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Leadership and the Politics of Religious Conflict in Northern Nigeria

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LEADERSHIP AND THE POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN

NORTHERN NIGERIA

BY

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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I

Acknowledgement	II
Table of contents	.III
Abstract.	IV
Introduction	1
Research question	3
Statement of the problem	.4
Limitations	5
Definition of terms	6

Chapter II

Literature review	8
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Chapter III

Design of the study	20
---------------------	----

Chapter IV

Survey results	21
----------------	----

Chapter V

Conclusions	33
Recommendations	37
References	40
Appendix	43

ABSTRACT

Northern Nigeria has become a boiling point lately where Christians and Muslims kill each other in the name of God. Within the last four years, over 10,000 people had lost their lives. This research seeks to investigate the relationship between political leadership and the causes of religious conflict in Northern Nigeria. Using the survey method 150 questionnaires were sent to different parts of northern Nigeria and 40 to Nigerians living in the United States. 117 questionnaires were analyzed at the end with 99 coming from Nigeria. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between political leadership and religious conflicts, and political leaders are perceived to be responsible for most of the religious conflict in Northern Nigeria.

Leadership has not only failed Nigeria but Africa as a whole. Leadership is simply using your head and heart for your people, but that is what many of those who lead in Africa lack. The author emphasizes the need for an effective and responsible leadership, a leadership knowledge, and general education for a way forward.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The World Bank's report on Nigeria 1996, describes Nigeria as a paradox: "the country is rich but the people are poor...Nigeria is rich in land, people, and oil and natural gas resources. If more wealth had been channeled to the development of its people...Nigeria could have been poised for a promise" (Awe, 1999). The BBC World service describe Nigerians as the most religious and happiest people in the World, but was ranked by Transparency International as the second most corrupt nation in the World three years ago. It dropped to the sixth position last year. Today it ranks the 18th position. Nigeria is a country of about 140 million people with 250 different ethnic groups, the World's sixth producer of oil, and has the most intellectual capital in Africa with the best brains scattered all over the World; at the age of 46 Nigeria still crawls.

"Nigeria burning again," "mindless religious killings," "killing in the name of God," "Nigerian president tours riot cities," "another religious crisis in Kaduna," all these are headlines on national dailies in a country that used to be very peaceful and one of the best places to be in Africa.

Lately, Nigeria has been experiencing intense religious violence in the north and ethnic militia violence in the southern part of the country. Many reasons have been postulated as the causes of the violence in which over 10,000 people have died within the last four years alone. While some believe poverty is the main cause of the conflict even though it looks religious, others suggest religious bigotry between the two dominant

religions in the country namely; Christianity and Islam. Could all these religious conflicts and ethnic militia be a result of ineffective leadership?

Six years ago there was a leadership program held at Columbia Business School, Columbia University, New York, and apart from other issues discussed, the problems of African Leadership was raised particularly as it affects the conduct of business. The main conclusion was clear, “the problem of our continent is due to the failure of leadership“ Many times patriotic Nigerians wonder what a man or a woman who is desirous of making money is doing in public service. All over the civilized world, those who wish to make money go into the private sector, while those who wish to serve the people dedicate their life to public service. The majority of those who serve the public in advanced nations usually do so selflessly. They do not have more than one house, probably two cars and reasonable investments to live a modest life in retirement. The situation is, however, different in Nigeria. Those who want money and influence usually seek public office. The traffic to public office is so heavy that one wonders whether there is no other job in our nation. Regrettably, it appears that some of those who join this traffic have no desire to serve the public good, but only to use the avenue to amass wealth. This is the sad outcome of the leadership struggle in our part of the world (Duru, 2006); but must Nigerians allow this to continue? Thus there is a need for them to rigorously interrogate candidates to ensure that bad ones do not get into power. Can we learn from our past mistakes? A leader that cannot give voice to the voiceless, hope to the disillusioned and direction to the confused cannot lay solid foundation for peace and progress in a nation.

Chinua Achebe a Nigerian noble laureate, said that “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure in leadership.’

President Faure Gnassingbe of Togo, on his visit to Nigeria to deliver a lecture entitled “Leadership in Africa: a generational change“ says in Africa, we have been victim of bad leadership at all levels. “We have left undone what we ought to do and done things we should have avoided.“ According to him where leadership is lacking you cannot pretend that it exists. If a business is under bad leadership, you easily notice its debts rising, workers disillusioned, products losing quality, structures decaying and eventually it will collapse. He went further to say, good leadership brings hope and energy to the people, attracts the best minds as well as local and international support. Good leadership brings about quality and good governance and general dynamism (Ogunmenfun, 2006).

Since independence in 1960, the leadership question has been and still is the problem of the Nigerian nation. Lack of selfless and committed leaders has contributed immensely in the sociopolitical and economical predicament facing Nigeria today.

The Author will attempt to look critically at the leadership question in Nigeria and see if that is the root cause of her ethno-religious conflict, and then suggest a way out.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced a civil war between the northern part of the country, which is predominantly Muslim, and the south which is predominantly Christian. The war was fought for three years of which over one million people lost their lives. Since the end of the war in 1970, Nigeria has experienced over 40

various forms of ethno-religious conflict, hence my research question is: what could be the remote and the immediate causes of this violence? Is it economical, social, political or religious? Or could it be a leadership problem?

Many people have suggested that though most of the conflict may look religious its underlying causes are political; therefore, “Could Nigerian political leaders use politics for their own selfish reasons to cause most of the conflicts?” Are Nigerian leaders using politics to cause conflict? Better still, could ineffective or bad leadership be responsible? Since leadership has to do with “influence,” are Nigerian leaders manipulating situations by *influencing* people towards conflict for their own selfish gains? These are the questions that the author will try to answer.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

About twenty years ago, as a young high school boy in the Northern city of Zaria, Nigeria. I experienced my first religious conflict which began from Ahmadu Bello University about two miles from my school (St. Joseph’s) which was eventually burned down. After many other students and I escaped death narrowly, and going through more of the narrow escapes as years goes by, I became interested in being part of the solution. The new political dispensation in 1999 has made the polity so hot with so many political questions unanswered, the rivalry between Islam and Christianity has widened and the ruling classes are still ‘playing’ their game.

The ‘north’ is regarded by Sarduna as comprising three major cultures: the Sokoto caliphate, Borno and the middle belt (Paden, 1986), a place where Muslims and Christians will live in peace with one another practicing their religion. Today things have changed, the domination of one culture over the others economically, politically and

otherwise has made many afraid of what will become of this region; yet the challenge for a solution goes on.

This is why my research has become necessary; to contribute to the wealth of knowledge in resolving these killings, rivalry and delicate political game being played by our leaders.

LIMITATIONS

This research limits itself to the Northern part of Nigeria, which constitutes 19 states of the 36 states of Nigeria. This region is larger than the size of the California in land mass. Therefore, our finding would be particular to this geographical region. However, it could be applicable to the entire country, though most of the religious conflicts are prevalent in the North. Only on few occasions did religious conflicts start from the south.

This work is focused mainly on religious conflicts within Northern Nigeria from 1987 to 2006. Most of the literature reviews and articles will be from this period. Most of my Questionnaires were sent to Northern Nigeria, it then means that most of the findings will be focused on the region, but also comments and contributions will come from some Nigerians living in the U S A.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

LEADERSHIP

The root of the word “lead” is a word meaning “to go,” which denotes travel from one place to another. Leaders can be said to be those who “go first.” They are those who step out to show others the direction in which to head. They begin the quest for a new order (Kouzes & Posner, 1990).

There are far too many definitions of leadership. In the academic circle, there is no commonly adopted definition of leadership; it means different things to different people.

According to Evans and Newnttam, (1988) “Leadership is the combination of personal attributes respected by others that enables an individual to shape the collective behavior patterns of a group in a direction determined by his or her own values.” One important aspect of this definition is that one has to have a vision to direct others but that is what many lack. A leader is someone who acts as a guide, and it could simply mean influencing others to act in a particular way. Or, the act of getting work done through the influence of others. The most important word here is *influence*.

One of my favorite definitions of leadership was given by Yukl 1998, he defined leadership as “the process wherein an individual member of a group or organization influences the interpretation of events, the choice of objectives and strategies and organization of work activities, the maintenance of cooperative relationships, the development of skills and confidence by members and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization” (Wu, 2005). Leadership is generally using your head and heart for the people, but it takes a good leader to know that. Leadership involves both rational and emotional sides of human experience. Leadership includes actions and influence based on reason and logic, as well as inspiration and passion (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy 2002). In leadership, the followers and the one who leads are brought together by a situation which gives the leader the opportunity to lead the followers into positive or negative actions. In this work the leadership referred is political leadership.

POLITICS

Etymologically, the word ‘politics’ is derived from the classical Greek ‘polis’. This refers to a city state. Perhaps a modestly satisfactory interim definition would be that the word

‘politics’ refers to all the various ways in which the senses of the policy decisions of organizations may be determined, save when these determinations are made by single individuals. It has to be extended to organizations in general and not just government organizations. (Ashford, 1991)

CONFLICT

Human conflict is omnipresent and ubiquitous. The potential for conflict exist whenever different individuals or groups pursue goals that they perceive to be incompatible. In this sense, conflict is an inescapable feature of our social life. (Cheldelin, 2003)

“Conflict is a type of interaction characterized by antagonistic encounter or collisions of interests, ideas, policies, programs and persons or other entities” (Plano, Riggs & Robin 1982). Conflict is part and parcel of our lives, but when it leads to violence, it has become something else. Destructive conflict is one that destroys or injures valued lives, psyche, institutions and possessions. Religious conflict is as old as the history of man; it can escalate and become a war. In this work I would want to use the word as the carrying of arms against the other party because of the clash of interests and differences in religious values and beliefs.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CONFLICT AND DIVERGENCE: GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY IN NIGERIA

By Bolanle Awe.

As a historian Mrs. Bolanle Awe used the three story method in narrating the hard luck story of Nigeria. Her opening sentences were in honor of M.K.O Abiola, a philanthropist and a champion of democracy, who allegedly won the first free and fair election in

Nigeria, but was annulled by the ruling military junta. What is the World saying about Nigeria today? The World Bank sees Nigeria as a paradox, “rich nation but poor people.” She captured this in the words of Rueben Abati when he said, “Our colony is Nigeria. In fifteen sociological sketches, Sylvester reflects on the nature, problems and character of this colony. What we find is a disposed community of persons smarting under internal colonialism, victims of failure of independence and the modern state, play things in the hands of privileged minority that sits on boards of companies or who manage to get into the corridors of power.....”

Awe saw the emergence of the Nigerian predicament embedded in her history. However, the plight of the women in this part of the world is even worse because they are not only discriminated against by the government alone but also by the society itself, despite the 1994 Cairo international conference on population and development that emphasized the emancipation and empowerment of the African woman, and not to forget the Beijing conference.

Conflict is a necessary element in life, and can always be an opportunity for growth; hence it is not necessarily negative. It can be malignant or benign. Within every society, nation, state, or religious group or an ethnic aggregate, people can be in conflict when one group perceives the other as a barrier or threat to its own goals. Conflict then creates a gap or divergence between the parties concerned, Awe went ahead to say. But this can also be resolved through negotiation, which can result into convergence and accommodation within a polity. Lucidly, she puts it thus, “In most polities there is always some element of conflict, and convergence is the harmonization of the two points of view in such a way that they see each other as no longer a threat.”

PRE- COLONIAL PERIOD.

Before the colonialists came, the geo-political entity called 'Nigeria' did not exist; instead, there were various geographical regions which were inhabited by about 250 different ethnic groups, with an organized system of governance. And while the Yorubas in the west and the Hausas in the north had a centralized system of government, many ethnic groups in the east and south like Ijo, Igbo, urhobo Isoko had a decentralized system of government. These systems had their own ways of settling local conflict and it could result even in war sometimes.

The African traditional religion was mostly the main religion, which was so peaceful and tolerable, until, through the trans-Sahara trade, Islam came into northern Nigeria and around the eighteen and nineteen centuries it spread into some parts of the west. Christianity too became popular with the coming of the missionaries from Europe and America around the sea ports of the south to trade in slaves and to cater to the spiritual needs of the colonial masters. These external factors brought about many changes into the social and political life of these societies. The increase in the demand for slaves made conflicts between the societies more intensified, as Awe puts it "it became endemic." The reformist fulani jihad of the 18th century introduced a new system of leadership in the north with its headquarters in Sokoto; so also Ibadan became popular for its wars. The introduction of western education began to breed a new group of elites who were also distinct from the traditional elites.

COLONIAL PERIOD

The colonial administrator by 1914 Fredrick Lord Lugard, amalgamated all these different parts into one entity known today as 'Nigeria' without minding the various ethnic

boundaries. But we have to remember that the primary aim of this amalgamation was for the economic interest of the British people. Through the railroads connecting the north to the south, goods were shipped out of the country via the Atlantic Ocean in Lagos which was made the capital then.

Indirect rule was introduced in the north, that is “rule through the people’s institutions of government that were familiar to them” to make things easy for them to govern the people; but it was in reality a direct rule. The imposition of the will of the colonial masters both in the north and south made conflicts even worse because of dissatisfaction among the people and by 1929 there was a bloody women riot.

The administrators introduced schools to train their clerks and the missionaries started to train the indigenous interpreters on how to read and write to facilitate their evangelism. With so many people as converts, education was spread mostly in the south. Gradually cities began to develop and agriculture was spread. But while lawyers, doctors and civil servants were beginning to emerge in the south, education was delayed in the north, and so the new nationalists that began to emerge were mostly from the south.

INDEPENDENCE

When Nigeria became independent on 1 October 1960, many Nigerians expected the attainment of independence to usher in an era of widespread prosperity, democracy and self- governance. But the new groups of leaders also were just waiting to step into the shoes of the colonial masters, and the discovery of oil made things even worse for the new leaders as they had so much to fight for. Agriculture started declining as oil was discovered; the movement of people from rural areas to big cities made many young people jobless and frustrated which led to so many conflicts.

“The gross corruption and mismanagement of public funds by the new group of leaders gave the military opportunity to seize power in an attempt to correct the ills of the nation,” but they too were caught up in the same web and became even worse. The fact that one military government toppled another is a testimony to their own mismanagement and corruption. Both civic and military leaders became infected with the endemic virus which gave way to ethnic chauvinism and regional sentiments.

The first republic fell to the military again because of corruption and regional sentiments and violence in the country, but they too, Buhari and Babangida, perpetuated the same crime, went ahead to popularized and baptize corruption with sweet names like “419,” “you chop I chop.” The military thus heightened the conflicts and divergence in Nigerian society. The use of guns and the forces of coercion became rampant; the creation of states did not solve the problem of ethnicity, and then came the second republic which also did not

last. Who cares if the president has immense power? As long as he delivers his best in leadership, “the focus must be on the human centered values and norm of peace, social justice and freedom,” but all these were lacking.

Predictably, tracing the historical evolution of the Nigerian state leads to lamenting the many negative consequences of the military rule as Awe vividly puts it that “they had all the guns and the forces of coercion“ yet democracy still remains the best system of governance because it has no force.

Nigerians will never forget the good works of democratic activists and their contributions both internationally and locally. NGOs sprang up and a new era of political

dispensation was ushered in Nigeria today, yet very little has changed in corruption. The ethno-religious conflicts is increasing, the divergence seems stronger than ever before.

Awe's suggestions of empowering women, calling for a national conference, restructuring of the military as the solution to Nigeria's conflict and divide may seem out of place because the present government of Nigeria led by President Olusegun Obasonjo has implemented within eight years these strategies and yet the conflicts and divergence has not become better. Nigeria's case may seem too complex, and Awe's suggestions unreal; that is why my research is very important.

RELIGION, POLITICS AND POWER IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

By Matthew Hassan Kukah.

The Author's first chapter is insightful and informative. The jihad of Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) which founded the Sokoto caliphate gave definition to the socio-political impetus of northern Nigeria. The bloodlines of the founder of this religious and political seat in Sokoto have made it their birth right to dominate the socio-political life of not only northern Nigeria but the entire Country.

Even though many ethnic groups in northern Nigeria resisted Islam, every other aspect of their lives has been dominated by the successors of the great jihadist who now control the economical, political, and social lives of the entire region. But the coming of the British colonial government and subsequently the missionaries, made the minority ethnic group's situation worse because they accepted Christianity.

The emergence of the Sardauna of Sokoto, one of the bloodline of Usman Dan Fodio, as a political leader in Northern Nigeria, and his campaign to convert the entire

Northern Nigeria, was an interesting move. Even though he did not succeed in his mission, others are ready to accomplish his vision.

The discrimination and the exclusion of the non-Muslim in the political life for this part of Nigeria made them search for power elsewhere, especially in military and the education missionaries brought.

CHAPTER TWO

“Although the ruling class presented itself as the custodian of the north and its interest, deep down, this was a ploy to maintain the allegiance of the minorities and the non-Muslim people of the region.” The military incursions into power made the non-Muslim (middle belt) have that political power that eluded them for a long time. Educationally too, they have upper edge over their Hausa Fulani counterpart. This was lucidly captured by Kukah in a song

*Those we met sitting on the floor,
Are today the top men of modern times
Status is now based on modern education,
the talk of the son of so and so is over.*

The coup and counter coup of 1966 finally made General Yakubu Gowon assume the position of the head of state, and this move introduced a completely new factor in the power equation in northern Nigeria; at least, it was a major departure from the perceived norm of power in the region.

CHAPTER THREE

The military interventions threw the northern ruling class off balance and in the process, transferred more political power to the middle belt in a way that never had been done before. But the mechanism and paraphernalia has been set by the Late Sardauna for the

manipulation of political power by the Hausa\Fulani. According to the author six major institutions have contributed to the strengthening of the northern hegemony and they are: NNDC, Bank of the north, Ahmadu Bello university, Kaduna polytechnic, new Nigeria newspaper and the federal radio corporation of Nigeria.

According to Mr. Charles Sharp, the British business man whom the regional government employed to establish the New Nigeria newspaper, he saw the creation as a “political act” and by the 1st of January 1966 it was set rolling. It serves the political interest of the northern ruling class and Islam. So also the controversial radio station became a powerful tool in the hands of the ruling class.

CHAPTER FOUR.

The way Usman Dan Fodio defeated the Hausa states and made Islam supreme, so also did the British colonial masters defeat the caliphate and made the rule of law supreme. The question whether a Muslim should be allowed to live their faith within a non-sharia environment is an academic question, and has since been the bone of contention after the defeat of the caliphate. “A Muslim sees sharia as supreme but a non-Muslim like the British sees the constitution as supreme.” By 1963 the Muslims felt that the sharia (a divine law) has become subjugated to what they believe to be a mere human law (constitution); hence the seed of conflict that had been sowed by the British was revisited.

In the face of the new political programs the ruling class of northern Nigeria knew that they were threatened by the new democracy, they had no foothold or any solid base for political competition as a block with the rest of the country. In view of this political bankruptcy, it became clear that Islam would offer the only alternative for the protection of the class interest. But even this was not an easy card to play because the so-called Muslim

north no longer existed, but all the same, it was clear that to seek to defend it would enhance their position. So they held on to the issue of the sharia in the assembly as their only weapon for mobilization in the north.

Alhaji Musa Daggash's comment on the sharia at the constitutional assembly was stimulating that "I have been told that the unity of Nigeria is like a catholic marriage, it may not be a happy one, but it does not break." The sharia debate became a tool in the hands of politicians; for example, Paul Unongo is quoted to have said that "after the role we played in the defeat of the sharia debate, the next thing was for us to convince the electorates that they had to vote for us to ensure that sharia stayed out once and for all" and on 5 June, 1978 it came to a close without a concrete solution.

CHAPTER SIX AND SEVEN

Kaduna state is the capital of northern Nigeria with an equal population of 50/50 between Muslim and Christians respectively, and Kaduna is a home to most of the military generals and the northern elites.

With time southern Kaduna's sons had made unprecedented leaps in both state and national political arenas. At the national level, some had joined the elite corps of the military ruling class in the armed forces ruling council, the nation's highest decision making body from a region where ethnic identities are factors for social economic and political progress.

The military regime was characterized by more violence in Northern Nigeria and especially in Kaduna, the power house of the ruling northern elites. According to the author, Kaduna is the thermometer of the socio-economic temperature of the country and so when Kaduna sneezes, the rest of the nation catches a cold. The Kafanchan religious conflict had already

created tension between Islam and Christianity; the OIC issue made things even worse for both sides who desire to see a better Nigeria, but at whose term?

Conclusively, Kukah said the ethnic, cultural and political composition of Nigeria is such that its problems have defied any neat solution. An average Nigerian owes allegiance to at least ten or more identifiable institutions around which life evolves: family, clan, village, tribe, religion and many more.

The politics of Nigeria is essentially one of very keen competition among the elites of the various ethnic and regional groupings, and in our area of study, the situation has been made complex due to three main reasons.

The first reason lies in the lack of cultural, religious or ethnic homogeneity in the region, a fact which has affected the relationship between the inter-ethnic elites in this region. Secondly, the immigration patterns between the north and the south are such that most northern cities have a disproportionate concentration of southerners who live in what is known as Sabon Gari (strangers quarters) compared to northerners in the south. Thirdly, even within the north, western education has facilitated the mobility of some of the people from the Middle Belt, by opening up opportunities for them. This competition has brought about the proliferation of many elite power blocks now called mafia groups. Put these reasons together, we can now see why conflict seems hard to avoid. Even though days for the manipulation of religion by the ruling class in northern Nigeria is short, the reality is that the game is still in their hands.

ANALYSIS BEHIND NIGERIA'S VIOLENCE

By Dan Isaac.

In the first four years following Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, at least 10,000 people were killed in communal violence across the country; but in recent months these clashes have been notably less frequent.

Some of the violence has pitched Muslims against Christians, but all of them have fallen across different tribal and cultural divide. From the desert of the north to the tropical forest region of the south and east, it is home to around 140 million people, divided up into some 250 different ethnic groups.

The broad characterization of a Muslim Hausa speaking north, and a Christian south made up of the dominant tribes the Yoruba in the southwest and the Igbo in the south east. Most of the conflict is rooted in religious disagreements the introduction of Islamic law, especially in some northern states. But it most often boils down to competition between those that see themselves as the true "indigenes" as of an area, and those that are considered to be more recent "settlers." Whatever the historical justifications, the conflict is always and everywhere about access to scarce resources.

At the root, these differences are not cultural or religious. They are economical. The tragedy is that over the past few decades its population has grown rapidly, but despite the countries vast oil wealth, the economy has failed to keep pace and many Nigerians have been getting poorer by the year. Along with this, the failure of the state to provide adequate education for the vast majority of the population has produced a frustrated and angry underclass of largely urban unemployed youth. It is to this disempowered group that ambitious politicians and religious leaders look for support.

The cynical politicians are prepared to pay some money to foment the unrest. And once it is triggered that is all, when Muslims hear that Muslims are being killed elsewhere they too take up arms to kill Christians in the neighborhood. Christians too in another part of the country will get to hear about their brothers being murdered, they too carry out reprisal on local Muslims.

Chapter III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY.

This study was designed to obtain the opinion of people about the role political leaders play in fomenting religious conflict in northern Nigeria. The author did a quantitative research in a form of a survey aimed at gaining information on the topic.

The author gathered materials from books, magazines, journals and articles written about the subject from 1987 to 2006.

A questionnaire was also sent out to Nigerians living both in the US and Nigeria. The questions on the questionnaire were based on research statements and findings with some few questions open to input from people.

SAMPLE

The questionnaires were distributed among Nigerians living in the US and some were sent to northern Nigeria via a second party to be distributed among educated people of integrity, credibility and experience in Nigerian politics, but most of all they must be above 30 years of age.

DATA COLLECTION

A hundred and fifty questionnaires were mailed to Northern Nigerians living in Abuja, Kaduna, Kano, and Sokoto, another 40 were distributed among some Nigerians living in the United States and the results will be discussed in the next Chapter.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The results of this finding will be examined in perspective with the view to determining if there is a significant relationship between leadership and religious conflict in northern Nigeria and which factors are the real causes of religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Since knowing a problem is a step toward solving it, the comments from the results will be used as recommendations for resolving the problem.

Chapter IV

SURVEY RESULTS

The author mailed 150 Questionnaires to various parts of Northern Nigeria, and 40 were distributed among Nigerians living in the US 110 came back from Nigeria and 29 came back from Nigerians living in the United States. More than 21 questionnaires were eliminated and not used for the analysis because they did not fulfill the demographical requirements, especially that of age.

Twelve questions were asked in all, of which the last two have to do with suggestions for the way forward and the demographic information.

The following are the survey questions and the analysis of the results:

QUESTION ONE

Which of the following is behind most of the religious conflicts in Nigeria?

Religious leaders	Political leaders	Fanatics	Students
19	48	47	1
16%	41%	40%	0%

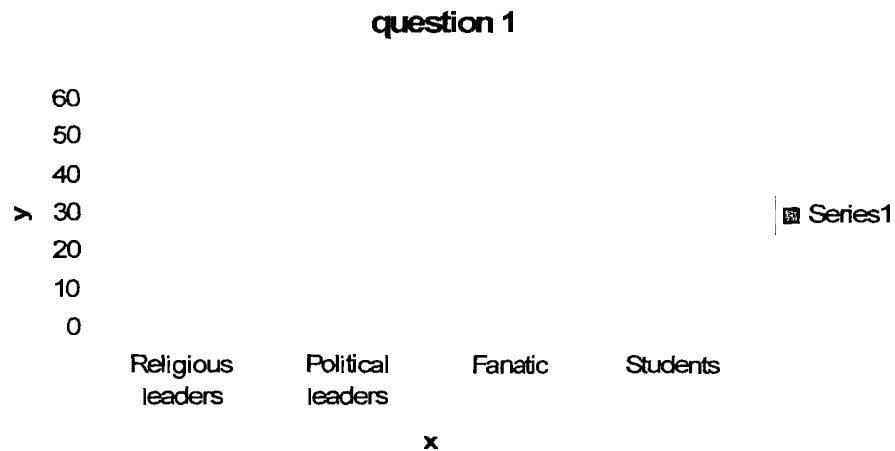


FIGURE1

The largest group of respondents saw political leaders as rightly behind religious conflicts, which scored 41%. Fanatics came close to political leaders with 40%. But fanatics do not just act alone; always they are controlled by either political or religious leaders. Religious leaders scored 16% and students 0.8%

QUESTION TWO

“Once we have a good leadership in Nigeria every other thing will follow suit”. Do you agree with this statement?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52	6	2	1	
44%	5%	1%	0	

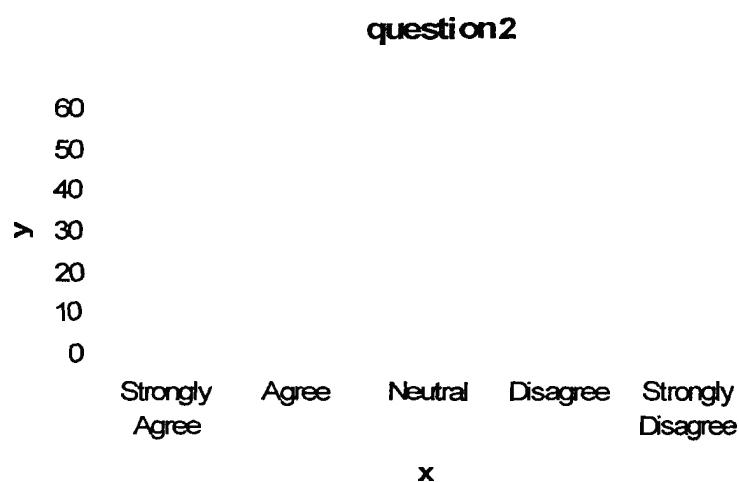


FIGURE2

Almost all the respondents from United States and some in Nigeria (40%) strongly agreed that good leadership in Nigeria would almost eliminate religious conflict; this goes to show that they are more exposed to the knowledge of leadership than their fellow Nigerians at home. Most Nigerians at home also agreed to this fact which scores 44%. Only 5% disagreed and one person strongly disagreed.

QUESTION THREE

“Some leaders create division among the people, incite violence to cover up failed actions or promote narrow interest“

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61	41	1	0	2
52%	35%	0.80%		0.70%

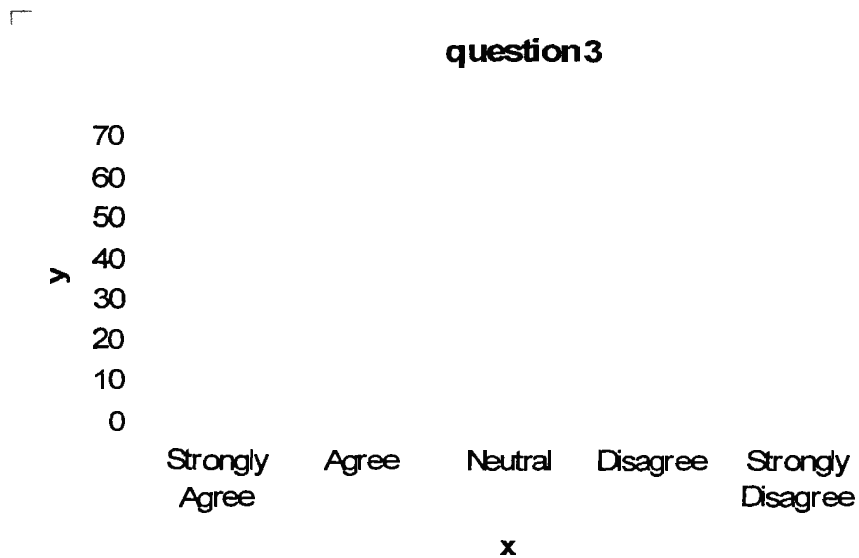


FIGURE 3

52% of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that leaders cause conflict most times for selfish reasons. Another 35% agreed to the statement. Only two persons strongly disagreed.

QUESTION FOUR

The Sharia question was politically motivated by some leaders. Do you agree with this statement?

Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
63	31	4	1	5
53%	26%	3%	0	4%

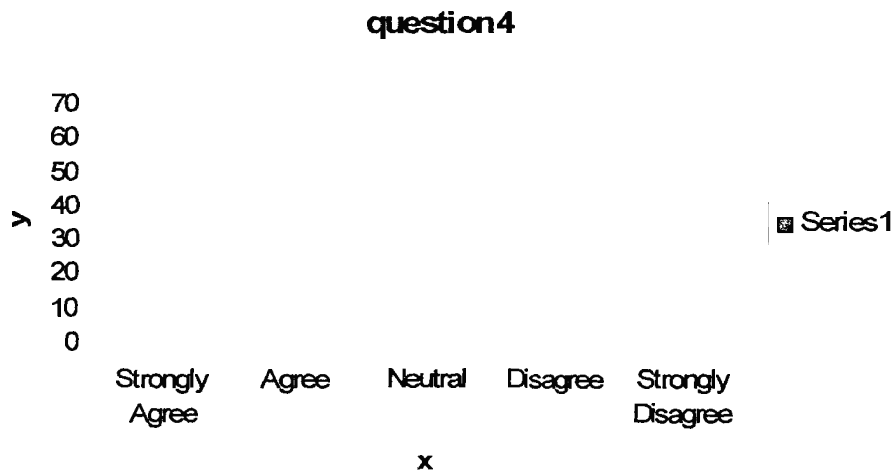


FIGURE4

The politics of the Sharia question in Northern Nigeria made some political leaders celebrities, while on the other hand, many common people lost their lives. About 10,000 people died during the sharia conflict in various parts of the northern states. 53% strongly agreed and another 26% agreed that the sharia conflicts that engulfed the country in 2001 were politically motivated. This is a clear display of how leadership has failed the Nigerian people.

QUESTION FIVE

“Educating and empowering the youths will help a great deal in reducing the religious conflict“

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
50	44	3	1	0
42%	37%	2%		

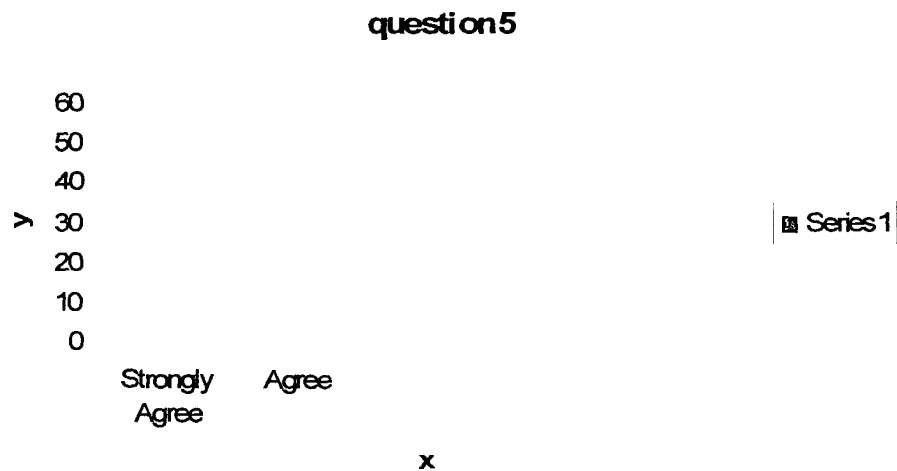


FIGURE5

42% of the respondents strongly agreed that education can help in reducing religious conflict. Another 37% of the respondents agreed; therefore, education can significantly play a role in reducing conflict.

QUESTION SIX

“In the 50’s & 60’s north was regarded by Sardauna as comprising 3 major cultures: the Sokoto caliphate, the Borno and the Middle belt where Christians and Muslims practice their religion freely”

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36	51	20	0	6
30%	43%	17%		5%

question6

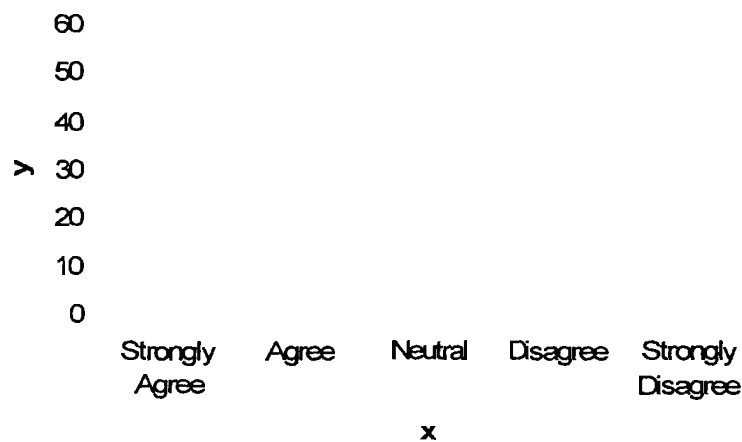


FIGURE 6.

30% of the respondents strongly agreed and 43% agreed to the fact that it was the vision of many leaders that northern Nigeria would be a place where both Christians and Muslim can live freely in peace, side by side.

QUESTION SEVEN

Is the above statement true of Northern Nigeria today?

Yes	No
18	84
15%	71%

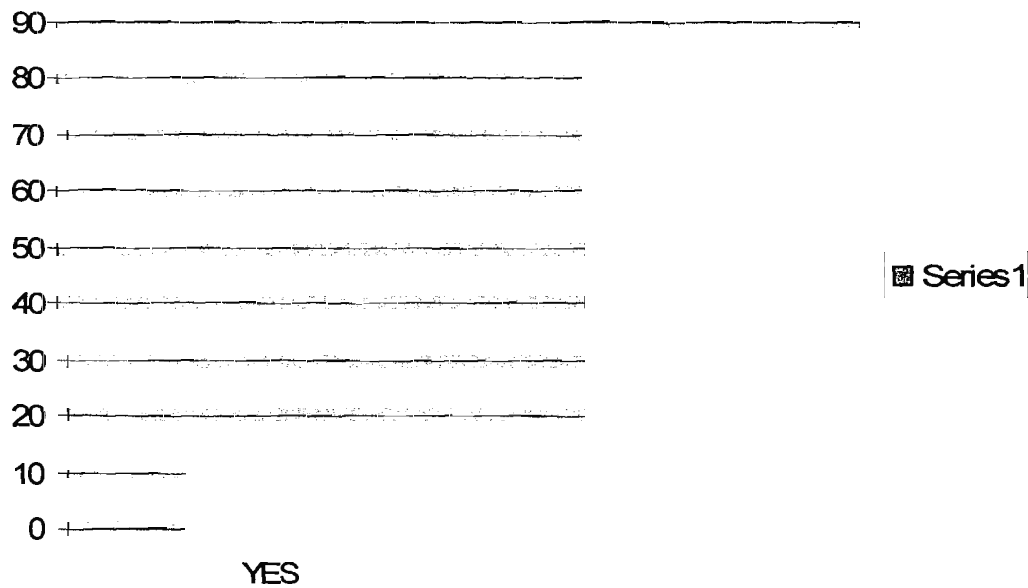


FIGURE7.

71% of the respondents are overwhelmingly disappointed that the good vision of such leaders like Sardauna has remained elusive to many northern Nigerians today.

QUESTION EIGHT

What Quality do you admire best about Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto?

Political Ecumenism	Leadership Style	Religious Zealousness	Humility
25	47	12	20
21%	40%	10%	17%

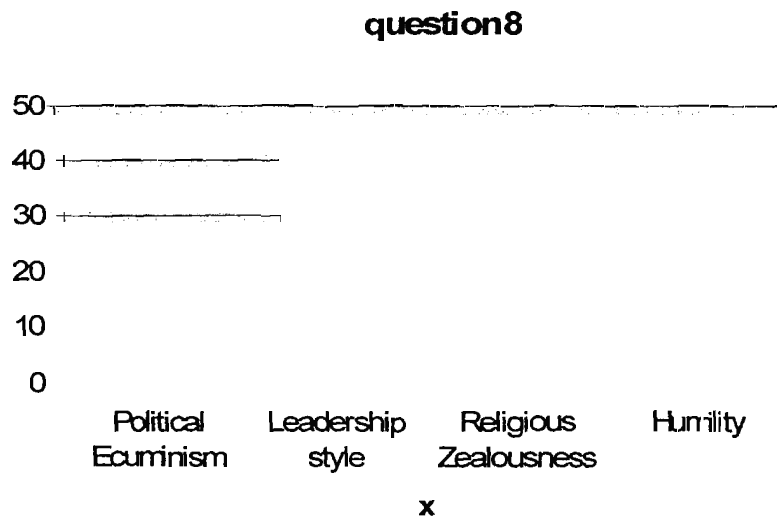


FIGURE8.

The transformational leadership style of Sir Ahmadu Bello stands clearly above other qualities people admire about him. Over 40% love his leadership style, and over 21% love his political ecumenism, which made him work with people of other religions and serves as a model for many other leaders in northern Nigeria. 17% loved his humility and 10% his religious zealousness.

QUESTION NINE

What do you suggest as the best way of minimizing religious conflict in Northern Nigeria?

Education	Electing good leaders	tolerance	dialogue
53	20	29	22
45%	17%	24%	25%

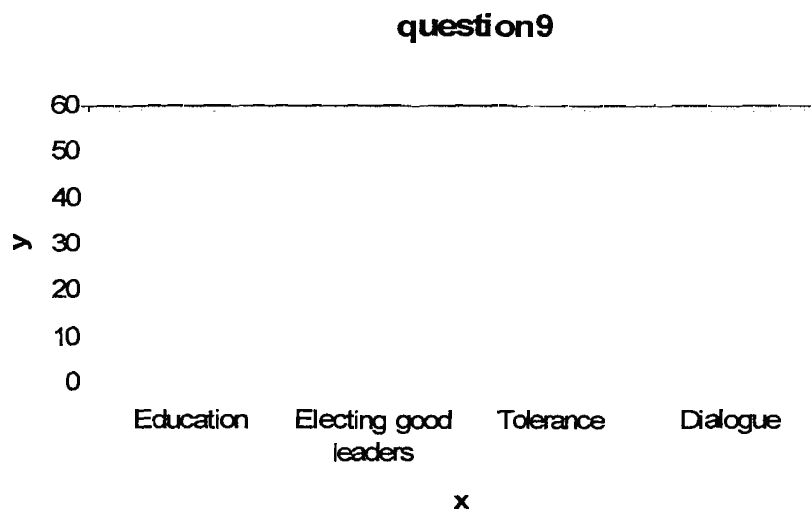


FIGURE 9.

I am shocked that electing good leaders gained only 17% and became the least among the best way for minimizing religious conflict. Education scored over 45% as the best way, then tolerance 25% and dialogue 20%. Education is the key, education on leadership, tolerance and Dialogue. About 15 respondents agreed with more than one answer.

QUESTION TEN

Muslims and Christians can still live in peace with one another

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16	62	6	11	5
13%	52%	5%	9%	4%

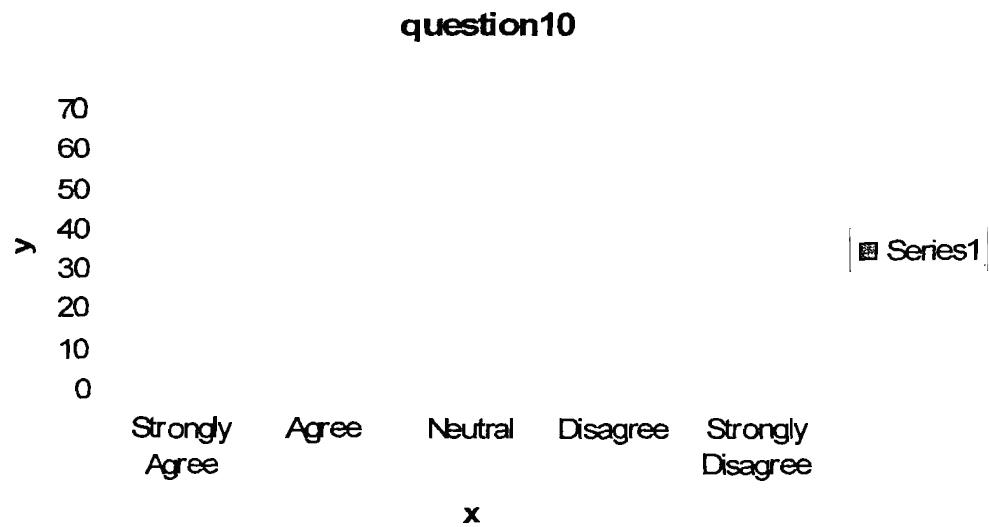


FIGURE 10.

52% of my respondents agreed and are optimistic about the future. Only 13% strongly agreed, 4% strongly disagreed about future peace, while 5% remain neutral.

QUESTIONS 11 & 12

Question 11 has to do with suggestions and recommendations from the respondents of which most of them are going to be included in the last chapter. Question 12 has to do with the demograph which includes the age, gender and occupation. I used the demograph to decide which questionnaires were counted or not. About 28 from Nigeria were eliminated because their ages were below 30.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

In summery, Mrs. Bolanle Awe saw the politics of Nigeria's conflicts as imbedded in her history, intentionally and strategically by her colonial masters (England). She feels that the amalgamation that made Nigeria one entity was a mistake and for the country to experience peace and remain together, the people must sit down and talk.

Kukah saw the problem in the class system. Elites or ruling class manipulate the people to remain significant. The diverse nature of the Nigerian society made the situation more complex. Othman Dan Fodio has set a vision of an Islamic northern Nigeria; what is happening today is the actualization of that vision by classes of wealthy northerners.

Isaac clearly sees the problem as economical, and feels that when the Nigerian youth is gainfully employed the situation might change.

While it is true that Nigeria is a complex society with diverse ethnic groups and the two World's great religions spread among its people, sitting down to talk has not really

resolved any of her complex problems, so many of the national conferences did not end up with a solution as Mrs. Bolanle Awe suggested.

Jobs for the youth as Isaac requested seems a way out, but what becomes of the 41% of the same youths who do not have education and skills? But the greater question is who would want to invest in Nigeria's oil sector when conflicts are prevalent everywhere, the educational institutions are in shambles, and corruption flourishes. Kukah and Awe called them the ruling class, I call them leaders, they are the cause of Nigeria's problems, especially the lack of peace.

Human conflict is omnipresent and ubiquitous. The potential for conflict exists whenever individuals or groups pursue goals that they perceive to be incompatible. According to Cheldelin (2003), conflict is an inescapable feature of our social life, an activity whose effects is often beneficial either because they help to clarify differences, let off steam or generates needed change. But destructive conflict- conflict that destroys or injures valued lives, psyche, institutions, and possessions is another story. Religious conflicts fall within the destructive type. Religious conflicts, especially the one between Christianity and Islam has brought a lot of setbacks to the world throughout history.

Cheldelin also distinguishes between latent conflict (**pre-m.c.p**), manifest conflict processes (**m.c.p**), and aggressive manifest conflict process (**a.m.c.p**). Latent conflict or **pre-m.c.ps** are conflicts that are developing but have not yet expressed themselves in an observable manner. **M.c.ps** are conflicts that have developed to an extent that are observable, but have not yet escalated to a violent level of expression **A.m.cps** are not merely capable of being noticed and expressed but are also destructive to parties, resource, and others as well. The timing of conflict here has become necessary to avoid it,

so also, identifying and understanding the source of destructive social conflict is the key to reducing its frequency and intensity, and this is where leadership comes into play.

Reynal-Querol (2002), saw faith and family, blood and beliefs as those aspects with which people identify themselves and the characteristic for which they fight and die, and beliefs or religion make it worse because a person can be half French and half Saudi Arabian, and at the same time be a citizen of both countries. However, it is difficult to be half Catholic and half Muslim.

It is undeniable that religion has been and continues to be deeply implicated in many of humanity's cruelest struggles, but with an effective leadership style leaders can be able to reduce religious conflict to the barest minimum. Effective leadership and education are the keys to peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

The mere existence of religious differences is usually not the primary cause of conflict between groups. However, culture is always the lens through which differences are refracted, and conflict pursued. Education on the need to respect and understand other cultures, education on tolerance is what many respondents suggested as the way forward. Leadership has not only failed the Nigerian people but the whole of Africa. Effective leaders like Nelson Mandela are hard to come by; many African leaders have overstayed in government and are manipulating their followers for their own personal gain.

People frequently ask "are leaders born or made?" It is a judgment call. No one knows for sure. Our experience tells us that leadership is a set of learnable competencies. I can however, say for certain that every exceptional leader I know is also a learner. Many leadership skills are successfully learned in the classroom but training alone is

insufficient. Those who become the best leaders take advantage of the broadest possible range opportunity; they try, fail and learn from their mistakes. Thus, ultimate leadership development is a self-development. Musicians have their instruments, engineers have their computers, accountants have their calculators but leaders have themselves. They are their own instruments (Autry 1990). Apart from vision, leadership goes hand in hand with ethics and fear play and so a Muslim leader do not care if his followers are Christians or Muslims he treats them fairly and justly. But it is glaring from this research that with effective leadership most religious conflicts in northern Nigeria would have been averted.

Last year an African business mogul in Europe introduced the Mo Ibrahim prize for African leadership to encourage effective leadership style in the African continent. “We need to remove corruption and increase governance“ he said. The award of \$200,000 annually for life after retirement will go to leaders who deliver security, health, education and economic development. This may go a long way to help the African continent begin to produce more responsible leaders (BBCnews 2006).

This research has shown that there is a significant relationship between political leadership in northern Nigeria and religious conflict, and political leaders are perceived to be the chief architects of most religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria.

Oral tradition has it that in the mid-1960's Dr Azikiwe met with Ahmadu Bello and said, “Let us forget our differences...” to which Ahmadu Bello replied, “No, let us understand our differences. I am a Muslim and a northerner; you are a Christian an Easterner. By understanding our differences, we can build Unity in our country“ (Paden,

1986). Even though these leaders are gone, Nigeria is desperately in need of effective leaders, and differences in religion could be positive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In a simple way the author asked respondents to suggest the best way forward. Over 40% of the respondents suggest that Education and tolerance are the key to a better future. Here is what most of my respondents recommended.

1) EDUCATION

Many see most conflicts as rooted in ignorance and prejudice, misunderstanding, contradictions, injustices and lack of tolerance and love. And so education on the need to understand other religions and cultures, education on the need to respect other religions and cultures, at the same time avoid religious bigotry.

Education is the key, knowledge on responsible leadership must be taught in schools from elementary, high schools and universities. Responsible leadership requires not just personal and collective discipline, but also requires commitment to honesty, transparency, accountability and social justice. People have to be educated on what it means to vote for a responsible leader.

Western educational system should be incorporated into the curriculum of the Islamic Almajiri system of education. Respect and dialogue with other religions should be integrated into school curricula at all levels too. Many respondents also suggested that religious leaders and teachers as well be re-schooled on the dangers of fanaticism and the need for peace.

2) POLICIES

Policy makers in federal, state and local government levels are yet to come out with laws to punish the perpetrators of religious violence. Many have been caught and set free for killing and looting. Religious conflict may have killed more northern Nigerians than AIDS, malaria and high blood pressure put together. It is the leading cause of death in this region and so policy makers in Nigeria must act responsibly and stop playing games with people's lives (Iduh, 2007).

3) GOODGOVERNANCE

“Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the presence of justice“ (Bernstein, Petersen & Katz, 1997). Structural injustices, religious preferences, Tribalism, nepotism, domination of one tribe, culture or religion over others, are what, when put together, results into a conflict, especially when leaders are not sensitive to honesty and accountability. 60% of my respondents emphasize the need for good governance through fairness. Most of them complained of injustices on the part of the state government favoring one region of the state over the other because of their religious affiliation, where schools, hospitals and infrastructures are situated in one section and not evenly distributed; all these grow into what becomes a conflict. Responsible leadership goes above tribal or religious sentiments, many respondents suggest that politicians should stay out of religious matters; they said religion be separated from politics. As simple as it may seem, it will be unfair to a Muslim whose religion and politics are inseparable. Creating jobs for the youth is a social justice; this will help them stay away from being used because an idle mind is the devil's workshop.

FUTURE STUDIES

This research is primarily focused on northern Nigeria and my research was conducted in the four major cities in northern Nigeria: Abuja, Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, which has left room for future studies of other cities and the entire country at large.

Future studies could research the complex nature of this region, and why people are ready to die for their religion.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am graduate student of corporate communications and at Seton Hall University. As a requirement for the partial fulfillment of my studies, I am doing a survey on leadership and the politics of conflict in Northern Nigeria, kindly spare me 5-10 minutes of your time to answer the follow questions as this survey cannot be complete without the contributions of people like you.

The result of this survey will be published on my University's website by May 2007, if you are interested, go to www.shu.edu. Thank you so very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Clement Kagoma

Department of public and corporate communications

Seton Hall University.

1) Which of the following is behind most of the religious conflicts in Nigeria?

- A) Religious fanatics
- B) political leaders
- C) religious
- D) leaders
- E) students

2) "Once we have a good leadership in Nigeria every other thing will follow suit". Do you agree with this statement?

- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree strongly disagree

3) "Some leaders create division among the people, incite violence to cover up failed actions or promote narrow interest"

- Strongly agree Agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

4) The Sharia question was politically motivated by some leaders do you agree this statement?

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree strongly disagree

5) “Educating and empowering the youths will help a great deal in reducing the religious conflict“

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree strongly disagree

6) “In the 50’s & 60’s north was regarded by Sardauna as comprising 3 major cultures: the Sokoto caliphate, the Borno and the middle belt were Christians and Muslims practice their religion freely“

Strongly agree Agree neutral strongly disagree

7) Is the above statement true of Northern Nigeria today?

Yes No

8) What Quality do you admire best about Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto?

- A) Political ecumenism
- B) leadership style
- C) religious zealousness
- D) Humility.

9) What do you suggest as the best way of minimizing religious conflict in Northern Nigeria?

- A) Education
- B) Electing good leaders
- C) tolerance
- D) Dialogue

10) Muslims and Christians can still live in peace with one another

- Strongly disagree disagree Neutral agree

11) Further Suggestions

12) Please mark the appropriate demographic information

A) Age: 17-30 ----- 31-44-----45+ -----

B) Gender: male -----female-----

C) Occupation: -----