caliphate became the largest Empire in Africa after the fall of the Songhai Empire in 1591. At the peak of its prosperity, Sokoto Caliphate had about thirty emirates (heads of various towns) which were answerable to the Caliphate. The fall of the Caliphate began with the death of Uthman dan Fodio in 1817 when the Caliphate was divided into two, east and west. Its power eventually fell to the Colonial rule in 1903. Despite the above, the age long supremacy of the Sultan of Sokoto as the head of Islamic Umma in Nigeria remains till today.
Faith Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) formed in 1995, has shaped Islam in Nigeria focusing on the challenges facing young educated Muslims.

Unlike the case with Christianity, Islam did not affirm any dichotomy between the religious, civil, and political affairs. The establishment of Islam in the courts at the early stage where the Mallams served as advisers to emirs, judges, and teachers of Islamic precepts, show its affinity with civic life. Islam continues to be a relevant force in national political affairs.

2.1.3 Christianity

The first attempt to plant Christianity in Nigeria is dated to around 1485 when the King of Benin, a city in the coastal land in the southeastern part of Nigeria, requested the Portuguese to send missionaries to his domain. The Augustinian Monks from Sao Tome arrived in Benin City in 1515. The Portuguese missionaries were sent at his request and they labored for a number of years. But it was a failed attempt because of the economic interests of the King of Benin. Other issues attributed to this failure are the concentration of the missionary activities in the eastern segment because of the special interest in the transatlantic slave trade coupled with a total neglect of other parts of the country. There was a second attempt in the 1570s when the Spanish Capuchin Fathers arrived in Warri. Again, the missions did not last beyond a few years. Further attempts were suspended until the second half of nineteenth century. Some scholars did not consider these earlier endeavors in their historical narratives.

A period of ‘reentry’ of Christianity to Nigeria is connected with the history of the repatriated slaves at the time of the abolition of slave trade in West Africa. When the slave

21 Some scholars simply linked the introduction of Christianity to Nigeria with the second half of the 19th century. For instance, Peter Falk’s *The Growth of the Church in Africa* (Bukuru, Plateau: ACTS, 1997), 340-352 simply recorded that Christianity came into Nigeria after the return of the ex-slaves into Nigeria. Falk also considered the Niger expedition between 1841 and 1885 when the Protectorate was declared as the preparation for introduction of Christianity, 340. See Fatokun, “Christian Missions in South-Western Nigeria, and Response of African Traditional Religion”, 113.
trade was abolished in 1807, an immediate settlement was established in Sierra Leone. From there some of the ex-slaves were allowed to return home after a few years. Most of these liberated slaves had been influenced by Christianity. A number of these ex-slaves had learned trades and business skills. Literacy was a major asset they acquired as they could read and write. They became the first missionaries to re-evangelize their own people.²² One main figure among these freed-slaves was Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who in the company of others pioneered the Niger Mission in 1857.²³ Other mission agencies joined them from Europe and the United States. The mission enjoyed so much geographical concentration. For instance, the missionaries of each foreign agency spread their tentacles in the immediate area and extended their mission into the hinterlands. Finally, they penetrated into other parts of the country. This has resulted in an uneven distribution of churches. For instance, the Catholic and Presbyterian Churches are numerous in the eastern part, Baptist, Anglican (previously Church Missionary Society CMS) and Methodist churches are more populous in the west, the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) is highly concentrated in the north. The migration of traders and other commercial activities aided the propagation of churches in other parts of the country.

In Nigeria today, one can easily identify four main categories of churches. The first is the historic or mission churches. These are the churches that pioneered the 19th century missions. These include Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, and Methodists. The second category is the group belonging to the Garrick Braide movement of 1916. An extension of this movement are African churches or churches pioneered by Africans in a tradition of supernatural emphasis. By and large some of them seceded from the mission churches. Examples are the ‘Aladura’²⁴ and Christ Apostolic Churches. These churches emphasize prayer as the main Christian weapon and the use of means for healing, for instance. They also stress on the spiritual phenomenon of vision and so on.²⁵ The decades around the 1930s witnessed the birth of different indigenous church movements and finally a resurgence that

²³ Most of the indigenous accounts of the modern Christian mission in Nigeria centred on the leadership of this ex-slave who later was ordained a Bishop. Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (c. 1806-1891) was sold as a boy to a slave ship meant to be taken to Brazil but was freed and resettled in Sierra Leone. He was ordained a Bishop in London in 1864. See Elizabeth Isichei, A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present (London: SPCK, 1995), 171-182.
²⁴ The ‘Aladura’ churches (literally the praying people) is often used in a context of a number of churches because of the commonalities in their teachings and traditions. These churches include the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S started in 1925), The Church of the Lord, Aladura (1930), Celestial Church of Christ (CCC started in 1947), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC started in the 1930s).
has led to a dramatic engagement between the Christian message and the African existential world view.

The third group is the Classical Pentecostal Churches like the Assemblies of God which arrived sometime after the mid-twentieth century from the United States. The fourth group is the newer Pentecostal churches of the 20th century. Examples of this are the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) and Living Faith Church (aka Winners’ Chapel). Although, these churches have always maintained unparalleled Christological views, yet they have continued to sharpen one another’s understanding of Christology in present day Nigerian Christianity. Whilst some of them have succeeded in moving away from what we may here call ‘orthodox missionary theology’ others remain faithful to that orthodoxy in worship style and teaching.

In terms of statistics, Christianity in Nigeria is found in the following denominations: Protestant denominations at 15.84% of the total Christian population, independent churches has about 18.25%, Anglican Communion in Nigeria is estimated at 10.21% and 13.45% for the Roman Catholic Church. Though these statistics do not say anything about the Pentecostals and Charismatics, these groups could have been included in the independent churches. It is common knowledge that these groups are attracting large membership and are, in fact, growing faster than any other group of Christians in Africa today. Suffice to mention that the matter of religious statistics in Nigeria is highly controversial. The Nigerian government considers it a sensitive issue and claims on the Federal Government’s website: 45% Christianity, 45% Islam & 10% others. However, a recent report has confirmed that the Christian population is now slightly larger than the Muslim population.

Nigerian Christianity has experienced tremendous growth in various sectors of the nation’s life. The influence of this growth has resulted in renewal of the mission churches as

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27 Right from independence in 1960 there have been great debates about the statistics of Christians and Muslims in the nation from internal and external sources. The religious figures from censuses are often compromised for political reasons, claiming that the Muslim population outnumbered Christians. For instance, *World Fact Book Report* of 2001 put the Muslim population at 50% of the Nigerian population, Christianity at 40% of the nation’s population and 10% is attributed to other religions.
29 For instance on 18 December 2012 Pew Research Center reports on religion and public life in Nigeria stated that in 2010, 49.3 percent of Nigeria's population was Christian, 48.8 percent was Muslim, and 1.9 percent were followers of indigenous and other religions or unaffiliated. In the same way the 2010's census conducted by Association of Religion Data Archives also reported that 46.5% of the total population is Christian, the Muslim population is 45.5% and 7.7% are members of other religious groups.
well as the birthing of new generation churches both at home and overseas. The emergence of Pentecostal churches, which mostly emphasize prosperity, wealth and health as the core of the gospel message, resulted in a wave that spread across all church bodies. One Nigerian Pentecostal denomination today boasts of having the largest single auditorium in the world.\(^{30}\) This, however, is not without notable challenges especially in the areas of orthodoxy and social relevance.

2.2 The Rise of Violence in the Nigerian Socio-Political and Religious Interaction

I will argue in this section that a reflection upon the interaction among Nigerian religions provides the yardstick for understanding the complexity of the problem of peace, mutuality and coexistence. My intention here is to provide a synopsis of the emergence of violence in the Nigerian religious space focusing on active players. Historicizing religious interactions and the problem of peace and mutuality in Nigeria must essentially uncover the multifaceted factors which emerged as dominant forces against the Nigerian nation. These factors are religious appropriation in social space, quest for ethnic supremacy, political and economic relations, and the conspicuous place of colonization in the history of the Nigerian people. These are vital forces that have impinged on peaceful coexistence in the Nigerian social space. In the discussion that follows I will highlight the roles of the above mentioned factors.

For emphasis, three phases are discernible in the interactions that have taken place in the Nigerian religious landscape regarding violence. For a scholar like Afe Adogame, the periods could be categorized as precolonial, colonial and postcolonial phases, with each contributing to diverse forms of violence and interaction.\(^{31}\) It should be pointed out, as already reflected in the myriad pieces of literature on Nigerian colonial history, that the encounter between different regions of precolonial Nigeria with colonization and the resultant violence was double sided.\(^{32}\) By this I mean that the violent disposition could not be

\(^{30}\) This is the claim of the founder of the Living Faith Church (aka Winners’ Chapel) Bishop David Oyedepo. The church’s International headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria is a 50,000 seater auditorium. This auditorium is often filled with worshippers in every single service in addition to several overflow tents. It was recorded in the *World Guiness Book of Record* as largest auditorium in the world in 2009.


\(^{32}\) For example, Falola in his *Violence and Colonialism in Nigeria* argued that most of the major kingdoms/empire or cities that were defeated by colonialism such as Lagos, Egba, Niger Delta region, Benin kingdom, etc occurred with the residents prepared to attack the colonial army. Eghosa E. Osaghae and Rotimi
understood merely in terms of the colonizers’ approaches to capturing territories but also how the pre-independent Nigeria responded, and combated the colonizers through resistance and war. However, I will focus more, especially in the second phase, on the ‘winner’ which in most cases was the British colonial powers. The precolonial era witnessed the internal contacts and associations between the existing kingdoms in various parts of the country. The most prominent of these kingdoms included the Yoruba, Benin, the Hausa/Fulani, and the Igbo. Each kingdom lived autonomously, independently of the other, and was led by a local decentralized administrative leadership of Obas, Emirs, Obi, and chiefs as appointed by their own people. During this period, the interaction among these ethnic peoples was cordial. Inter-tribal trades, economic interdependence and political association characterized their relationships rather than religion. The tribal religions, which were least militant and less competitive, distinguished between one ethnic people and another.

However, as early as this period, the instances of strife, ethnic wars and supremacy, political and administrative violence were part of the surviving strategies of the existing nation-states. There were ethnic, inter-ethnic, and inter-tribal wars and conflicts but it was at best minimal in the context of that age. The stronger kingdoms exerted their supremacy, showing off their military strength over economic issues such as taxation and tributes. The kingdoms with a stronger army fought and defeated the weaker kingdoms and established themselves as vassal states, subjected the smaller kingdoms to pay tributes. Well-known examples are the Yoruba civil wars which divided the cities in western Nigeria and had defined the extent of their social and economic interaction till the present times. Many of the known incidents of violence and wars in the precolonial Nigeria were purely economically and politically induced.

There was a cross fertilization of ideas, and inter-marriages took place and the people became receptive to one another. According to Adogame, the nature of existing receptivity

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33 I am not unaware of the argument of Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton in their A History of Nigeria, 17-29, that to simply delineate the history of Nigeria by colonization says nothing other than amplifying the colonization and downplaying the earliest development that had taken place earlier. They opted for the period of “early societies.” However, for the sake of clarity and consistency, I will use the term ‘precolonial period’ to describe the period predating the arrival of colonization.


prepared the ground for accommodating Islam and Christianity on their arrival. The nature and extent of their reception, negotiation and accommodation of other forms of external religions is exemplified by how traditional religions encountered Islam and Christianity. Most importantly, the nature of the religious interactions shows how the traditional religions have been the least aggressive and confrontational in the religious competition and rivalry that ensued.\textsuperscript{36}

This association continued with peaceful interactions among the existing native religions before Islam and Christianity arrived, and various social contacts occurred within the societies that shaped the religious views in different ways. It was not just the arrival of Islam and Christianity as external faiths that provoked violence but the attitude of the adherents of these faiths involving different claims. For instance, the relationship between Christianity and African Religions was favorable at the beginning. It was a symbiotic association for lack of a better expression. As Samson Fatokun argues, the implanting of Christianity in the 19th century Nigeria became a success because of the tolerance and accommodation of traditional religionists. “The goodwill of these former adherents of African traditional religion [liberated slaves], now converted to Christianity, and the warm reception they gave to missionaries laid the foundation for the permanent planting of Christianity not just in Yorubaland but also throughout Nigeria.”\textsuperscript{37} The Methodist Missionaries arrived in 1842/43 and by 1850 the Missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention of USA arrived. Historical records informed that when the missionaries arrived at Abeokuta\textsuperscript{38}, the traditional ruler of the city who was a traditionalist received them warmly to the extent that an entourage of chiefs and subjects were organized for a befitting hosting. The coming of missionaries to them was interpreted as a fulfillment of an age long divination.\textsuperscript{39} The traditional ruler embraced Christianity and later attracted a lot of converts to Christianity.

The events that permanently molded and redesigned the terrain of religious and political interactions other than religion itself occurred in the turn of the 19th century and continued until the late 1950s, when Nigeria was governed by the colonial authorities. These

\textsuperscript{36} Adogame, “Fighting for God or Fighting in God’s Name!”

\textsuperscript{37} Fatokun, “Christian Mission in South-Western Nigeria”, 112.

\textsuperscript{38} Abeokuta, a city in South-western Nigeria is the current capital of Ogun State. Christian mission historically began in this city from where it spread to the hinterlands.

\textsuperscript{39} Fatokun, “Christian Mission in South-Western Nigeria”, 113. The Ifa Oracle (Yoruba traditional gods of divination) is claimed to have 'spoken' about the coming of 'the power beyond the sea' long before and had warned the people to accept the white men when they eventually come. When the missionaries arrived, the traditional religionists in that part of the country interpreted their arrival as the fulfilment of the voice of the oracle.
events laid the foundation for the current struggles and violence in modern Nigeria. I now turn to discuss the specific issues such as the dynamics of colonial conquest, colonial administration of different regions of Nigeria, ethnicity and political structures which are features of the second phase under consideration. The colonial invasion, negotiation, manipulation, and amplification of items on the trade and commerce agenda, and the conquest affected the existing socio-political interactions of various self-governed kingdoms in the precolonial Nigeria.

By the year 1861, the British government had succeeded in taking over southern Nigeria, established its base at Lagos, and declared it a Colony of the British Empire. First, it began in the form of treaties, negotiations, and annexation. Second, it involved force. The capturing of the southern precolonial Nigeria was least easy as one could imagine. Colonization was established and advanced with a numerous list of casualties, deaths, victimization and violence against the kings, chiefs and other leaders who had refused to surrender their independence and the leadership of their people to the colonial authority. In fact, the establishment of colonization in Nigeria was actualized by the weapon of violence such as war or the threat of war. Each fallen or surrendered kingdom or city implied an expansion of the British Empire. The 1900s marked the beginning of the extension of the British territory northward. The north was declared a Protectorate. The negotiation of the colonial High Commissioner of northern Nigeria, Frederick Lugard, became successful as some Emirs willfully succumbed to the threats of the colonial powers. Those who resisted were fought by a combined army of the colonial ruler who were mostly southerners. By 1903, the Sokoto Caliphate was conquered, marking the end of the Caliphate as a sovereign political entity.

The colonial administrators intentionally introduced different systems of administration in the north and south. Indirect Rule was introduced to consolidate the existing administrative structures in the north. This system allowed the governance of the colonialists through the traditional rulers, the Emirs. Chiefs and other local agents were involved in the collection of taxes and other local participation in colonial administration. Indirect rule retained the traditional institutions, culture, and the law. It primarily means that the British

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41 It has been argued by Toyin Falola, a scholar in Nigerian history of religion, that the outbreak of violence was a major characteristic of the European conquest leading to loss of independence. See Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*.

would control and sometimes manipulate the Emirs and the Emirs would govern the people by seeking their collaboration. The legal system of the north was influenced by the Islamic jurisprudence through the provision of Shari’a courts. Thus, the systems adopted by colonialists created a disparity between the governance in southern and northern Nigeria. In the south, the system was initially a direct rule where governance was under the control of the colonial authority. But as indirect rule became successful in the north, in addition to several incessant clashes between the colonial officials and the people, language barrier, and other factors, the Frederick Lugard-led government extended a brand of indirect rule to the south. This was perceived as a definite way to reduce direct contact with the citizens. As one would expect, it led to a redefinition of the roles of the traditional rulers within the structures of leadership earlier set up in the society. Some of the kings became too powerful and could not be checkmated under traditional institutions because of their desire to be approved by the colonial authorities.

The history of British colonialism in Nigeria indicates a disparity in the administrative structures and policies between south and north. That the British sustained the legality of slave trade in the north until about 1939, which had been abandoned in the south earlier, shows some inequality. Another issue is the support for the institution of the Shari’a laws to run concurrently with the common laws. This latter point would become focal in highlighting a series of religious violence in this chapter. These inequalities, however, the southern bloc of the nation has turned them and the stated marginality into a blessing. Due to the early establishment of the missionary activities in the south, which focused on education as a means for socialization and conversion the southerners had an advantage of education over the northerners.

Violence in this phase can be seen in the unlawful conquests of various kingdoms and cities, dethronement and killing of kings, and forceful use of politics as instruments of domination. All these forms of violent dispositions of the colonizers affected the people’s perception of colonialism, reaction to it and relationship between the missionaries and the colonial officials especially in the eastern and western Nigeria. Violence, therefore, is a bad,

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43 For a fuller account of the administrative and judicial systems of northern Nigeria, see Orr, The Making of Northern Nigeria, 219-243.
44 Falola, The History of Nigeria, 70-74.
sustained legacy of the British incursions into Nigeria with its enduring influence until modern-day religious and political exchange.\textsuperscript{45}

The above set the pace for the current experience of violence and the interruption of peaceful atmosphere and it equally affected the political structures delivered to the country on the eve of independence. The third phase covered 1960 till date. A new scramble for power, political dominance, ethnic and religious rivalry accompanied the British preparation for disengagement and Nigerian independence in the late 1950s. Dividing the nation along an ethno-religious boundary is more of the British strategy to make a new Nigeria, which had been agitated by those tutored by the colonial government less effective in governance and to remain polarized. This task the colonial government achieved before its exit. The emerging nationalists resulted to fighting one another in quest for positions and recognition, starting campaigns of calumny which brought to the fore ethnic political agenda rather than collective interest, future and wellbeing of the nascent nation – Nigeria. This factor undoubtedly resulted in the failure of the First Republic.\textsuperscript{46} All political parties were regionally founded along ethnic and religious factions.\textsuperscript{47} Although several political restructurings had taken place since independence to eradicate the regionalization of politics due to ethnic rivalry, the religious divide became a factor for inciting the Christian south against the Muslim north and vice versa.

The relationship in political and religious space during the early years of independence and post-independence has been characterized by tension. Religious revivalism and fundamentalism were deeply responsible for this. This resurgence affected the religious mobilization, conversion, and religious volunteerism. Evangelistic motif fanned an ember of enmity between Christianity and Islam. Christian and Islamic apologetic increased in churches, mosques, and outdoor crusades to defend the tenets of both religions. Claims, responses and counter responses characterized religious broadcast in the media. This gross misunderstanding lingered for several years and still persists today. In some Nigerian

\textsuperscript{45} Adogame, “Fighting for God or Fighting in God’s Name! The Politics of Religious Violence in Nigeria”
\textsuperscript{46} The first five years of Nigeria independence (1960-65) is often described as the First Nigerian Republic, the first democratic attempt after independence. Larry Jay Diamond, \textit{Class, Ethnicity, and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic} (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988).
\textsuperscript{47} Aborisade and Mundt, \textit{Politics in Nigeria}, 55-100: describe Nigerian politics as heterogeneous and complex, shaped by some sort of political culture and socialization. In pages 172-177 he supported the assertion of regionalised political structure that emerged on the eve of the Nigerian independence. For instance, the Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) was formed in the north with pure Islamic ideology. The National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) was formed in the east with mainly Christian populace and Action Group (AG) was formed in the west comprising Yoruba people.
communities the traditionalists and Muslims see Christians as enemies contending for space. That is not the bone of contention when discussing the religious interaction in the public space today.

However, the way that religion has been appropriated as an instrument of supremacy and a channel of personal actualization in the nation has led to an atmosphere of suspicion. This atmosphere of suspicion gradually erupted between Christianity and Islam prominently from a decade after Nigerian independence. The earlier arrival of Islam gave it an opportunity to be established in some parts of the country before Christianity arrived. Even after independence, Muslims maintained a close affinity with the political class. This is glaring in the government of the nation. The question began to arise from different quarters whether Nigeria is a secular or religious state. The Muslims’ influence on government at various levels continued to grow through the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA) and the Jama’tu Nasril Islamiyya (JNI). The Christian body equally invented a channel to influence the religious space, politics and governance. The quest to checkmate these Islamic bodies resulted in the formation of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).\(^{48}\)

Three major issues that have impacted upon the Nigerian religious interactions are worth noting briefly because of their importance. The first is the membership of Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC, previously Organization of Islamic Conference). In January 1986, then the military Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida registered Nigeria as a member of the OIC. This membership further escalates the existing religious pressure. Toyin Falola notes that it was done secretly as Christian members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council denied the knowledge of Nigeria’s registration as a member of the OIC.\(^{49}\)

The Christians responded vehemently against the decision to become a member of the OIC. They mobilized one another, describing such a move as a step towards Islamization of Nigeria, and therefore, demanded that the membership be withdrawn. Falola further captures the reaction of the Christian community in the nation.

Christians immediately mobilized against the OIC. Their manifold objections were widely publicized in the newspapers and were the subjects of sermons and church publications throughout 1986. Churches issued statements and called for special prayers, rallies, and fasts aimed at fighting the OIC.

\(^{48}\) JNI began in 1962. CAN started in 1976.
Christians thought of the OIC as an Islamic organization, conceived by Muslims to achieve objectives that would promote the cause of Islam; citing its charter and activities, they concluded that the OIC was nothing but an organization of Muslims united in the defense of Islam. The situation provided an opportunity for the Christian leadership to launch a full-scale attack against the government and Nigeria’s Islamic elite.\(^{50}\)

The leadership of the Christian community in the nation was right in their reaction. The main purpose of the OIC states in part “to strengthen the struggle of all Muslims with a view to safeguarding their dignity, independence, and national rights….”\(^{51}\) The body exists to advocate Islamic interests which will gear the nation towards an Islamic state. The nation became polarized in opinions on this issue. Whilst the JNI defended the OIC as having a potential for financial and economic support, CAN believed that “there is no conceivable way by which full membership of OIC can be effective without using it to promote, canvas, or impose Islam on Nigeria.”\(^{52}\)

Ever since, the issue of OIC remains sensitive and unresolved in Nigeria, touching on the corporate existence of the nation. Other successive governments have refused to promote OIC activities publicly or disclose Nigeria’s involvement. The questions raised by Nigeria’s membership in the OIC remain unanswered up to now.

The second issue is the Shari’a Law debate and its implementation. The debate over Shari’a Law in the post-independence Nigeria is traceable from the 1978 Constituent Assembly appointed to debate the reports of the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) of 1977. The contention was whether there should be a provision for the establishment of the Shari’a Court.\(^{53}\) After a heated debate there was a consensus that there should be a Shari’a Court of Appeal at the State not the Federal level. The Muslims were not happy with this. Falola detailed the second episode of Shari’a debates that occurred in 1988 in preparation for a new national constitution.\(^{54}\) In the year 2000, the Shari’a law controversy resurfaced again. This time it was a move to implement Shari’a law in some northern states. The proposed implementation stirred major crises, witnessed in the loss of lives and vandalism of personal and government property as shall be seen later in this chapter. The claim behind Muslims’

\(^{50}\) Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 96.

\(^{51}\) Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 94.

\(^{52}\) Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 97, citing a CAN memorandum of 1986.

\(^{53}\) Taiye Adamolekun, “A Historical Perspective in the Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria since 1914” *Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH)* 2, no. 5 (June 2013): 62.

\(^{54}\) Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 86-93.
request for Shari’a law is their interpretation of everything western as primarily ‘Christianized’. However, Christians’ interpretation of Shari’a law is that it should only operate in an Islamic theocratic State. They constantly view every action of the ruling and political Muslim elites with a religious undertone. This mutual suspicion continued and even prepared the ground for incessant clashes between Muslims and Christians beginning in the early 1980s until the new millennium.

The third issue is governance and the extent of religious participation in politics. Factoring in the earlier concerns, the matter of religious representation in politics and governance has become a continual source of debate and tension. Both Christians and Muslims always demand equal representation in government committees, and political appointments. Typical examples are the establishment of the Muslim Pilgrimage and Welfare Board, and the Christian Welfare and Pilgrimage Board constituted as parallel bodies. The reaction and counterpoise between Christians and Muslims is, so to speak, a source of tension and threat to peace in present day Nigeria. “The mutual suspicion, distrust engendered by religious functionaries, and the evolution of religious and ethnic bigotry affects the overall security, for the interplay of religion and politics is intrinsically linked to the virulent competition for national resources.”55 These factors have consciously and unconsciously left indelible marks on the Nigerian nation in the past. And they are still affecting it now. They will again come to the fore in our consideration of some episodes of the religious conflicts in Nigeria.

2.3 An Overview of Religious Conflicts in Nigeria

My argument in this section is that to propose Christological paradigms to address Nigerian crises situations, it is indispensable to understand various manifestations of these crises. Episodes of crises outlined in this section show the interplay of various factors which I have partly discussed in the previous section. I have tagged the conflict discussed in this section as religious conflict because most of the conflicts or violence have been mobilized under the guise of religion. As stated earlier, the association of various religions in Nigeria has been interpreted in various ways, the focus depending on the lenses of the analysis. Different patterns of conflict or violence are identifiable in the history of Nigeria.

The first pattern of conflict or violence is inter-ethnic and boundary contention. Ethnicity is also a common factor of identity which has been used to stimulate violence. Ethnicity and land are well-known sources of identity among Nigerians. These factors have become instruments of violence through allegiance. Starting with the promotion of ethnic superiority among the first Nigerian political elites on the eve of independence, to the coup d’états which crumbled the first democratically elected government of Nigeria, and the specific violence that occurred along ethnic lines in the early 1990s and into the new millennium, one can simply understand that ethnicity is being promoted as a force of division among Nigerians. As will be evident in the series of conflicts presented in the next section, the Jos, and Zangon-Kataf riots of 1992 fall into this category. More recently, ethnic interest has anchored a mobilization for militancy on economic grounds. This is obvious in the cases of the fights for ‘selfhood’ by the oil-rich Niger Delta region youths and leaders, who complained of being neglected in social and economic development despite a huge oil exploration and devastating environmental pollution the region has witnessed.

Like ethnicity, land is often understood as part of an identity of a community or group so much that shifting land boundary unduly is tantamount to denying a group of its identity. The claim to the ownership of territory and boundary adjustment between communities and tribes is a major source of conflict found in the traditional and modern Nigerian societies. Neighboring communities have had to contend with each other at war over land purportedly belonging to one community which has been claimed by another community and the rightful owner felt the need to do all within its power to reclaim it. There had been battles over boundary adjustment in various parts of the country. These forms of conflict manifest as communal clashes on the basis of land dispute occurring over social and economic factors.

The second pattern of conflict is intra-religious conflicts in which members of the same religious group clashed with each other in view of their clique ideology and

56 Toyin Falola and Adebayo O. Oyebade, Hot Spot: Sub-Saharan Africa (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood Press, 2010), 63-98.
58 There so many examples of communal clashes on the basis of land dispute and boundary adjustment. Some of these examples include; Ife and Modakeke communal conflicts which has spanned decades, Iba and Iree conflict, the Ijaw and Itsekiri conflict in the east and so on.
Historically, the Maitatsine conflicts of the 1980s with its magnitude of loss and destruction occupies a central place in the narratives of intra-religious conflicts witnessed in Nigeria so far. An Islamic charismatic teacher, by name Muhammadu Marwa, founded a movement that later grew on a large scale to the point of becoming a notable threat to the mainstream Islamic teaching in the northern city of Kano. Marwa was an individual with impressive ability to preach and rally people around himself. The teachings of Marwa was perceived as contradicting the Islamic orthodox beliefs and doctrines, especially the promotion of violence and fundamentalist tendencies. He also challenged the opulence of the Islamic aristocracy that controlled the political domain in the north. Hence, both the Islamic authorities in the country and the government condemned Marwa and his followers. Since Marwa already garnered a multitude of followers, it was not difficult to express their loyalty by fighting for their leader. This fight resulted in the death of the leader of the Maitasine movement but did not extinguish the ideologies of this sect. More recently, significant tensions have occurred between the Islamic brotherhoods of Quadriyya and Tijanniyya, between the Islamic movements such as Izala and the Shiites and others.

The third dimension of conflict in Nigeria is identified as political violence. This form of violence often occurs when the citizens are dissatisfied with government policies and initiatives and an attempt to voice their grievances turned out to be violent oriented whether intentionally so or otherwise. As will be seen in the next section, political violence mostly operates with poor economic conditions of the country. Similar to instances of intra-religious violence, political violence has, at times, occasioned the release of bottled up anger with an undertone of religion. There is hardly an instance where one form of conflict mentioned above is absolutely exclusive of the other.

The fourth pattern that is also identifiable is inter-religious conflict in which there is a conflict between two or more religions. This is the most common type of violence in Nigeria. There are cases where some misunderstandings erupted within a religious circle only to end in unleashing violence on the members of other religious groups. Misunderstanding of the religious beliefs and practices of the other, intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism are major issues that have generated violent acts across religions in Nigeria.

59 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 137-162.
Religion as a binding force for every people has its own share in the events that have evolved over the years. Religion and politics have always been in close contact in Nigeria so that it is easy to describe the relationship perfectly in words of Afe Adogame, as the ‘politicization of religion and religionization of politics’.\(^{61}\) Afe Adogame a scholar in Nigerian religious history is right when citing Orlando Robertson:

An increase in concern on the part of ostensibly religious collectivities with governmental issues and, secondly, an inflation of interest among those with declared religious commitments in coordinating the latter with secular-ideological perspectives and programmes... politicisation and religionisation are mutually amplifying processes, in that the more ‘religious’ the state becomes the more it provokes expansion of activities of ostensibly religious actors along political lines.\(^{62}\)

It is extremely difficult to separate religion from the happenings in the political terrain. Politicians often bring religious factors to bear in the political processes, mobilization, and electioneering campaign. The military is not left out in this process as most of the coup d’états and counter coups were not without a religious undertone. Religion, therefore, is in the fore of most political and economic moves, and it has also molded it in so many ways.

In presenting this overview, I will select a series of violence to show the dynamics of issues leading to disruption of peace and mutuality. The presentation here although not recorded chronologically cover some selected northern states but in a few occasions a violence in the north escalated to the eastern and western parts of Nigeria. In most cases, these crises happened sporadically so that an area which experiences violence at one time still encountered similar violence over the years. This approach will be helpful in deconstructing the difficulties of the sequence of the occurrences. Most of the crises recorded so far are between the Muslims and Christians especially in northern Nigeria. In an attempt to highlight the Nigerian situation, specific emphasis will be made to situations of crises encountered in the 1980s up to the present day.

Furthermore, I will not analyze the crises extensively since that is not the primary focus of this study. Rather, I will present the sparks to these crises and responses from


government and religious groups in the nation. In each case, the actions and reactions of the Christians and Muslims are also presented. The actions or inaction of government or its agencies are also stated in some places. Finally, the accounts presented here cover four states: Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi and Plateau States. All these accounts have their sources in scholars who are nuanced on this subject and whose researches are available in the public domain. With these comments in mind I shall examine some of the religious related crises in four of the Nigerian northern states beginning with Kano State.

2.3.1 Kano State Crises 1982, 1991, 1995

Kano is a city in the core northern part of Nigeria. It is notable as a commercial center where the Christianity had entered through the northern part of the country at the time of its expansion. Kano, which is situated in Kano State, is predominantly a Muslim state but a significant number of Christian communities cannot be denied in the city and entire state.

On 30th October, 1982 the Muslim Students’ Society (MSS) raised a protest against Christians in the city of Kano against the siting of a church building, St. George’s Anglican Church in Fagge. This was on account of its proximity to the central mosque.63 Before this hullaballoo surged, two important personalities in the year had visited the said church. In February, Pope John Paul II had visited Nigeria followed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie in April. The Anglican family in Kano had thought of commemorating the historic visit of Archbishop of Canterbury with the foundation stone laid for another building since the existing old building had worn out. The dramatic part of that story was that the church building did not appear there overnight; it had been situated there since 1933 only for the mosque to be built between 1968 and 1970. A Dutch missiologist, Jan H. Boer, who worked for over thirty-five years in northern Nigeria recorded an eyewitness account of the state of events between the church and the Muslim community earlier:

In 1933, when the mission compound was built up, I was there. The compound then stood within the radius of about 1000 yards on each side from Sabongari and Fagge. There was no building of any kind anywhere near it… right in front of the church, almost covering the passage, a court and a police station are built. This appeared to have choked up the compound and there was hardly

any way out. On the day the mosque was opened, Muslim worshipers filled the mission compound and worshiped undisturbed.\textsuperscript{54}

The testimony above was given by an elder statesman, Justice Haruna Dandaura before the committee appointed by the Kano State government to investigate the occurrence and report back to the state government. Despite the age difference in their appearance, little did anyone wonder that it could suddenly become an issue. The protesters insisted on demolition of the church building but there was an intervention from the police. The police prevented the demolition of the church building but around forty-four people were reported killed.\textsuperscript{65}

The Christian’s invitation for the German Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke to lead a week-long crusade in the city of Kano began an uproar on October 29, 1991. This was one of the earliest times Bonnke visited Nigeria. Reinhard Bonnke is known for his charismatic preaching and the consequent invitation to people to say “yes to Jesus”. Bonnke’s evening crusades and ministers’ forum always attract massive participants. People would travel from neighboring states and the neighboring countries to listen, receive prayers for healing and miracles. Most evangelistic crusades of Reinhard Bonnke are characterized by heavy publicity; posters are often printed and pasted around the hosting city walls, streets, schools, churches and other public places. Such phrases as “Jesus Fire Crusade”, “Kano City Crusade or for Christ” are popular appendages appearing on the posters and handbills for this crusade.

Three events led to this upheaval. First, the mention of the word “crusade” in that context was a sensitive word which the Muslims received with a negative connotation. It reminded the Muslims of the wars of the previous centuries which were synonymous with crusade. Various devastations accompanied the crusades (especially the jihad) and thousands of lives were lost. The coming of Reinhard Bonnke refreshed that memory of the historic past.\textsuperscript{66} Kano State is predominantly an Islamic state as noted earlier. Such a massive publicity for a Christian program using print and public media was more or less understood as an attempt to convert the state to Christianity – an act utterly unacceptable to the Muslims! Bonnke’s previous crusades had witnessed massive conversions of people to Christianity, whilst several other people rededicated themselves to Jesus Christ. Prior to this time, the local organizing committee of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) had written the state government to secure an approval. Finally, having given an approval, the CAN was to make a

\textsuperscript{66} Chentu Dauda Nguvugher, Conflicting Christologies in a Context of Conflicts: Jesus, the Isawa, and Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria (Jos: Acts, 2010), 124.
compulsory payment of ten thousand naira. When the money was ready to be paid, it was increased to thirty thousand naira and then fifty thousand naira, possibly to discourage the use of Race Course where CAN had proposed to hold the crusade. It was obvious that something was about to happen as tension mounted in the city before the commencement of the program. Islamic fundamentalists vowed to stop the crusade. Intelligence reports and verbal notices reached CAN. As a result, CAN changed the venue of the program to St Thomas Catholic Church, Sabon Gari.

Second, two Islamic preachers had been denied visas to enter the country; Louis Farrakhan, a black Muslim leader in the United States, and the South African Muslim polemicist and apologist, Sheik Ahmed Deedat in 1987 and 1990, respectively. Third, Muslims had been denied the use of the Race Course for the celebration of *id al-maulid*, a festival marking the birth of Prophet Muhammad by the government. Whereas, it was approved for Christians to host a crusade program there. They reasoned that while Muslim preachers were denied entry for Islamic activities, a Christian was allowed in, and was also given permission to use the Race Course. Consequently, they needed to stop them.67 The Muslims believed they were justified in their actions.

The attack led to the death of hundreds of people though the exact number is not known. Houses and cars were set ablaze, nearby shops invaded leaving many people homeless. Around two hundred people died. In the heat of anger, Christian youths immediately mobilized to defend themselves. However, the defense strategy turned out to be a revenge, leading to the burning of over twenty churches, one mosque and several people sustaining various degrees of injury under two days of this riot.68 This differed greatly from other attacks where the Christian community was afraid to either defend itself or retaliate.

The series of pandemonium witnessed in northern Nigeria had remote and immediate causes. On some occasions, it built up over time and became unleashed in the highest point. This is the best way to describe the Kano riot of 1995. Jan H. Boer states that three major events orchestrated the riot.69 There are conflicting stories on this violence which clearly present ethnicity and religion as factors that can be mobilized for violence.70 First, one

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70 The three stories that Boer points to are conflictual. It is difficult to ascertain which of the stories started this violence but it is very unlikely that those events would have happened serially.
Akaluka, an Ibo trader in Kano had used pages of the Quran as toilet paper, a desecration of Islamic scripture for which he was kept in protective custody for his own safety.71 Afterwards, an angry mob broke through the prison and beheaded him while his head was paraded in the town. That a person was beheaded under protective custody raised some unanswered questions. The second incident was that a woman who hails from Southwest had boarded a vehicle, but the conductor gave the wrong amount of change. This began the whole trouble. The angry mob was ready to massacre her except for the intervention of the police and the military. The third is that two Hausa women parked their car in front of an Ibo shop. Two Hausa men burgled the car and stole a bag. The Ibo trader identified the burglars and the incident was reported to the police. Police pressed charges but released the men on bail. Now, fellow sympathizers quarreled with the Ibo man, who hailed from the southwestern part of the country. Other fellow Hausas supported the rioters against the Ibo man, who was considered an infidel. This fight escalated from there and the Muslims seized this opportunity to massacre any Christian that could be found.

The rioters assembled at St. George’s Anglican Church which had been the subject of the riot in 1982 and set the building ablaze. The priest in charge of the church narrowly escaped with his family. Every other person who could not chant “God is great” in Arabic fell victim. The events narrated above signaled the Christians that Kano was an Islamic state. Fliers appeared overnight from the Muslims:

This is to inform you that for your own interest and life security, you are seriously advised to pack out of Kano metropolis with immediate effect and in no given time, otherwise your life will be in danger. And for your information no authority can protect you from whatever calamity that will befall you if you fail to comply.72

Christians within Kano had been pushed to the wall. They looked for various ways to defend themselves through the arms of the flesh and with the words of their mouth. The Government’s response as usual was to deploy a team of mobile police and military to assuage the situation. The vicar of the burnt church who incidentally belonged to the same

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71 There are difficulties in ascertaining the exact story as it was reported differently. Some had put it that his wife had allegedly used the Qur’an page as toilet paper. Another had it that he was put in protective custody then he used the Holy Scripture. Others simply said that it was in an argument with his neighbor about the superiority of the holy book and to show that Qur’an is inferior to the Bible he then used it for toileting. Whichever way it happened, it is very sure either of those things could set a Muslim fanatic in high mood to foment trouble.

Igbo ethnic group as the Akaluka who was beheaded, gave an uncompromising response in view of the experiences of the time. Boer reports;

(Christians of Sabon Gari) don’t rely on the police. They don’t rely on the Army. But I must tell you that Sabon Gari is not an easy field to swallow. As small as we are, there is nothing we don’t have, but, moreover, we have God. We’re ready. This Sabon Gari can face the whole of Kano State and burn Kano State…. But for the fact that we held our youth, eh! They were ready to face the Mobile Policemen….But any day they attempt to come into this area, nobody will be safe. The Emir, the Governor, the police, nobody will be safe. I don’t want to tell you how but it will happen. I must tell you that we’re prepared.73

Describing the Kano series of combats between Christians and Muslims indicate how a fundamental Muslim thinks in a crisis situation. Some of the causes enunciated above are issues that could have been settled amicably without necessarily leading to a bloodbath. Government has responded in a number of ways to these violence. The initial government’s responses to these clashes were to set up committees of enquiry to investigate the causes, assess the impacts and make recommendations to the government. Unfortunately, the reports of most of the committees set up could not see the light of day. In the 1982 riot, Christians were told to remove the church from its location, although strong evidence detailed the distance in the times of construction of the church and Mosque. In the 1991 clash, the then military Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida had to return home as he was on his way to attend a Head of States of the Commonwealth Nations’ meeting. The curfew is often imposed to reduce the effect while a state of emergency was imposed on the affected State in recent times. A combination of Army and Mobile Police are used to curb the effects on the citizens. Government’s response has often been in the form of apathy to the cry of Christians, of paying no compensation to affected people, and of culprits never brought to book. This has not eradicated the Muslim-Christian conflicts as it has also been experienced with degrading effects in Kaduna State. This shall be considered now.

2.3.2 Kaduna State Riots 1987, 1992, 2000, 2002 and beyond

Kaduna, like Kano, is the capital of Kaduna State. It is also one of the oldest northern emirates. Besides, it has economic and political importance as the capital city of the old

protectorate of northern Nigeria under the British colonial rule. It has 23 Local Government Areas with a population of slightly over six million people, with ethnic, political and religious divides. The northern section of Kaduna is the home for Hausa/Fulani who are predominantly Muslims while the Christian minority ethnic groups live in the south. Kaduna is traditionally known as a Christian state. When counting the effects of the inter-ethnic cum religious riots in Nigeria, Kaduna will be rated to have had the most devastating effects on both human and economic dimensions. The narratives below inform that adequately.

The 1987 riot began at Kafanchan, a city in the southern part of Kaduna State. Analysts are divided along religious lines on which religious group began the riots. The issues leading to this riot are fundamental orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith which lead to misconception, argument, and riot in Christian-Muslim relationships. A cloud of conflict and tension was already gathering with various activities on the side of both parties. Christian Student Fellowship at Kafanchan College of Education staged a program featuring the life and work of Jesus Christ. The guest minister, Rev Abubakar Bako, a Muslim convert is known for his extensive quotations from the Qur’an during his preaching. The presence of an ex-Muslim invited to lead a Christian program in an environment already boiling for a few weeks earlier attracted some Muslim students to join the Christian Student Fellowship, expecting that an offensive utterance or quotation would be made by the preacher.

The preacher quoted two Qur’an passages which allegedly triggered one female Muslim student, Ai’sha Umaru, to seize the microphone and beckoned the male students to come around with the threat that girls would undertake that task should Muslim boys fail to defend Islam. To Ai’sha, misquoting and misinterpreting the Qur’an is a gross abuse of Prophet Muhammad. The school authorities intervened and the Christian fellowship was asked to apologize to their Muslim counterparts, but it was too late. That apology could not pacify their counterparts. “A fight ensued and soon escalated into full-blown ruckus, with sixteen students seriously injured and a church burnt along with the school mosque. Bako

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75 Nguvuher, *Conflicting Christologies in a Context of Conflicts*, 129. In his research Nguvuher maintains that while the narratives given by Christian narrators put the initiation of this conflict on the Muslims and vice versa there is an agreement on where it started.

76 Boer, *Nigeria’s Decades of Blood 1980-2002*, 50-51. Boer traced the initial events leading to this crisis to some publications of the Muslim titled “Jesus Is not the Son of God”, “The Holy Bible is not the Word of God.” Further, an Islamic polemicist from South Africa, Ahmed Deedat had equally produced some video materials on anti-Christian themes which were in circulation at that time.

escaped through a barbwire fence and remains a wanted person by Muslims.” The following Sunday, Christian students were meeting at a church in the town but the Muslims located them and disturbed their activities with fierce attacks using various weapons. The matter escalated from the College campus to Kafanchan town and other churches around, in neighboring towns like Zaria, Katsina, and Kano.

There was a massive destruction of personal and government property in the various affected towns and states. Over one hundred and fifty-two churches were reported destroyed statewide, five mosques vandalized, and several people lost their businesses in this fracas. The role of the police and media were prominent in escalating this crisis. The effects would have been minimal in most of the towns and churches affected. Although the matter was promptly reported to the police for appropriate action or protection in the face of the looming danger. But the police promised to be monitoring the situation only to refrain from any concrete action and discarded the security reports supplied to them by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in the area. This gave Muslims an upper hand to brutalize the Christians in the affected areas. Again, the media fueled the crises by reporting in the initial stage when the crisis began at the College campus in Kafanchan, that Christians were killing Muslims. This led the Muslims to mobilize and call for a reinforcement thereby making the matter worse.

As it is in any dispute, the Muslims had their own version of the story represented in the work of Bashir Isyaku. His account was that the entire hullabaloo began through a group of students and lecturers who, having attempted to disrupt the activities marking ‘Dan Fodio Week’, intentionally invited one Bako to the College campus to foment trouble. According to this source, the Christian students had hung banners at the school gate with the inscription “Welcome to Jesus’ Campus” which undermined the presence of Muslim students on the College of Education campus. To him, the whole situation began with the Christian students. Rev Bako was said to have insisted on the claim that only Christians are following the right path.

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79 There is a common trend whenever a religious conflict occurs in a northern state. The Muslims in nearby states or cities are prone to escalate it by creating a version of the fight in their domain as a way of paying solidarity to their fellow Muslims. This is the case of other cities like Zaria which began at Ahmadu Bello University campus and subsequently spread to other parts of the town and to states like Kano and Katsina.
path, supporting himself from Qur’an surah 1:6-7 and 55-57. When Ai’sha remonstrated the exclusive claim of Bako, the Christians protested shortly torching the campus mosque.\(^{80}\)

Kaduna State government set up a Commission of Enquiry to find out and report back to the government. The trend in the period under review regarding religious crises is such that when one ends, it is preparing for another or another version is almost beginning in another part of the north.

Zangon-Kataf riot of February 6 1992 remains fresh in the minds of the northerners and southerners not just for the dimension it took but most importantly for the monumental destruction it left on its victims. It began by the Kataf people of Southern Kaduna with the Hausa-Fulani Muslim community as the target. This crisis occurred over the proposed relocation of a local market in view of shortage of stalls. Though the relocation was not properly planned, the Christian Kataf community was happy about this development but the Hausa traders were unhappy about it. They claimed the new market site had not been developed; besides no single stall and no toilet facility was available there. Armed Kataf youths had allegedly unleashed violence on the Zango community. There was a serious attack as the security officials could not assuage the situation. “The damage was great. Millions of nairas of vehicles, farms and equipment were destroyed, including thirty-eight cars and nine motorcycles, 133 houses and twenty-six farms. Ninety-five people were killed, while 252 went to the hospital for treatment of wounds.”\(^{81}\) Most of the casualties were Muslims.

This was not the end. There was a lull for a short time but a source as reported by Boer states that the Emir of Zaria who was in charge of the area came on a visit to the Hausa community of Zango with some gift items leaving out the Kataf people. In the same vein, the state government’s relief agency went to donate some gift items to the Zango people not minding the Kataf community. After the visit, the Emir of Zaria invited the Kataf people to Zaria. The act was interpreted as supporting the Zango people so, they ignored the invitation. This led to another fight. Hausa people who carried their dead to Kaduna city to ‘whip up’ sentiments had attracted sympathizers to fuel the fight for them. Hence, the Muslim youth took to the streets, “indiscriminately burning anything that symbolized Christianity, and

\(^{80}\) The contradictions visible in the accounts tell of religious bias of those who have reported it. However, the popular impression is that the Christians were always at the receiving end in most of the crises. When Bako was invited to stand before the Committee of Enquiry on the happening, it was said that he denied ever provoking the Muslims or that the Christians were the first to attack the Muslims.

killing or maiming anybody suspected to be a Christian.” Christians also retaliated. Hence, the crisis spread to Kaduna city and Zaria. The death toll in the crises numbered between 4,000 and 5,000 people apart from those injured.

As part of the government response, the local government was dissolved and some of the civil servants were sacked for their roles in this crisis. In the aftermath of this crisis, many Christians assumed that how the government managed the crisis allowed the riot to escalate. Over three hundred people were arrested including prominent Kataf people who were believed to have instigated the riot. A prominent Kataf Army general Zamani Lekwot was given a death sentence but later converted to short jail terms. An economic issue in the community led to the religious violence.

The start of the new millennium, when many were expecting a new order betrayed their expectations because of crises. In fact, it marked a major shift in the debate on the sporadic crises experienced on the Nigerian landscape. The turn of the 20th century witnessed a fresh debate on Shari’a law. This was not the first or second time Nigerians were debating Shari’a laws and its implementation. Some northern state Governors unexpectedly intimate their people of plans to introduce and implement Shari’a law within their jurisdictions. Shari’a laws were previously applied to the personal laws; but from this time, it was to apply to criminal laws. Shari’a laws was raised first in Zamfara State. Then, it moved to Bauchi, Kaduna, Yobe, Kano and other parts of northern states.

There is a uniqueness about Kaduna State when compared to other northern States. There are about thirty ethnic settlers around the southern part of the state. Northern Kaduna has Hausa-Fulani settlers largely while southern Kaduna is home to many Christians. With a significant Christian community, the Christians view themselves as a majority and stood against the introduction and implementation of Shari’a law in Kaduna State. The Governor and the House of Assembly set up different committees to consider the issue and give recommendations to the government. These committees could not give any substantial report

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83 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 221.
84 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 77-102. Shari’a law had been existing in the northern constitution during the half decade preceding the independence of 1960. But it entered a public debate beginning with the 1970s when Muslims were clamoring for its inclusion in the Nigerian constitution. Christians argued against it because Nigeria is a secular state and besides they reasoned that it will be a step to Islamize Nigeria. The Shari’a law debate entered another level of discussion at this time because some of the northern states wanted to implement it.
that could calm the atmosphere of suspicion and tension already building in the state. It is fascinating to note that the governor Ahmed Markarfi was a Muslim, while his deputy Stephen Shekari was a Christian. The Christians did not trust the committees set up. All the while the Muslims were mobilizing and clamoring for Shari’a law.

To stop the proposed Shari’a law, the CAN branch of Kaduna State organized a mass protest of over 50,000 participants on February 21, 2000 marching to the State House of Assembly and the Government House. The peaceful protest afterwards turned bloody. Leaders of the protest were waiting for deputy governor, as the governor travelled abroad on medical reasons, when a report reached them that the Muslims had attacked their families and businesses back home. The protesters dismissed themselves at once, each one making his way home to defend his family, businesses and church buildings. The mob used that opportunity to loot various businesses and set houses ablaze. Churches were incinerated. They did not spare mosques in some places, corpses littered the streets, petrol stations set ablaze, residential houses torched or damaged and the remnants deserted the area. Businesses worth millions of naira were lost. Many of the people who could not recite verses of the Quran became victims, slaughtered by the angry mob holding various injurious weapons. When the then president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo visited the city, it was but a ruin! He exclaimed with utter dismay for lack of greater expression:

The devastation was so massive, it seemed as though Kaduna had overnight been turned into a battlefield. My visit confirmed…all the reports I had been getting- the mindless killings and maimings, the wanton destruction of property, the fear and uncertainty on the faces of those who survived the carnage, and the pervasive mutual suspicion.

The report that Muslims were transferring their wives and relatives to other areas of Kaduna, a predominantly Muslim dwelling fueled the fight. Rumor spread wide that this embarked on a fresh clash with the Christians. This made Christian groups to be alert and prepare for further attacks. On May 22, the atmosphere of tension was not yet quenched in the state; many non-indigenes had fled to nearby states like Plateau and Bauchi after the previous ruckus. The one-sided report of Radio Kaduna aggravated the situation. In the interim, both Christian youths and Muslim youths were trained in using fire arms should there be any outbreak. They were eager to put them to use. This situation gave them an opportunity to experiment with their arms. The youths in major areas like Tudun Wada,

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Kawo, Kakuri, and Rigasa killed one another. This bloodletting spread to other parts of the state like Zaria and on the extreme parts of the southeastern Nigeria because the Igbos embarked on reprisal attacks on the Muslims and even Hausas in Aba, Onitsha, and Owerri, avenging their relatives killed in the Kaduna crises.

It took the military with armored tanks to lay the situation to rest. The president summoned the National Council of States among other fora created for intervention. National Council of States decided that the status quo be maintained but the governor still enacted the Shari’a laws under the guise that the matters pertaining to Christians will not be applicable under the Shari’a laws. Markafi implemented an adulterated or changed brand of Shari’a law in the state.87

To implore all the concerned parties to embrace peace, and to forestall similar future occurrences, the government officials invited eleven leaders of Christian and eleven Muslim groups for a harmonious discussion. They finalized their conversation by signing an agreement to preach peace and allow peace to reign in their various domains. Their commitment was to:

“work with all sections of the community for a lasting and just peace”; condemned all forms of violence and sought to “create an atmosphere where present and future generations will co-exist with mutual respect and trust in one another”; and announced the establishment of a “permanent joint committee to implement the recommendations of this declaration and encourage dialogue between the two faiths.”88

The next major crisis that loomed in the city of Kaduna after two years is the “Miss World riots” 2002. Nigeria was selected to host the 2002 edition of the Miss World Beauty Pageant at the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Miss World competition is an annual fashion parade held worldwide with neither religious connotation nor affiliation. When Nigeria was chosen to host Miss World Beauty Pageant, some events happened that brewed violence until the immediate cause of this violence sparked up. People had yet to recover from the debate on Shari’a in most states of the north. On March 21, 2002 one Ms Amina Lawal was sentenced to death by stoning under Shari’a law for allegedly having a child out of wedlock because of rape. This happened in Katsina State, the first place the Shari’a law was imposed

87 A brand of Shari’a law implemented in Kaduna allowed people of opposite sex to sit in the same car unlike the case of Zamfara State.
88 The Kaduna Peace Declaration of Religious Leaders, August 22, 2002. The declaration was also signed by Governor Ahmed Makarfi and the ethnic/religious leaders in Kaduna State.
on the citizens. The verdict was criticized as callous given the circumstances of the pregnancy. The government refused strong appeals launched against the judgment. As a result there was pressure on the participants to boycott the beauty pageant competition before arriving in Nigeria. Another reason it became heated was that this event would be held during the concluding week of Ramadan fasting. Ramadan, according to the Islamic tradition is a holy month when all have to abtain from sin ‘that easily beset one’. So, hosting a pageant competition was offensive to the Muslims in the various parts of the north. These two problems led to the third, which is the immediate cause of this crisis.

Isioma Daniel, a ThisDay newspaper journalist wrote an article on the 16th November in which she ostentatiously described the gorgeousness of the damsels taking part in the beauty pageant concluding that, if Prophet Mohammad was alive, he would have loved to marry any of them. She put it pretentiously:

What would Mohammad think? In all honesty, he would probably have chosen a wife from one of them. The irony is that Algeria, an Islamic country, is one of the countries participating in the event.

This statement was offensive to the entire Muslim community. By November 20, Muslims took to the street in Kaduna, in a peaceful protest. The protest resulted to a vicious cycle of vandalism beginning with the ThisDay’s branch office in Kaduna. Properties belonging to government, hotels, businesses, and churches got torched or damaged, looting businesses and leaving blood of innocent citizens flowing on the street. At the end of the three days crisis one of the national dailies reported that “58 churches were attacked and at least 215 people were killed.” The Zamfara State government issued fatwa on Isioma, calling for her death while she was forced to flee to the United States of America for asylum. The police arrested three hundred and fifty people in connection with this riot. The dynamics of this event suggests the spirit of violence which can hardly be pacified once it is started. ThisDay

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90 Nguvugher, Conflicting Christologies in a Context of Conflicts, 136, citing A. Henry, Off Our Backs, Mar/April 2003. Isioma’s appraisal was of the candid view that it was an honor for Nigeria to host the year’s edition of the Miss World beauty Pageant having won the previous year’s competition. She was relatively ignorant of the crescendos in the Christian-Muslim relationship in the country having returned shortly to the country from England to practice journalism after studying. Being a Christian from the Southern Nigeria, the Muslim North considered it an insult upon their religiosity and the personality of Prophet Muhammad. That was the main cause of this trouble.
newspaper apologized to the entire Muslim community in the nation, displaying it conspicuously on the cover page for four days from November 16, with Isioma’s resignation for her journalistic blooper. But this did not stop the premeditated violence.

The venue of the beauty contest was shifted to London United Kingdom where it was held on 7th December. The legitimacy of the source of the fatwa on the embattled journalist was questioned in line with Islamic tradition. Only a religious leader is legally allowed to issue such a religious verdict, not a government official like a deputy governor. As a result the secretary general of the Nigeria’s organization of Islamic groups ordered the fatwa to be lifted in December stating that "true religion never touches thuggery, killing, vandalism. But where you have 70% of youths unemployed ... a devil can find work for idle hands" shifting the focus of the issue from religious intolerance to economic condition and maladministration.92

Prior to the writing of the article, the announcement of Nigeria as the hosting country did not meet with the approval of some conservative Muslims in the north who associate the competition with sexual impropriety like half naked dresses and promiscuity. Consequently, there were rumors of underground threats before the contestants arrived. Perhaps the organizers would have considered another country for hosting this competition except for the intervention of the then president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo who calmed the rumors that the situation was under control and that the event would not be held in an Islamic city – assuring the international community of the safety of the contestants. Announcing the FCT Abuja was later interpreted as undermining the presence of Muslims in Abuja. As the violence began the President blamed the media for the uproar; "it could happen at any time irresponsible journalism is committed against Islam," but later pleaded with the entire nation to remain calm. The violence spread to Abuja FCT but the police quickly arrested the situation unlike Kaduna where the police did not give immediate attention. The overview of this riot presented Nigeria erroneously to members of the international community as an Islamic country. Amina later gained her appeal in 2003. Different organizations have stressed the overbearing consequences of this riot. For instance, Human Rights Watch showed that

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92 This was in addition to the immediate response from the Minister of Information Prof. Jerry Gana and the leadership of the Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI), the Muslim umbrella organization, and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), condemning the Islamic edict and questioning the jurisdiction of Zamfara State government to make such a statement on matters happening in another state. These Muslim organizations demanded that the statement be overlooked.
around two hundred and fifty people were dead while between twenty thousand and thirty thousand people were displaced besides extrajudicial killings.\textsuperscript{93}

The whole of the Kaduna episodes of violence with the various shattering lasting effects are a practical demonstration of the interconnectedness between ethnicity, religion, and politics. Granted that they also have economic dimensions, the sectarian nature of these violence often bring to the fore religion as a standing agent for criminal acts. The government, which ought to be non-partisan in the ‘peace-building process’ is mostly found guilty of taking sides. The ‘ritual’ of quickly setting up one committee of enquiry to give critical look into the causes of violence in different parts of the affected states has lost its meaning today. In fact, the case of Kaduna State has shown that the government of the time was a colossal failure regarding security and mutual co-existence in the State. Part of the recommendations given on the 2000 crisis, which the state government also agreed to, was that affected areas, churches and mosques will be adequately compensated. As at the time of another crisis in 2002, these recommendations were not implemented. The changing face of similar violence has also occurred sporadically as we shall see shortly.

2.3.3 Bauchi State Riots 1991, 1994, 2000 and beyond

Bauchi has experienced a notable violence starting in 1991. The occurrence at Bauchi between 20\textsuperscript{th} and 24\textsuperscript{th} April, 1991 which led to the death of over two hundred people, began on a trivial issue that would have been otherwise settled amicably between a butcher and his customer at an abattoir. There are three instalments on the cause of the riot. The first has it that a Christian butcher in the Tafawa Balewa\textsuperscript{94} Local Government sold meat to a Muslim. Tafawa Balewa is a suburb of Bauchi, a distance of about 50 kilometers. On arriving home the customer returned the meat to the butcher on the ground that the meat was not beef but pork – which Muslims are forbidden to eat by their tradition. The second version has it that a Christian butcher slaughtered swine in an abattoir populated by Muslim butchers and the latter revolted. The third narrative was that a Muslim bought meat from a Christian butcher; (s)he returned it later realizing that the man was a Christian because he would not have made

\textsuperscript{94} Tafawa Balewa is a town located some 76 kilometers south-west of Bauchi, the Headquarters of Bauchi State. The town was founded by Fulani after Jihad. It is the headquarters of Tafawa Balewa Local Government. The popularity of the name came with the First Prime Minister of Nigeria, (1960-63) Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who adopted the name of that town.
some Quranic citations on it. In the first and the last version of this story, the meat would be considered *haram* or *non-kosher* to a Muslim. To return it, the butcher refused to collect the meat, an argument erupted and the customer injured or killed the meat seller. Fellow Christian butchers around came to rescue their friend who was overpowered by the Muslims around.

The fight escalated to Bauchi capital city, lasting four days. It was dramatic like the fueling of Zango-Kataf of Kaduna crisis; the carriage of the corpses of the casualties instigated more havoc. The fight had spread to the neighboring town of Dass. Bauchi city became aflame as the dead were being carried to the town for mass burial. This spread the word and the Muslims in Bauchi rose to avenge their loved ones lost in this attack. The riots of Bauchi particularly attracted national attention because at the period the state was hosting a National Sports Festival with media focusing on the events going on in the state. The rioters invaded Hospital Road Bauchi, where many churches were located. Falola reports that twenty churches altogether were destroyed. This riot led to the suspension of the Sports festival.

In the heat of this violence and violation of the human rights, the security agents did not give full support to quench the ensuing bloodshed. So the fight spread far and near. Over two hundred people were recorded dead, larger numbers were injured, thousands of Christians deserted their homes for Jos nearby state for fear of being attacked, five hundred houses, fifteen hotels were torched, and twenty churches vandalized in this tumult.

On why such a minute issue could lead to full-fledged violence in the state, Falola reasons that the “economic decline in the country, religious divides and manipulation, and attempt by minority to assert themselves” over the so called southerners who had long dominated the economy of the state are the key underlying factors. Government imposed dusk-to-dawn curfew but it yielded a little result. The deployment of soldiers by the federal government for the public protection brought up more casualties as people crowded the state from different parts of the country. The damage was so much that the police could not resist

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95 It is very difficult to maintain the exactitude of this occurrence out of the three versions of this story reported in the long run. The first and the third instalments of this story seem more probable considering the fact that a Christian butcher will never try to slaughter a pig in an Islamic dominated abattoir considering the likely outcome of that action. It is very certain however, that meat caused a fight between a butcher who was a Christian and his Muslim customer.
97 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 205-207.
98 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 204.
the violence, but “as soon as the rioters had finished their havoc, the police would come to inspect, but they were powerless to stop it.”

It was a situation of complete anarchy. The state government pleaded with many non-indigenes who fled the state to return to resume their normal activities but many did not yield to the appeal. The Federal government set up a Commission referred to as “Babalakin Commission” to report back the causes, extent of damages, compensation that could be paid to the victims, the instigators of this crisis and measures to prevent future occurrences. This notwithstanding, nothing good came out of it.

The atmosphere of suspicion created in 1991 Bauchi fracas left Falola with no other conclusion than to say, “riots could recur at any time” and it recurred in three years. How the previous violence was handled opened the door for another episode of violence. The Committee of Enquiry had earlier recommended a compensation of 25 million naira for the victims of the 1991 riots, but this money was not paid. Like the situation in many of the places in the north, Tafawa Balewa Local Government has a Christian minority ethnic group, known as Sayewa tribe – mostly Christians by religion. Sayewa people had long been complaining of the domination of Hausa/Fulani rival tribes which were for the most part Muslims. The Sayewas being a minority found it difficult to secure a good job after education and struggled with their economic and religious life in view of the perceived domination of the majority tribe. Their coming into politics is more a strategy targeting their emancipation.

The Bauchi riots of 1994 emanated from the above situation. The emergence of a Christian governor was a relief to the Sayewas though not their own indigene. However, he was removed when according to a report, he was showing signs of support for the Sayewas by appointing some of their people into the state cabinet. In replacement, Rasheed Raj was appointed. Governor Raj politically removed a Sayewa indigene, and replaced him with a resident of Tafawa Balewa, Alhaji Ibrahim. The Chairman of Tafawa Balewa Local Government Council organized a reception party for the new Commissioner. In preparation, salaries of the Council workers were deducted from the source, against their wishes not

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100 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 209.
101 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 211.
102 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 205. Though Sayewas would lay that claim of the victimization of the majority tribe but Hausa/Fulani would always refute that claim. Sayewas are very small so that they cannot win elections alone except by seeking affinity with some other groups.
minding the circumstances leading to the appointment. It is the resistance to this reception party and subsequent Sayewa actions that immediately spurred this crunch.

The wives of the workers protested the salary deduction but could not control that decision. The date was fixed for the reception but the closeness of the date heightened the tension further in Tafawa Balewa. On the reception day the invited guests could not gain entrance into the town, as Sayewas mounted roadblocks on all the major roads leading to the town. The reception was postponed. The Sayewas went out in jubilation of the victory being able to stop the event. Then the violence broke out in the process of jubilation. The effects of this mayhem are recounted. For instance, Yakubu Dogara, a Christian member of the community reported that thirty Sayewa villages were burnt down, eight villages of Hausa/Fulani or Jarawa, making a total of thirty-eight villages being burnt down. About 145 Sayewas were killed and seventy-seven churches burned. Both Federal and State Governments at this period responded to this crisis differently. First, media being a major agent through which unfounded rumor usually spread was mandated to downplay the effects and the numbers of the casualties in reporting to the rest of the country. Second, burial for the victims took an altered format from the 1991 episode. Corpses were not allowed into Bauchi City so as to prevent its potential escalation of the crisis into the state capital.

The crisis in Bauchi State continued unabated for several years at various intervals. It was always sporadic and unpredictable in most parts in the north. The 2011 post presidential elections also inflicted pains on the residents of Bauchi State and even elsewhere in the country. Lists of casualties kept piling up with little or no proactive measures at bringing a permanent solution. The ceaseless conflict in this part of Bauchi cannot be totally separated from ethnic bias. The Sayewa people had been clamoring for their own traditional ruler which was one of the underlying factors for previous outbreaks of mayhem. Then state Governor, Isa Yuguda, decided a relocation of the Tafawa Balewa Local government from its seat in Tafawa Balewa town to Bununu in 2011 in view of the sporadic outbreak of mayhem which has so much affiliated with the area. It is hoped that this move will restore peace

103 Boer, _Nigeria’s Decades of Blood 1980-2002_, 83-88. The Muslim sources used in research that formed the source informed that Christian Sayewas started the violence.
104 The _Vanguard_, one of the Nigerian national dailies reported on 7th May 2011 that 16 people died in the attack while not less than 20 houses were destroyed. See http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/05/16-die-20-houses-burnt-in-bauchi%E2%80%99s-fresh-mayhem/#sthash.QndmJZR.dpuf. Accessed November 22, 2013. Another Newspaper _ThisDay_ reported the same occurrence but was different in terms of the numbers of casualties with an addition that three people who were hospitalized as a result of fatal injury also died the following day. See http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/20-fa.pnged-killed-in-bauchi90917/. Accessed November 22, 2013.
among the warring communities. This action has received criticism from various organizations like the Hope Arewa Development Initiative (HADI), a pan-northern group based in Kaduna, describing the relocation of Local Government headquarters as “absurd, unconstitutional and an insult to the sensibilities of Nigerians,” because it was the home of first Prime Minister of Nigeria.105

Considering the effects in 2011 the Bauchi State government set up another Commission of enquiry to reassess the implementation of reports of the Babalakin, Shehu Awak and Justice Bala Umar led judicial commissions of enquiry into the Tafawa Balewa crises over the years. In carrying out the assignment, the commission engaged the members of the erring communities in three days interactive sessions, to unveil the causes and grievances of the concerned parties with the help of an Imam, Muhammad Nurain Ashafa and Pastor James Movel Wuye,106 ending in a communiqué on the situation. The communiqué signed by sixty members of the religious and community leaders reads in part;

We the people of Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro having seen the need for peaceful co-existence between the various ethnic and religious groups, firmly resolve and declare our commitment to ensure that peace reigns in the two local government areas. It is the consensus of all the stakeholders and indeed the successive government of this state that this sad development has seriously hampered progress in the area. We have therefore resolved that hence forth, all religious and political leaders must preach and propagate peaceful co-existence and must conduct their activities devoid of sentiments.107

The concerned people have indicated their interest in making things work to their benefit. Meanwhile, the governor and House of Assembly members have also stood publicly to defend their actions as being a move to allay long years of protracted bloodletting. “We believe the action has paved the way for relative peace in the local government and we pray that blood will never be shed again on this land, which was founded by Tafawa Balewa, our

106 The Pastor and Imam mentioned have been variously involved in leading aggrieved youths in inter-religious wars in times past and they have both fallen victims at both ends. On realizing the need to form a collaboration, they are now working together on procedures for mutuality and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, using dialogue as a vehicle to achieve reconciliation.
leader and man of peace and unity.”

But only tomorrow shall tell what becomes of the ethno-religious cum political crisis in the state and elsewhere in the nation of Nigeria.

2.3.4 Plateau State Crises 1994, 2001 and beyond

Jos and the Plateau State in general has a long standing era of peace relatively compared to all other northern states. It has a history of having Christians as the dominant indigenous people and settlers. The indigenes, who were predominantly Christians unlike most of the northern states, had lived peacefully together with Muslim/Fulani northerners who had migrated to the state from other northern states in the early part of 20th century. This peaceful co-existence earned the Plateau State the slogan “State of Peace and Tourism” among other states of the federation. This condition of peaceful co-existence was overturned beginning with the crisis of 1994.

Historically, no part of the Plateau State fell to the Islamic jihad of the 19th century perhaps the major reason the State has a majority Christian population. All the same, in the process of political grouping during the colonial era, that part of the north was placed under the ruler of the Emir of Bauchi who was appointed from Islamic descent. The Emir appointed a Chief to oversee Jos until 1926 when the colonialist removed Jos under Bauchi and gave an indigenous chief. This decision remained unchallenged until 1987. In 1987, a Muslim politician Alhaji Saleb Hassan was said to be inciting youths of Jasawa – Hausa/Fulani settlers in Jos north to rise and reclaim the right of chieftaincy back from Jos as their legitimate right. The problem lingered for years and the peak of this was the riot of 1994.

In 1994, the military administrator of Plateau State, who himself was a Muslim, appointed a Muslim member of Jasawa tribe to the position of the Chairman of Jos North Local Government Area. While the Jasawa people were glad of the gradual breakdown of the domination of the traditional people, the decision did not go down well with the traditional Jos people, who interpreted it as the gradual fulfillment of the internal war that began in 1987. Hereafter, they embarked on a massive but non-violent protest against the decision. Seeing the signal, the appointment was suspended and the Jasawas took offence, went on a rampage, caused a lot of havoc, killings and looting. The police and military were involved to

calm the situation. Tension of that situation remained as none of the parties ‘gave up its claims.’ This broke the peace of the Plateau State; the situation has never been the same again since.

Friday March 22, 1996 was a day of interruption of regular activities due to a clash between Christians and Muslims not far from the Jos Central Mosque. Weeks before, tension had risen high in view of the violence associated with Local Government elections held nationwide, in which a thirty-five year old Christian man was killed, while challenging a group of rogues who were allegedly engaging in multiple voting. Azi Chai was killed in Agwan Rogo, a Muslim populated area. On that day, the CAN gathered at the COCIN Sarkin Mangu Street while in procession for the burial of this young man. The relationship had gotten worse because of the above, added to the fact that the Christians could not pass through the street on this Friday as the Muslims blocked the road because of the Jum’aat prayer. The Christians boldly dismantled the barricades which led to a fight on the street. Nguvugher reports that, “many people were injured and property estimated as running into thousands of naira was damaged in the skirmish.”

The city of Jos went into a state of frenzy again on September 7, 2001. History repeated itself as one Alhaji Mohammed Muktar Usman was appointed Chairman of the Jos North Local Government Area and the Co-coordinator of the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), a decision unacceptable to the indigenes. There are two other causes that helped ignite this violence. First is that a Christian woman passed through the ranks of an extension of Muslims during a Jum’aat prayer. The Islamic vigilante beat her up and the Christian youths retaliated to the extent of burning the mosque. Second is a pamphlet distributed by the Muslims in the area in response to a Christian group’s provocation. When the position of the Jos North Council Chairman was announced, the Christian youths came out enmasse to protest, holding various placards with different inscriptions, “If you can’t read, at least you know the sign above means: Dangerrr!” (sic), “trace your roots before it is too late”, “the devil has no parking space in Jos North”, “I believe you will like to take care of your family, boy! Run for your life. Run! Run!! Run!!!”, “you are warned once again not

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112 NAPEP was a federal government initiative that supports unemployed youths by engaging them in small scale businesses. Government facilitates businesses by giving loan to individual participants in the program.
to step in”, “please go and tell them you are not interested anymore because your life is at stake”, “this office is not meant for Hausa/Fulani or any non-indigene”, “go and teach Islamic Knowledge, it is better”, “Mukhtar Muhammad is a wanderer ....” In response to this, the Muslim youths equally responded with provocative placards which read: “the seat is dearer to us than our lives. In any case, do you have monopoly of violence?”, “blood for blood”, “yes,… Jos North Local Government is not only historically located in Middle of our community but was actually created absolutely at our request”. Jos North indigenes reasoned that the settlers were claiming their own land thereby losing their traditional heritage. These responses in an already tense atmosphere sparked the ferocity in the entire local government and throughout the state. The violence escalated from this area to other parts of the state and other neighboring states like Kano, and Onitsha in southeastern Nigeria.

The September 7th crisis lasted six days with a death toll estimated at one thousand people. The home of peace and tourism then turned to a “state of pieces and terrorism” continuing to 2002, and 2003; with sporadic violence in places like Langtan-Wase, Minchakpu where a figure put at 500 people dropped dead, and over ten thousand people displaced. In the Jos 2002 crisis, the ultramodern market complex was torched leading to a colossal loss for a lot of business owners and traders within the complex and environment. Indirect clashes which are an offshoot of the main one in Shandam, Langtan South, Langtan North, Wase and Kanam, Basa Local Government Areas, saw a lot of churches, mosques and residential houses razed to ashes, besides there being unaccounted numbers of missing people.

The Jos episodes of crises can best be described as a “battle for supremacy” between ‘indigenes and settlers’ beginning in 1994 and had been channeled through religion between Christians and Muslims via politics. An offshoot of this crisis has continued unabated until recent times in various part of the Plateau State with major effects. The tension became heightened again in Yelwa, Mikang, Barkin Ladi, Shendam, Wase, etc in 2004. On May 2 2004, there was a massive massacre as a group of militant Christians of the Tarok tribe attacked a Muslim community of Yelwa town leading to the death of six hundred people. This happened as a counter attack to the previous attack on the Christian community a week earlier. However, the situation repeated itself in the Muslim dominated Kano, where the Muslims bombarded Christians in the state with fierce violence killing fifty people. The crisis

113 Nguvugher, Conflicting Christologies in a Context of Conflicts, 149.
was almost threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria, when the then president Olusegun Obasanjo had to declare emergency rule in Plateau State.\footnote{On May 18, 2004 President Olusegun Obasanjo declared an Emergency Rule in Plateau State. The state governor Joshua Dariye and the legislators were sacked in the president’s nationwide broadcast. A retired army general Chris Ali, who is also a Plateau State indigene was appointed as the Sole Administrator for the state for six months. This was the first time an Emergency Rule would be declared in the nation’s nascent democracy since its return in 1999. The President gave the reasons for the Emergency Rule as the governor’s failure to handle the situation adequately.} It was becoming imminent that it would result in emergency rule as the violence was already escalating to other parts of the country. The situation persisted all through year 2011 and 2012. On July 8th, 2012 the death of a senator representing Plateau north district and Majority Leader of the state assembly, Gyang Fulani, was reported; they were assassinated by alleged Fulani assailants. The killers were dressed in complete military uniform, and killed the two men and injured four more. Some individuals who dressed in the same regalia had earlier attacked several Berom villages, killing mostly the elderly, women and children. This resulted in the deaths of over forty people, including twenty from the attackers. This is just one of the several attacks in a recycling violence between Jos’ Fulani herdsmen, who are predominantly Muslims and the Berom people who are Christians. It was the peak of the happenings around this time.\footnote{Then Governor Jonah Jang set up a Commission of Enquiry headed by Bola Ajibola. The Commission in its 339 pages report faulted the establishment of Jos North Local Government where the crisis first began in Plateau State and revolved around it ever since, by the former military government of General Ibrahim Babangida as a move to favour the Hausa-Fulani group in Jos North who clamored for recognition against the indigenes in 1991. It further recommended the following: 1. The Jos North Local Government be divided into three with an equal number of wards. 2. Every appointment, promotion, and nomination by the State government should reflect due and equal consideration for all ethnic groups in the state. 3. The state government should include and promote State Character in the manner of the Federal Character Principle to enhance every citizen in the state to have the same inalienable rights everywhere they find themselves. See http://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/03/jos-crisis-when-a-mining-city-becomes-an-eternal-killing-field/#sthash.QufocEMw.dpuf. Accessed November 23, 2013.}

Various pressure groups and international communities were mounting pressure on the State and Federal Government to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Plateau State.

A Commission of Enquiry set up by the Plateau State Government was ending its findings and report\footnote{The Hausa/Fulani group refused to show up before the Commission of Enquiry set up by the state government possibly because they did not trust the Commission to play the role of an unbiased umpire in its findings and recommendations. But immediately the General Emmanuel Abisoye Panel started meeting the Hausa/Fulani group flooded it with petitions and memoranda. The group was advised that the whole happening was political in nature going through the history of the crises. It alleged that then current Governor Jonah Jang was supporting the Christian groups.} when the Presidential Panel of Enquiry of the Federal government arrived for its findings and dialogue among various warring people.\footnote{A source, Coalition of}
All Southerners in Plateau State, comprising people from southwest (Yoruba), southeast (Igbos) and south-south (Niger-Delta area) recently numbered the losses associated with the Jos crises since 1994. The group claimed that since 1994 Plateau State has lost 1,654 persons and property worth #970 billion naira. Up till the moment of this research, the government of Plateau State and the Federal government of Nigeria are engaging in a collaborative effort to resolve over a decade of attacks and reprisals in various parts of Plateau State. The trend that is now developing is that of dialogue so as to erase the bitterness of the past and persuade various stakeholders to embrace peace and mutuality through right actions beginning with government.

Crisis related to the above have occurred in various parts of the north. The above background has given birth to a greater worrisome stance of fundamentalism. Since the year 2010 there had been a shift in the understanding and interpretation of the periodic violence witnessed in the northern part of Nigeria. It is now taking on some dimensions of terrorism. The sect founded by Mohammad Yusuf, popularly known as Boko Haram, has wreaked so much havoc on churches, mosques and individuals since its inception. There are evidences that Boko Haram sect has affinity to the religious ideology of the Maitatsine Islamic sect that ravaged several northern states in the 1980 beginning with the state of Kano. Writing about Maitatsine in 1998, years before the emergence of Boko Haram sect, Toyin Falola stated that some of the core teachings of Maitatsine were an astute rejection of modernization, western education, and technological advancement. The group embraced poverty as an ideal, modest lifestyle. These elements are exactly what members of the Boko Haram sects have claimed to oppose. No wonder that some easily draw a connection between the two groups.

Whichever way one views the episodes of violence presented above, the Christians have always been the receiving end, victims either in the form of destruction of church buildings or facilities or death of members. The violence has created pain, division, physical and emotional injuries, needing healing and restoration. The message of reconciliation will have so much to offer in the process of working together to build a better nation in the future.

118 This group gave the break down as follows: 630 Yoruba, 604 Igbo and 430 people from the South-South lost their lives to the crises which occurred at various times over a period of a decade in the Jos area. According to the spokesperson of this group, the Yoruba lost property worth N450 billion, Igbo N10 billion and South-South N110 billion in the various crises since 1994. See http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/03/1654-persons-n970bn-worth-of-property-lost-in-jos-crises-since-1994-jos-group/. Accessed November 23, 2013.
119 The official name of the group is Jama`atu Ahlus Sunnah Lid Da`awati Wa Jihad or People Committed to the Prophet’s Teachings for Propagation and Jihad. For more on Boko Haram, see Mike Smith, Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria’s Unholy War (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2015).
120 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 143-144.
2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the Nigerian situation in a brief historical perspective, focusing on major issues underlying the constant strife and violence. The heart of the concerns is how religion has been misappropriated to affect politics, economy, and governance. One main lesson from this historical sketch is that religion is a powerful phenomenon that can be obtained to pursue a beneficial or disruptive agenda by a few people. The unhealthy associations and interactions that have existed over the years have had negative consequences in the process of nation building since the eve of Nigerian independence. How political and religious associations were promoted have continued to sow multiple seeds of distrust, suspicion, abuse, intolerance, violence, and disintegration in various facets of the Nigerian life. The most significant impact of this rivalry is evident in a backlash leading to series of scuffles and losses that have accompanied it over the years.

In the midst of the complex Nigerian situation, the Christian mission has continued to grow, always looking for a way to engage with the Nigerian people. This engagement has showed its relevance in areas such as educational support to consolidate government efforts, checkmating government activities and Islamic influence in the nation. The growth of Christian mission also shows in how theologians are articulating contextual theologies that respond to the Nigerian people. I will discuss some of these contextual theologies as reflect in Christological development in the next chapter.

In considering the crises motivated by religion among other factors, a sample of some of these crises have been presented without further analysis. It would take a different research project entirely to analyze thoroughly the terrain of violence and how it has affected Nigerian nation. Some academics that I cited have undertaken that task faithfully. The aspects of politics and military intervention in the nation’s affairs have not been covered for this same reason. However, the description of the crises presented here is done to give context to the argument that a renewed understanding of a living Christology may offer a way forward for peace and mutuality. This will be proposed in Chapter Six.

In the remainder of the thesis, I will argue for a Christian alternative solution to the Nigerian crises situations. The Christian option is rooted in the theology of mission and social transformation. This theological approach has resulted into a Christology that seeks to change the situation of the church and Nigerian people. How this Christology develops in Nigerian
Christianity and the issues surrounding it is the focus of the next chapter. The next chapter will seek to understand the roots of this Christological expressions in the academy and among the Christians in Nigeria.