CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND THE FEAR OF ISLAMIC DOMINATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

While Christian worldview discussions in the West are mostly undertaken in response to the dominance of sacred-secular dualism, African Christian scholars mostly discuss how African traditional worldview might influence Christian theology, without emphasizing Christian worldview. The few scholarly statements about Christian worldview per se on African perspective are mostly made by Western scholars writing in Africa. They suggest a gap in Christian worldview discussion by indigenous African scholars in response to challenges to faith. The authors of this piece propose that Christian worldview discussion in the context of plural relations, especially the fear of Islamic domination, may prove helpful to influence Christian thinking in Nigeria towards more biblical and fruitful attitudes.

KEYWORDS: Christian, worldview, Islamic, domination, African, perspective, fear, violence, jihad, dualism

INTRODUCTION

Islamic violence in Nigeria, which often targets Christians, has been a cause for great worry. Following many years of violence against Christians, Today’s Challenge, a Christian magazine, featured 2018 as the bloodiest year for Christians in which 634 people were killed in Benue State, 503 in Plateaus State, 760 in Taraba State, 235 in Southern Kaduna, 200 in Nasarawa State, 300 in Adamawa State, and 100 in Kogi State.1 It also reports the declaration of the President of the Church of Christ in Nigeria, Dr Dachollom Datiri, that a conventional and stealth jihad has been launched against the church in Nigeria, not only in terms of killings and kidnappings by various militant groups, but also through denial of land to Christians for the building of churches.2 Dr Datiti also blamed President Buhari of Nigeria for the government not protecting the lives and property of Christians.3 The fear of Islamic domination, often called ‘Islamization’, is therefore palpable among many Christians in Nigeria. This is further evidenced by the


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many statements in publications, as well as in news and social media, where many Christians put forward allegations of plots to Islamise the country. For example, Danjumma Byang cites the Sardauna jihad (meaning efforts by Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of Northern Nigeria from 1960 to 1966, to convert non-Muslims in the north of Nigeria to Islam): the use of government media houses and organisations to propagate Islam; the use of Islamic/Arabic inscriptions and symbols on federal institutions and national currencies; establishment of Islamic/Arabic institutions and centres with public funds; unfair treatment of Christians by governments in inter-religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims; and, lopsided religious considerations in Nigeria’s foreign policy (e.g. delay in establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, while clandestinely enrolling Nigeria into the Organization of Islamic Conference), as evidences of plans to Islamise Nigeria. Moreover, he insists, from the regime of Obasanjo in 1999 to that of Buhari in 2017, governmental activities in favour of Islamic domination have continued unabated, even when Christians were Presidents.

Today’s Challenge, has consistently carried stories highlighting attempts by Muslims to dominate Nigeria. For example, volume 7, number 6 of July 2012 cites bomb attacks as evidence of ‘ongoing annihilation of Christians in Northern Nigeria’. In reaction to this the Methodist Prelate of Nigeria, Bishop Ola Makinde, said nobody could Islamise Nigeria. Volume 10, number 3 of June 2016 carries the story, ‘FG Education Policy Change: Another Islamization Ruse in Disguise’, arguing that the merger of Christian Religious Knowledge and Islamic Religious Knowledge, under an omnibus discipline known as Religion and National Values is a plot to Islamise Nigeria. Volume 10, number 4 of July-August 2016 carries another story: ‘Grazing Reserves: A Covert Islamization Plot Uncovered’. While a bill to provide grazing reserves for Fulani herdsmen is supposed to reduce conflicts between herdsmen and farmers, many Christians believe it is a ploy to continue the 19th century jihad of Othman Dan Fodio by granting land to Dan Fodio’s kinsmen, the Fulani herdsmen.

Volume 11, number 7 of August 2017 features a story entitled ‘Islamization of Nigeria: The Palpable Facts’ (pp. 22-26), in which government appointments that favour Muslims, President Muhammadu Buhari’s open support for Sharia, his promotion of Islamic Studies literature, and Nigeria’s joining of the Coalition of Islamic States against Terrorism, are cited as the facts that prove Islamic domination efforts. However, the magazine also carries a rebuttal by Professor Ishaq Akintola of Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), who declared that using the Christian and Islamic Studies curriculum as a launching pad to declare that Nigeria is being Islamised stands logic on its head. This is because both Christian and Muslim leaders asked the Federal Government, under ex-President Jonathan (a Christian) to make the two subjects compulsory for students who belong to their respective faiths. He called this and other allegations ‘false, baseless, deceptive, malicious and provocative’.

Christians have also cited demands by Muslim students, in Osun State in the Southwest of Nigeria, to be allowed to wear the hijab in all schools (including those owned by churches), as part of the Islamic domination plans. Wale Sokunbi said ‘It is unfortunate that the matter of school uniform has become a big distraction in the state…at a time when all attention should be focused on the problems bedeviling the

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5 Byang, Sharia in Nigeria, pp. 95-112.
nation’s education sector’ after the controversy generated when Christians in Osun State told their wards to wear choir and other church robes to school in protest of a 2016 judicial ruling in favour of wearing the hijab to school by Muslim girls. He was implying that the state judiciary should not promote the use of religious paraphernalia in public schools, but also advocating more measured responses by other religious leaders, presumably Christians.12

Yusufu Turaki provides some historical perspectives to the Nigerian Christian experience of Islam, leading to latent hostility between the two religions in the sense that conflicts between ethnic groups – the Caliphate (groups already subject to the rule of the Sokoto Caliphate established in the 19th century in parts of Northern Nigeria by Othman Dan Fodio) and non-Caliphate peoples – and between Muslims and non-Muslims ‘is a legacy of slavery (and specifically of Islamic kafir and slave status) and of British racism and colonialism.’ Turaki also argues that ‘the frequency of religious and communal riots in the Northern States is the current manifestations of the long-term consequences of the colonial legacy in Northern…and other parts of Nigeria’ because ‘the Colonial Administration created two antagonistic communities within the Northern System and instituted latent hostility between them’, when it gave the existing Caliphate system hegemony over the existing, unconquered local chieftdoms.14 Turaki’s claims probably refer more to violence due to the resistance by non-Muslim communities of Nigeria to the domination by Muslims, which the colonial system seemed to legitimize, than to the general violence around the world committed by Muslims. Moreover, Matthew Hassan Kukah observes that Islamic restiveness is a result of the expansion of Christianity in the north and the domination of professions by southerners, especially Christians, as well as incursion of Western pop culture, secularism and Euro-Christian values in policy formulation.15 What is more, Abashiya and Ulea declare ‘It would appear to us that a sizeable number of the adherents of the two religions do not seem to understand even the tenets of their own religion let alone those of others.’ How might the Christian worldview help Christians to respond to these complex historical and existential forces that generate hostility among the religions and fuel fears of Islamic domination?

THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Every proposal in life is based on a worldview. Ryken says, ‘A worldview is a well-reasoned framework of beliefs and convictions that gives unified perspective on the meaning of human existence.’17 Christians must therefore understand that ‘God’s redemptive grace is working in us and through us to restore all things that were given in creation, but lost in the fall and our calling as Christians is to consecrate every department of life and every energy at its disposal to the glory of God.’18 ‘The Christian worldview may also be seen, according to Dockery, as the recognition that all human sinful failings are the result of ‘our alienation from God’, which has however been dealt with at the cross of Christ, by which ‘the grace of God has provided restoration for believers and has brought about a right relationship with God, with one

18 Ryken, Christian Worldview, p. 37.
another, with nature, and with ourselves.’ In the same vein Holmes, arguing for differentiating Christian thinking from secularized thinking, says that fundamentally the Christian worldview opposes ‘self-deception, faulty imagination, misleading language habits, and disorganized relationships.’ This suggests that Christian responses to challenges from those who oppose them must still be based on truth, and never on manipulation of facts or deliberate deception. For example, in December 2016 a Christian posted on Facebook a ten-year-old picture of a petroleum explosion in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had burnt many people beyond recognition. Evidence of Muslim atrocities against Christians in Southern Kaduna State of Nigeria was claimed, but it was totally contrary to Christian worldview, and threatened to deny veracity to narratives of the real, horrifying experiences of Christians in that part of Nigeria.

The Christian worldview is expressed in various ways. Hence, Diekema observes that though ‘a Christian worldview must derive from the character and person of the Creator God’, there will never be ‘a single monolithic Christian worldview.’ Yet Diekema proposes ‘aspects of a Christian worldview which should guide all Christian thought’ as: belief in a sovereign Creator God; human beings as fallen image-bearers of God; a moral order in the world, revealed by God in scripture and creation; the Bible as the revealed Word of God, inspired and authoritative; Jesus Christ as the God-man, who breaks the power of sin in humans; human beings as servants of Jesus Christ, who live to serve God and humankind; revelation of God through the active pursuit of truth in human knowledge and understanding, by the study of scripture and creation; and, the Holy Spirit of God in the world, who gives inspiration to individuals and human communities. Gushee contrasts the Christian worldview from other moral norms in history such as: the ancient Sumerians who valued contentiousness, aggression and violence; the Epicurians who valued hedonism; the Marxists who valued the emergence of a society of equity from the struggle between economic classes; and, Hitler’s militarist racism based on survival of the fittest. In contrast to all these, the Christian worldview is based on the creation of a good world; human beings as God’s image bearers; the evil that befell the world because human beings deviated from God’s will; God entering into a redemptive covenant relationship with human beings; and, the reclamation of creation by the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth. The Church is called to reclaim the earth for Christ, sometimes experiencing victory, sometimes defeat. It may be added that the Christian worldview supports justice and opposes injustice, as did the prophets of old and Jesus Christ. It also upholds freedom and equality. Christians are called to speak and act by all legitimate means against social injustice and inequality, regardless of who are the perpetrator and victim.

The Christian worldview is sometimes deployed as a defence against secular philosophies. For instance, Edlin argues that education is not neutral, the way secular philosophers propose, but always informed by worldview, whether secular or religious. He upholds the Christian worldview ‘a biblically faithful and thus gospel-focused way of looking at the world’, which is ‘a reformed critical realism’ and

22 Diekema, Academic Freedom, p. 60.
‘celebrates the empowerment of Christians to revel in the authority of the Scripture’, against ‘the idolatrous positivism of modernism (naïve realism) and the individualistic uncertainties of postmodernity.’

It is such a Christian worldview that Naugle proposes, to foster the intellectual and moral development of university students, because it focuses on integrating intellectual and faith life rooted in God.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW IN AFRICAN SCHOLARSHIP

The phrase ‘Christian worldview’ per se has not featured much in scholarship by Indigenous Africans because their discussions are more concerned with the relationship between African traditional worldview and Christian theology. For example, Abogunrin reacts to Western scepticism about the identity of Jesus from an African worldview perspective:

The New Testament world, which is said to be alien to the West of today, is not strange to the present African world. A Jesus emptied of all the supernaturalism that is associated with Him in the Gospels and with His disciples in the Acts of the Apostles will be meaningless and irrelevant in the African context.

Though rather sweeping and generalizing, Abogunrin alludes to the greater credulity of Africans towards spiritual matters than Westerners. African indigenous scholarship has tended to focus on this credulity as arising from African traditional worldview, which seems to be more open to biblical supernaturalism than Western Christianity, which in turn seems to be greatly influenced by secular scepticism. Hence Imasogie, recognizing that the African traditional worldview is ‘characterized by the strong belief that the world is full of divinities, spirits, demons and their human allies, in the form of witches and wizards,’ and that ‘man can find his real fulfilment only in relation to his human as well as his spiritual communities’, suggests that a Christian theology in Africa should be guided by the following: the efficacy of Christ’s power over evil spiritual forces, the role of the Holy Spirit, the present mediatory role of the living Christ, the omnipresence of God, and the consequent sacramental nature of the universe.

Adeyemo lays more emphasis on the centrality of community in African traditional worldview: ‘Man is the central figure of the African traditional worldview. His basic motivation for social existence is presentation and affirmation of life coherence and harmony are achieved through vital participation in a common life which is the basis of all his family, social, political, and religious institutions and customs.’ For him, basic African values include the sacredness of life, people centred philosophy, sense of community, respect for age, holistic approach to reality, respect for nature, toleration of other religions, regard for history, morality, and a prophetic existence (meaning that success on earth anticipates success in heaven). All these seem to have been distorted by colonial experience and the invasion of Islam and Christianity.

While O’Donovan, a Western scholar writing in Africa, basically agrees with the descriptions of African worldview presented by Imasogie and Adeyemo, adding African emphasis on events over

28 Imasogie, Guidelines for Christian Theology, pp. 79-85.
31 Adeyemo, African Worldview, p. 20.
schedules of time, he sees the need to ‘state biblical truth in ways that are true to African life and experience,’ without specifically talking about a Christian worldview.\textsuperscript{32} It is Van der Walt (1994), a Westerner writing from South African experience of apartheid and observations of general African history, who points clearly to the need for an African Christian worldview. The grounds are that while the original biblical spirituality encompassed the whole of life, Western Christianity’s dualism limited spirituality to the margin of life, and modern Western secularism rejected spirituality altogether. Dualistic Christianity was largely the type that came to Africa, instead of ‘a real Christian worldview based on the Word of God’, which is ‘a total, integral and radical worldview.’\textsuperscript{33} Boer, also a Westerner writing in Africa, agrees with Van der Walt that dualism (a sacred-secular dichotomy in Western Christianity enhanced in Africa by colonialism) has weakened Christianity, not only against secularism, but against the challenges of Islam.\textsuperscript{34}

Dualistic Christianity to Van der Walt has led to the need for a Christian worldview for Africa which should encourage the presence of Christ’s kingdom in the world through advocacy for peace and justice, but avoiding activist radicalism and violence: ‘In all that it does the church should be concerned first of all not with its own interests but with the kingdom of God, and with justice beneficial for believers and unbelievers alike.’\textsuperscript{35} He argues further that ‘Christ consistently rejected violence and rebellion. It was not a sign of weakness but rather of strength. The world is never improved by hatred, terror, torture and murder.’\textsuperscript{36} Turaki, in his preface to Van der Walt’s book, praises it for formulating a comprehensive worldview, answering the crisis of values and worldview that deeply affects Christianity in Africa.\textsuperscript{37} This does not seem to have resulted in further scholarship by Indigenous Africans on Christian worldview per se.

McCain, another Westerner writing in Africa, observes that while in the West ‘the non-Christian worldview focuses on the rational, the Christian worldview focuses on faith’, but in Nigeria while ‘the non-Christian worldview focuses on retaliation, the Christian worldview focuses on forgiveness.’\textsuperscript{38} McCain laments that ‘unfortunately, this traditional retaliation worldview has penetrated the church the traditional worldview is stronger than the worldview they have observed from Jesus.’\textsuperscript{39} One might argue, however, that the ‘retaliation’ worldview is not peculiar to Africa, citing the US retaliation: to Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor during the Second World War;\textsuperscript{40} to terrorist bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and by bombing a chemical plant in Sudan.\textsuperscript{41} Also the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, due to a war against the Taliban in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{42} The term ‘massive retaliation’ was coined by President Eisenhower’s Secretary of State,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} W O’Donovan, \textit{Biblical Christianity in African Perspective}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edn, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1996, pp. 4-5.
\item \textsuperscript{33} BJ van der Walt, \textit{The Liberating Message: A Christian Worldview for Africa}, The Institute for Reformational Studies, Potchefstroom, 1994, pp. 18-23.
\item \textsuperscript{34} JH Boer, \textit{Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together (Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations)}, Volume 8, Part 2, African Christian Textbooks, Bukuru, 2009.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Van der Walt, \textit{The Liberating Message}, p. 464.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Van der Walt, \textit{The Liberating Message}, p. 483.
\item \textsuperscript{38} D McCain, \textit{The Battle for the Mind: A Call for Christians to Think Christianly}, African Christian Textbooks, Bukuru, 2017, pp. 16-18.
\item \textsuperscript{39} McCain, \textit{The Battle for the Mind}, pp. 20-21.
\item \textsuperscript{40} K Hughes, ‘How did the US Retaliate to Japan’s Attack on Pearl Harbor?’, \textit{Answers}, retrieved 7 November 2017, www.answers.com/Q/How_did_the_US_retaliate_to_Japan’s_attack_n_Pearl-Harbor.
\end{itemize}
John Foster Dulles, in 1954, to describe a military decision and nuclear strategy, in which a state commits itself to retaliate in much greater force, in the event of an attack. Western gangster and other movies are replete with vendetta themes, reflecting a culture in which retaliation is common.

‘Retaliation’ does not fully capture the traditional African worldview, which the Indigenous African scholars cited earlier, have shown to contain strong elements of community values, sacredness of life, and toleration of other religions. While retaliation existed to some extent in the past in Africa, today there is a preponderance of intolerance and retaliation over other aspects of African worldview. This may have been enhanced by the degradation of traditional life by the transatlantic slave trade (which escalated tribal wars) and the colonial experience. the dualistic Christianity that predominantly came to Africa from the West (as strongly suggested by Van der Walt), as well as suspicion engendered by the frequency of clashes between Muslims and Christians today. Moreover, Turaki points out that ‘patterns of dominance-subordination between ethnic groups still generate rivalries, resentments and contempt today.’ What is more, Turaki notes that ‘Christians of Northern origin seem not to have protection against the atrocities of some State Governments or some Muslim groups under the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria,’ thus giving room to the tendency for self-defence by Christians.

CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

For Christians to effectively apply the Christian worldview to their fears of Islamic domination, consideration of some issues that have challenged Christian-Muslim relations in the past and present will enhance a more thoughtful response. Younan’s discussion of prophetic interfaith dialogue for life, paints a picture of ‘a world torn apart by fear of the other, violence, war, and injustice, with much of it committed in the name of God.’ Many of the atrocities in the world have been committed by adherents of both Christianity and Islam, in the name of religion; hence, instead of reconciling people with God and with one another, religion can become a divisive tool in the hands of its adherents. Governments and organizations have been trying to do what religious people are expected to do as agents of peace and reconciliation, because of the conviction ‘that it is part of the innermost essence of religion to be a source of peace and reconciliation.’ It is in light of this that Hans Kung sees ‘no peace among nations without peace among religions.’ For peace to exist among religions, the challenges that tend to divide religions must be addressed through mutual dialogue, which Younan calls prophetic dialogue for life. The starting point for this prophetic dialogue for life, is to look at areas of similarities, areas of dissimilarities, and then try to find ways of bridging the gap through mutual relations of respect for the customs and beliefs of the other. A careful consideration of some areas of similarities that might unite the two, and areas of dissimilarities that are likely to divide them, might point to ways of closing the gap between them.

Christianity and Islam have two major points of convergence that might bind them together positively; these are their common Abrahamic ancestry, and the recognition of Jews and Christians by Muslims as

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45 Van der Walt, The Liberating Message, pp. 18-23.
50 Younan, ‘Beyond Luther’, p. 50.
52 Younan, ‘Beyond Luther’, p. 49.
people of the book.53 Many of the contents of Christian sacred texts, are also found in the Qur’an, referred to therein as Torah and Injil. Umaru argues that, using the Abrahamic ancestry and focusing on common themes in the two faith traditions, a theological model for Christian–Muslim relations could be developed in Nigeria. Christianity and Islam are Abrahamic religions and both (though with some differences) look up to Abraham as a model of faith and obedience. Within their respective scriptures, this model is expressed in their common theological themes of belief in one God, divine revelation, prayer, sacred scriptures and a common ethic enshrined in commandments.54 The Qur’an says Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a Hanif Muslim, and discriminates between followers of Abraham and Mohammed as Muslims on the one hand (Q.3:67, 68), and those who are not Muslims on the other hand. This is followed by a strong anti-Jewish and anti-Christian invective (Q.3:69-74), intending the supersession of Judaism and Christianity by Islam based on the identity of Abraham. However, based on other portions of the Qur’an where Muslims are told to ask people of the Book when in doubt, Christians could dialogue with Muslims leading to understanding.

The two religions also share similar ideas about some major prophets like Noah, Moses, and Jesus. Another positive aspect that unites the two religions, especially in Northern and Western parts of Nigeria, is the heterogeneous nature of the family; in a family there can be adherents to the three religions - Christianity, Islam and traditional religion - all bound by mutual respect for their blood relations.

Christians and Muslims both have negative associations. For one thing, Christians were the crusaders in the eleventh century. The crusades created a watershed in the history of Christianity for three key reasons: firstly, it presented a picture of God as one who needed human assistance to defend his cause; secondly, it cast aspersion on the gospel of peace which Christians preach; and thirdly, the church suffered great losses in terms of area of coverage, property and human lives. According to Dowley, out of the eight crusades only the first one was ‘successful’; the remaining seven were disasters.55 For Muslims, the jihads and terrorism are a direct opposite of the identity of Islam as a religion of peace. The term Islam means submission and by this it could mean many things, including peace to the adherents of the religion. Today, Muslims are viewed with suspicion across the globe, as many people tend to associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism, to the extent that some will say ‘all Muslims are terrorists’.56 These generalizations tend to widen the gap and heighten the already volatile situation that exists between adherents to these two religions.

Two other contrasting issues between Christianity and Islam are their positions on their sacred books and the languages they were written. For Muslims, one of the issues held sacrosanct is the fact that the Qur’an was dictated by God and it is part of the mother Qur’an which is kept in heaven. Richter says, ‘The Qur’an is the highest authority in the Islamic faith. For Muslims it is without error; otherwise, there would have been found therein much incongruity [that is contradiction].’57 Richter’s comment is based on what the Qur’an says about its origin: ‘We have revealed the Koran in the Arabic tongue that you may understand its meaning. It is a transcript of the eternal book in our keeping, sublime, and full of wisdom.’

57 Richter, Comparing the Qur’an and the Bible, p. 139.
58 Qur’an, Surah 43:3-4.
Muslims see the Qur’an as superior to the Bible because Jews and Christians have concealed, corrupted and distorted the original scriptures.\textsuperscript{59} Closely related to the Qur’an’s divine origin is the fact that Arabic is considered a sacred language and the Arabic version of the Qur’an is the only authoritative version of the Qur’an, while any other version is only a translation. Christians on their part believe that the Bible is sacrosanct, infallible because of its divine revelation and inspiration.\textsuperscript{60} It is regarded not as a transcript but an inspired book by God. Seen as the sacred text of Christians, the Bible nevertheless has no sacred language. It is open to translation into all languages, and each translation is a copy of the Bible in its own right. That is why Sanneh says translation demystifies the hallowed language of religion, thereby making it accessible and comprehensible to all.\textsuperscript{61} By embracing translation of the Bible into other languages, Christians ‘opened the door for other languages to be employed in communicating the truth of the gospel’,\textsuperscript{62} and the Christian faith continues to be localized among various cultures.\textsuperscript{63}

Another significant factor to note is the claim and counter claim, by Christians on the one hand that Isaac is the promised son of Abraham whom Abraham wanted to sacrifice (Genesis 22: 2-14), and by Muslims on the other hand that Ishmael is the promised son whom Abraham wanted to sacrifice (Qur’an Surah 37: 102-107). However, according to Richter, in both instances God intervened by providing a ransom in the form of a ram.\textsuperscript{64}

The approach of the two religions to evangelism is different. For Christians, it is said to be borne out of love for the lost without the use of force; they simply preach the message of the gospel and allow the individual to decide.\textsuperscript{65} Muslims seem to preach for geographical expansion, and for political and economic gain; hence, if people refuse to embrace Islam, they may use force to convert them, and the converts may be treated as slaves, rather than brethren.\textsuperscript{66} The dissimilarities between the two religions constitute the main source of the challenges against Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria.

Some of the challenges that militate against Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria include: generalized statements and association of religion with a language, group or tribe; inadequate knowledge of each other’s religion; using religion as a weapon of manipulation for personal aggrandisement; unquestioning loyalty to religious leaders; hate speech or use of offensive language; and, suspicion and lack of trust for one another.

The tendency to label Islam and all Muslims as terrorists ignores the fact that in every group of people there are good people because of being created in the image and likeness of God; however, there are equally bad people among Christians because of the effect of the Fall of mankind. The Lausanne Covenant on World Evangelization says partly in paragraph 10: ‘Because men and women are God’s creatures, some of their culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because they are fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic.’\textsuperscript{67} Hence, generalized statements, targeted at people based on religion, are a challenge to Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria.

\textsuperscript{59} Richter, \textit{Comparing the Qur’an and the Bible}, p. 139; cf. Qur’an Surah 2: 140, 146 and 3: 78.
\textsuperscript{63} Sanneh, \textit{Translating the Message}, p. 250.
\textsuperscript{64} Richter, \textit{Comparing the Qur’an and the Bible}, pp. 30-31.
\textsuperscript{65} Richter, \textit{Comparing the Qur’an and the Bible}, pp. 127-129.
Some comments from adherents of the two religions are made out of ignorance of the beliefs and practices of the other religion, based on hearsay, rather than verified facts. According to Younan, Martin Luther argued repeatedly ‘for a clear and honest presentation of matters of religion so that the truth might be pursued and the false refuted through consideration of what is, not of some perversion or monstrosity.’ Younan further emphasizes that it is only when the Islamic faith is understood on its own terms that Christians can effectively witness to their faith. Ignorance of the other’s religious beliefs and practices is a major predicament to genuine Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria.

Information Nigeria, an online platform for information, reported that a church in Akwa Ibom State sells a bottle of the blood of Jesus to members and those interested at a cost of ₦2000 per bottle. Gullible members rush to buy this substance in the name of religion. Those who buy this substance part with their money, while the pastor and his coterie get richer. In a similar vein, some founders of Islamic schools use pupils for financial gain, by engaging them in manual labour and begging. In order to maintain their control over these unsuspecting followers, some leaders hypnotize their members and manipulate them into thinking they are helping them, while the subjects are actually being used for personal aggrandisement. Such leaders will go out of their way to block any avenue that will bring enlightenment to their members, including mutual relations with others, for fear their secret will be exposed and they might lose their control over their members.

There are many followers who exhibit unquestioning loyalty to their leaders. Christian Comedy Channel carried a report of Pastor Legeso Daniel in South Africa who ordered his members to eat grass like goats or sheep. The members, without hesitation or questioning the rationale for doing so, went ahead to eat the grass. Some of them ended up in hospital. It is unquestioning loyalty to religious leaders that makes suicide bombers out of loyalists, as they do not have the freedom or the strong will to challenge the decisions of their leaders, for example, followers of Mohammed Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau of ‘Boko Haram’.

Whenever the activity and authority of the leader is questioned by outsiders as being inimical to mutual relations and corporate existence, such loyalists will not hesitate to resort to violence in order to defend their leader, for example the followers of Sheik Al-Zazzaky (leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria). There cannot be cordial Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria as long as there are people who show unquestioning loyalty to their religious leaders from both sides of the divide.

Recently, there has been growing concern by the Nigerian government about saturation of social media, with slanderous and demeaning statements, which are now labelled ‘hate speech’. The use of provocative statements also falls under hate speech. According to Abimbola Adelakun, hate speech is any speech that is used to demean persons based on their identities such as race, gender, sexuality, or ethnicity, and predispose them to acts of violence. Hate speeches are uttered with bad intentions, hence they are dangerous. Considering the increasing tension caused by hate speech across the divides of religion and

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68 Younan, ‘Beyond Luther’, p. 57.
69 Younan, ‘Beyond Luther’, p. 59.
geographical location, the vice president of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbanjo, called on cultural and political leaders to, ‘remember that if there is an implosion (due to hate speech) there is no predicting the shape of events to come’. He further stated that if the Federal Government had its way, hate speech would be classified as terrorist activity and offenders would be punished by a proposed law of the land.75 The Bible says, ‘The tongue is a fire! The tongue represents the world of wrongdoing among the parts of our bodies. It pollutes the entire body and sets fire to the course of human existence – and is set on fire by hell’ (James 3: 6, NET). The description of the tongue in the Bible as a fire that can set a whole forest ablaze is a strong allusion to hate speech, because hate speech is uttered with the tongue. Hate speech is not only a challenge to Christian–Muslim relations; it creates demons out of human beings and widens the gap between followers of different religions.

Trust is a key factor for the enhancement of mutual relations. According to A. T. Lucia, between 1970 and 1983, many more Christians and Muslims interacted freely as brothers and sisters, exchanging visits and helping one another, however, the Maitatsine riots in Kano, Bauchi, Maiduguri, and Gongola states, and the Kaduna students’ riots, etc., replaced this once harmonious relationship, with bitterness, suspicion and mistrust.76 In Jos, Plateau State of Nigeria, sections of the city can no longer be visited by members of one religion for fear of being attacked by members of the other religion. Even market places have been divided along religious lines. This polarization became more prominent after the crisis of 2008; Christians in Jos, Bukuru, and Kafanchan were warned not to buy oranges, meat and other consumables from Muslims, on the grounds that such goods had been poisoned.77 This atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust makes a healthy Christian–Muslim relation almost impossible. From the Christian perspective, the Christian worldview can offer Christians a positive way of engaging the problems bedevilling co-existence with Muslims and provide hope for at least a few solutions.

HOW CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW MAY IMPACT ON THE FEAR OF ISLAMIC DOMINATION

One reason why the Christian worldview may not be dominant in Nigeria is the fact that most Christians around the world are ignorant about the fundamentals of the Christian faith, a ‘scandalous’ fact observed by Maddox and Estep Jr.78 Another possibility is the growing secularization of the Christian faith. Boer puts it in the context of Nigeria as ‘for the most part they (Christians) marginalized their religion in a dualistic fashion. A semi-secular church cannot expect to be properly equipped for its mission.’79 One result of dualism is that many Christians have abandoned the power available from prayer that alone can defeat the spiritual forces in Islam, which oppose the gospel, as indicated in Ephesians 6:12.

Sometimes arguments can be put forward from the Bible to justify a violent response to perceived threats from others, especially Muslims. Mambula counters the claims that Jesus justified war.80 He argues

79 Boer, Christians and Muslims, p. 53.
‘Christians essentially believe that God, by his love, has chosen to save the world through Jesus Christ.’\textsuperscript{81} In the words of Omare and Kamaara regarding political peace in Kenya, ‘Christianity recognizes that all humanity comes from God, it upholds respect for all persons, love for all and calls for justice.’\textsuperscript{82} On his part, Gaiya declares: ‘Taking the sword for religious cause is not Christian at all. Christians have been called to win non-Christians to Christ with love, not to kill them.’\textsuperscript{83} These statements strongly reflect the Christian worldview, though without using this term.

Wilhoit points to an essentially educational approach to developing a Christian worldview, requiring ‘teachers who not only are sensitive to the student’s situation but who also can think theologically.’\textsuperscript{84} In other words, ‘a biblically-informed pattern of thinking’ shapes ideas with the revelation of Christ, rather than humanistic thought patterns.\textsuperscript{85} Fowler, however, cautions that it is inadequate to merely formulate statements of Christian worldview. Rather, ‘More difficult, and also more important, is to demonstrate such a worldview in every area of educational practice.’\textsuperscript{86} This kind of demonstration is concretely suggested by Guthrie, in a way relevant to Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria, a way that displays patience and tolerance, for: ‘Arrogant, angry Christians who are easily provoked and made defensive do little for the advancement of the Christian worldview as a credible authority structure.’\textsuperscript{87} Such demonstration is also be enhanced by the knowledge among Christians that the Qur’an also exhorts forgiveness in some places, \textit{e.g.}\ 24:22 and 7:199.

While recognizing that no lasting solution to Christian-Muslim conflicts can be arrived at without equal participation from all sides, we have focused on Christian worldview, because we believe that developing a truly Christian worldview will move Christians towards more meaningful responses to the fear of Islamic domination. Sometimes the understanding and celebration of differences advocated by proponents of inter-religious dialogue fail. Then the Christian worldview that shuns vengeance, promotes justice, and trusts God to bring peace can inform Christian response, even in the face of unrelenting persecution and violence. For Christians we therefore direct the recommendations that follow.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Christian worldview gives priority to man as the image of God, over man as evil. Christians should strive to reach the image of God in others, with the message of salvation and peace and to pursue creativity, industry and excellence, as examples to the world of the image of God in them. By Christian discipline and focused righteous, just and productive lives, Christians can initiate the sharing of dominion and direction with non-Christians in a chaotic world.

2. The Christian worldview upholds love over hatred, for God is love. Christians must always act in the belief that love will ultimately win over hatred, though this will often not be immediately obvious or

\textsuperscript{81} Mambula, \textit{Are There Limits to Pacifism?} p. 155.
\textsuperscript{85} RJ Edlin, \textit{The Cause of Christian Education}, 4\textsuperscript{th} edn – extensively revised and expanded, Dordt College Press, Sioux Center, Iowa, 2014, p. 61.
easy, requiring perseverance. Love should galvanize charitable actions in support of the weak, oppressed and displaced, without discrimination on the basis of religion, race or gender. Thus, laying a solid example for love, justice and equity in the world.

3. The Christian worldview is based on forgiveness and not vengeance. Forgiveness also means advocacy for justice, even to the benefit of those who oppose us.

4. The Christian worldview also affirms that God is a just God, who establishes human governments for the protection of citizens and punishment of wrong doers (Romans 13:1 ff.). Therefore, Christians have a legitimate right to expect and demand protection of their lives and property, by the government against armed banditry, and even to defend themselves by legitimate means. Christians should also expect and demand justice by the arrest and trial of murderers, kidnappers and arsonists, under any guise, religious or otherwise.

5. The Christian worldview is founded on the Gospel of peace and not the ministry of condemnation. It is in Christian character to see the best in others and strive to rescue them from judgment to life.

6. The Christian worldview sees the soul of man as eternal, rather than finite. Christians must have concern that every soul will either, end up in eternity with God, or with the devil. Thus, they must be compassionate enough to give everyone opportunity to spend eternity with God whenever they can, both by direct invitation and the evidence of godliness in their lives.

7. The Christian worldview holds that death for the Christian is gain rather than loss. This should reduce fear and bitterness over the prospect or aspect of death, and thus free Christians to pursue peace.

8. The Christian worldview holds that man can be saved, and is not hopelessly lost. This should galvanize Christians to persistent, but compassionate evangelization of Muslims, regardless of their hostility.

9. The Christian worldview recognizes God as being in control and not man. They should place their lives in the hands of God and not fear man. Christians should pray and believe God will keep them safe, to accomplish his purpose in salvation, and to ultimately bring peace to a troubled world through courageous advocacy.

All these offer radical alternatives to vengeance, which is fast becoming attractive to Christians in the face of Islamic violence, and other activities suspected to be evidence of plans to Islamise Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The Christian worldview offers a cohesive interpretation of the world, leading to a clear understanding of man’s purpose on earth and why there appears to be disharmony between man and man, man and nature, and man and God. The Christian worldview presents a clear direction for the restoration of peace between man and man, man and nature, and man and God. A good knowledge of the Christian worldview, Scriptures and church history, will enable Christians to cope with the challenges of living in a plural society. The Christian worldview is also a good means of calming Christian fears of Islamic domination. This is not because there is no conspiracy to Islamise Nigeria, but because it offers a strong line of response that preserves the Christian identity in the face of attack. The Christian worldview reminds us of the mandate of God to be courageous, to love our neighbours and to conquer the world for Christ, not by the sword, but by the gospel of peace. Advocacy for justice for all, regardless of religious affiliation, can successfully be combined with proclamation of the gospel of salvation. We can also trust God, as we pray for the government to speak against injustice and work to bring about redress for the injured. This is God, who liberated His people from slavery and oppression in the past through prophets like Moses, and whose Son Jesus ministered to the sick and needy, to bring about justice for the oppressed and victimized. Our participation in government and civil society are means by which, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we can contribute as Christians towards a just and equitable society.