

# MISSION AS PROPHETIC DIALOGUE IN CHRISTIAN- MUSLIM ENCOUNTERS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## ABSTRACT

Since receiving its independence in 1960, Nigeria has struggled to unite its many people, ethnic and religious groups under one national identity. In recent decades, religiously motivated encounters between Christians and Muslims have gained a new social and political presence and significance in the Northern Nigerian region. The impact of this kind of religiously motivated conflict has provided fresh stimulus and focus for the need to engage in inter-religious dialogue and to critically analyse the immediate problem(s). The consequences and outcomes of these encounters are reflected in the rate of killings, maiming and wanton destruction of lives and property over the years, therefore violating human rights and dignity, which come from God and are rooted in the concept of the *Imago Dei*.

Against this background, the call to do mission as prophetic dialogue in Christian-Muslim encounters is an important attempt to address these problem(s). Arguing for the use of prophetic dialogue suggests that our limited understanding be acknowledged and that we live open to learning more about God and the activity of God's Spirit in the world. The researcher maintains that prophetic dialogue is part of our very witness to listen, to learn, to boldly yet humbly share, as well as to explore faith in a spirit of mutuality with believers of other religions in a conflict situation, such as the case of Christian-Muslim religious encounters in Northern Nigeria.

As this was qualitative and interpretive research, the researcher argues conceptually for the use of Kritzinger's (2008) seven-praxis cycle to enable mission as prophetic dialogue in and through the documents of the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) and in order to address the challenges of inter-religious encounters and coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. Hence "thoughtfulness," "theoretical interpretation" and "wise judgement" are required (Osmer, 2008:83), and Osmer's hermeneutic therefore is closely followed throughout the dissertation as a guide for the research, which follows the four tasks of Osmer's (2008:4) hermeneutical spiral. In theory, Osmer calls these models four tasks: 'descriptive-empirical', 'interpretive', 'normative', and 'pragmatic' tasks.

The researcher argues that inter-religious conflict not only brings political and economic instability, but also impacts on the social and cultural life of a country's citizens. Therefore, the study established that religiously motivated conflicts have also threatened the Nigerian economy, rule of law, fundamental human rights and dignity.

As a result, the researcher introduces the equation of encounter, tolerating “others” in humility, building the concept of religious trust, and takes to task the religious communities and scholars of religion to do more in the area of addressing the value of human lives, as well as to carry out further studies on inter-religious relations in Northern Nigeria.

Consequently, the research findings show that the understanding of mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA’s activities, and mission as encounterology as proposed by Kritzinger, provide the following results: humility, respect for humanity, reconciliation, religious coexistence, and human and physical development.

## OPSOMMING

Sedert Nigerië se onafhanklikheidswording in 1960 sukkel die land om sy vele mense, etniese groepe en godsdienstige groepe onder een nasionale identiteit te verenig. In onlangse dekades het godsdienstig gemotiveerde botsings tussen Christene en Moslems 'n nuwe sosiale en politiese teenwoordigheid en betekenis in Noord-Nigerië verkry. Die impak van hierdie soort godsdienstig gemotiveerde konflik het 'n vars stimulus en fokus verskaf vir die behoefte om inter-godsdienstige dialoog te voer en die probleem/probleme krities te analiseer. Die gevolg en uitkoms van hierdie botsings word weerspieël in die tempo van doodmaak, verminking en moedswillige verwoesting van lewens en eiendom oor die jare, wat dus die menseregte en menswaardigheid skend wat afkomstig is van God en gewortel is in die konsep van die *Imago Dei*.

Teen hierdie agtergrond is die roeping om sending te doen as profetiese dialoog in Christen-Moslem ontmoetings 'n belangrike poging om hierdie probleem/probleme aan te spreek. Om te redeneer vir die gebruik van profetiese dialoog suggereer dat ons beperkte begrip erken moet word en dat ons leef deur oop te wees om meer oor God en die aktiwiteit van God se Gees in die wêreld te leer. Hierdie navorser hou voor dat profetiese dialoog deel vorm van ons opregte getuienis om te luister, te leer, moedig maar nederig te deel, asook om geloof te verken in 'n gees van wederkerigheid met gelowiges van ander godsdienste in 'n konfliktsituasie, soos in die geval van Christen-Moslem godsdienstige ontmoetings in Noord-Nigerië.

In hierdie kwalitatiewe en intrepretatiewe navorsing argumenteer die navorser konseptueel vir die gebruik van Kritzinger (2008) se sewe-praksis siklus om sending as profetiese dialoog in en deur die dokumente van die *Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa* (PROCMURA) moontlik te maak om sodoende die uitdagings van inter-godsdienstige ontmoetings en saambestaan tussen Christene en Moslems in Noord-Nigerië aan te spreek. Daarbenewens het die navorser ook gebruik gemaak van Osmer (2008) se vier take vir 'n praktiese teologiese ontwerp omdat dit interdisiplinêr van aard is. In die teorie noem Osmer hierdie modelle vier take: 'deskriptief-empiries', 'interpretatief', 'normatief' en 'pragmatiese' take, wat hierdie navorser as ontwerp vir die navorsing gebruik het.

Die navorser hou voor dat inter-godsdienstige konflik nie net politiese en ekonomiese onstabieleit veroorsaak nie, maar ook 'n impak het op die sosiale en kulturele lewe van burgers. Die studie het dus

bepaal dat godsdienstig gemotiveerde konflikte ook die Nigeriese ekonomie, regsowereniteit, fundamentele menseregte asook menswaardigheid bedreig.

Die navorser stel dus die vergelyking van begrip, die verdra van “ander” in nederigheid, and die bou van ’n konsep van wedersydse en godsdienstige vertrouwe voor en berispe die godsdienstige gemeenskappe en kenners van godsdiens om meer te doen met betrekking tot die aanspreek van die waarde van menselebens, asook om verdere studies oor inter-godsdienstige verhoudings in Noord-Nigerië te onderneem.

Gevolgtik toon die navorsingsbevindings dat ’n begrip van sending as profetiese dialoog in en deur die aktiwiteite van PROCMURA, en sending as *encounterology*, soos voorgestel deur Kritzinger, die volgende resultate sal lewer: nederigheid, respek vir menslikheid, versoening, godsdienstige en wedersydse samebestaan, en menslike en fisiese ontwikkeling.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for giving me the grace to successfully complete this study; to the loving memory of my late parents, Baba Hassan Shawai and my mother Mrs Soda Hassan Shawai; to my dear wife, Mrs Elizabeth John Hassan; and to all peace-loving people of Northern Nigeria.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AACC</b>	All Africa Conference of Churches
<b>ACC</b>	Africa Council of Churches
<b>ACCORD</b>	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
<b>ACRL</b>	African Council of Religious Leaders
<b>AD</b>	After the Death of Christ
<b>AEA</b>	Association of Evangelicals in Africa
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<b>ANPP</b>	All Nigeria People’s Party
<b>AQ</b>	Al-Qaeda – extremist Muslims who believe in militancy
<b>ATR</b>	African traditional religion
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>BA</b>	Bachelor of Arts
<b>CAC</b>	Council of African Churches
<b>CAME</b>	Conference of Allied Ministers of Education
<b>CAN</b>	Christian Association of Nigeria
<b>CBN</b>	Central Bank of Nigeria
<b>CCN</b>	Christian Council of Nigeria
<b>CD</b>	Campaign for Democracy
<b>CELAM</b>	Consejo Episcopal Latino Americano
<b>CENCOR</b>	Centre for Conflict Resolution
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>CORAT</b>	Christian Organization Research and Advocacy Trust for Africa
<b>CPA</b>	Centre for Preventive Action
<b>CRC</b>	Civil Rights Congress
<b>DM</b>	Dan Mission
<b>ECWA</b>	Evangelical Church Winning All
<b>ECWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EMW</b>	Exchange and Mission Association of Protestant Churches and Mission in Germany
<b>FABC</b>	Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences
<b>FCT</b>	Federal Capital Territory

<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation
<b>HIV</b>	Human immune deficiency virus
<b>IAMS</b>	International Association for Mission Studies
<b>IAP</b>	Islam in Africa Project
<b>ICG</b>	International Crisis Group
<b>ICMR</b>	Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations
<b>IDLO</b>	International Development Law Organization
<b>IDS</b>	Institute of Development Studies
<b>IFAPA</b>	Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa
<b>IMC</b>	International Ministry Council
<b>ISSRC</b>	International Society for the Reformed Communities
<b>JAH</b>	Journal of Arts and Humanities
<b>JNI</b>	Arabic acronym for Jama'atu Nasril Islam (Victory for Islam)
<b>LCP</b>	Liaison Committee in Europe
<b>LG</b>	Local government
<b>LGA</b>	Local government authority
<b>LWF</b>	Lutheran World Federation
<b>MA</b>	Master of Arts
<b>MSS</b>	Muslim Students Society
<b>NAE</b>	National Association of Evangelicals
<b>NAS</b>	New American Standard Version
<b>ND</b>	No date
<b>NDA</b>	Nigerian Defence Academy
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NIREC</b>	Nigerian Inter-Religious Council
<b>NIV</b>	New International Version
<b>NMDC</b>	Nigerian Muslims and Democracy Conference
<b>NMC</b>	Northern Missionary Council
<b>NT</b>	New Testament
<b>NY</b>	New York
<b>OAIC</b>	Organization of African Instituted Churches
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OAU</b>	Organisation of African Unity

<b>OIC</b>	Organization of the Islamic Conference
<b>ONU</b>	Organisation des Nations Unites
<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>PCIP</b>	Pontifical Councils for Inter-religious Dialogue
<b>PCM</b>	Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany
<b>PDP</b>	People's Democratic Party
<b>PHD</b>	Doctor of Philosophy
<b>PNM</b>	Protestant National Missionary
<b>PROCMURA</b>	Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa / Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
<b>SECAM</b>	Symposium of Episcopal Churches in Africa and Madagascar
<b>SUD</b>	Society of Divine Word
<b>SUM</b>	Sudan United Mission
<b>SIM</b>	Sudan Interior Mission
<b>UBE</b>	Universal basic education
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>WCC</b>	World Council of Churches
<b>WCRC</b>	World Communion of Reformed Churches
<b>WEA</b>	World Evangelical Alliance
<b>YMCA</b>	Young Men's Christian Association

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a huge diversity of people. This suggests that it is a pluralistic society, highly complex, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multicultural, multilingual and multi-regional. This is made clearer by Osaghae and Suberu (2005:7, 22-23), who state that “The identities are mainly ethnic, religious, regional, and gender. These being largely territorial identities within which the non-territorial identities of class, gender and youth tend to be summarized...to emphasize the interconnectedness of ethnic, regional and religious identities and the fact that they are often mutually reinforcing, they are sometimes compounded or hyphenated as ethno-regional and ethno-religious”. This informs that identity is created in the process of human interaction and can be negotiated (Eyeruroma & Chidimma (2013:199), argue that identity as a concept is not problematic, but it is often used as a basis for discrimination. The concept of social identity stems from the work of Tajfel, which has given rise to social identity theory (Pittam, 1994:63). It is also a helpful explanation when Stets and Peter (2000:224, citing Turner & Wetherell, 1987 and McCall & Simmons, 1978) explain the formation of identity thus:

In social identity theory and identity theory, the self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications. This process is called self-categorizations in social identity theory. In identity theory it is called identification. Through the process of self-categorization or identification, an identity is formed.

From the above description of social identity it may be argued that it is an action that has been used in diverse ways and has been explored in a number of disciplines, but particularly within social psychology. Deaux (2001:1), said, ethnicity and religion; political affiliation; vocations and avocations; relationships and stigmatised identities are some example in social identity. For the purpose of this research, categorisation is the type of identity that appears to resonate with this study. Categorisation, which is an aspect of social, identity, may be used negatively and positively. Hence, according to Tajfel and Turner (1979), identity is not always unconstructive and is different from stereotyping. In other words, people can opt to live with other people of differing identity mutually and peacefully if they wish. Incidentally, this is why I agree with Adenkule (2009: ix), who observes that “pluralistic societies are hard and complicated to manage”. Otherwise it would have been remarkable to expect mutual and religious

coexistence among Nigerians in a country that is rich in human resources and multiple cultures. However, this is not the reality (Howard, 1983:89), because the country is generally split between Christianity and Islam. Therefore this dissertation focuses on multiple identities and inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria.

In the context of these multiple identities, the quest of Northern Nigeria is a search for reconciliation, mutuality and peaceful coexistence. In this dissertation the intention was to build on an effort by investigating the contribution of prophetic dialogue, the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) and Kritzinger's seven-praxis cycle to the longing for reconciliation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria. In response to this challenge below is the research question that will help address the categorization contest in this region.

How can the praxis cycle enable mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA contribute to inter-religious encounters and coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria that can lead to peace and reconciliation in the context of religious diversity and religious plurality?

In view of the challenge at hand, it is helpful to have a brief background of the context, which relates to power struggle and representation, government allocation, indigeneity and *shari'a*,<sup>1</sup> among other factors, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. On the basis of the categorisation challenges (Liolio, 2013:9; Williams, 2012:164), it perhaps should be mentioned that Nigeria is the largest country in the world with an evenly split population of Christians and Muslims, and that it has experienced identity and identification challenges since the colonial epoch. The country has since been divided between a Muslim north and a Christian south (Adebayo, 2010:214; cf. Osaghae & Suberu, (2005:4). This division, according to Uzoma (2004:654-656), became more significant after the country's independence in 1960 and with the significant growth of Christianity and the Islamic faith. After its independence in 1960, the leadership style in the country changed slightly as a result of the administrative legacy of the colonial

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<sup>1</sup>The word Sharia refers to the complete universal code of conduct drawn up by Allah through His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) for humankind, detailing the religious, political, economic, intellectual and legal systems. It is meant for universal application, covering the entire spectrum of life, prescribing what lawful (halal) is and prohibiting that which is unlawful (Adekunle, 2009). In other words, Sharia is an Islamic law that is formed by traditional Islamic scholarship, which most Muslim groups adhere to. Literally, it carries the idea of a path leading to a watering place. Sharia constitutes a system of duties that are incumbent upon a Muslim by virtue of his or her religious beliefs.

masters. The regionalisation of the country was the seed that created the foundation of division in Nigeria, a country that is rich in human power and resources.

In addressing the challenges of multiple identities and inter-religious encounters, the following contributing factors to the on-going inter-religious conflicts are presented. Firstly, religious diversity and religious pluralism<sup>2</sup>: When referring to religious diversity and religious pluralism, the argument refers to religious tolerance, religious ecumenism as well as religious diversity and pluralism. Therefore, it appears that Mato (2004:3) is right to argue that “one of the rudimentary roots of the religious encounters in Northern Nigeria is the way in which the religious conducts in the country have intermingled, and the way they have been influenced by selfish interests”. For instance, according to Ovienloba (2011:72), “Nigeria, as well as other African nations is religious...” but how great is the understanding of these religions, as Christianity and Islam both teach peace and love for God and neighbours?

The three main religions in Nigeria are the traditional religions or indigenous religions, Islam and Christianity; of these three, Christianity and Islam are more prominent and have been at the centre of inter-religious encounters in the nation. Islam came to the territories of Northern Nigeria between the 13th and 15th centuries (Boyd & Shagari, 2003:2), while Christianity came to Nigeria in the middle of the 19th century (Enweren, 1995:20). The Jihad<sup>3</sup> of Usman Danfodiyo (1804 to 1808) and the assimilation of the Hausa Fulani states into Sokoto Caliphate, the largest empire in Africa since the fall of Songhai in 1591, made Islam powerful in Northern Nigeria (Nahor, 2008:221). Incidentally, Islam became popular and championed the respect of the populace of that era, in addition to creating a sense of superiority. Therefore, at present, it appears to be helpful for Nigerian religious adherents to accept what Knitter (1985:3) submitted when he said, “No longer are people of other persuasions peripheral or distant, the idle curiosities of travellers’ tales. The more alert we are, and the more involved in life, the more we are

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<sup>2</sup>Religious Pluralism is basically the belief that all the world religions are true and equally valid in their communication of the truth about God, the world and salvation. In other words, religious pluralism is the acceptance of religions other than one’s own.

<sup>3</sup> In Islam, Jihad is often translated as ‘holy war’, but in other words it might mean struggling or striving. In a religious sense, according to the Islamic Supreme Council of America, jihad has many meanings. It can refer to the internal as well as external effort to be good Muslims or believers, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam. It can also mean to protect the faith against others using any legal, diplomatic and economic or political means. Although the doctrine of jihad can be viewed as a just war that was established in Medina because of the interference and persistent fear of invasion from the non-Muslim forces surrounding Muslims, Sardar Ali and Javaid (2005:327) stress that the totality of jihad ideology represents a religiously sanctioned war to propagate or defend the Islamic faith.

finding that they are our neighbours, our colleagues, our competitors, our fellows”. This means that Christians, Muslims and others in Northern Nigeria have to live in the context of pluralism. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Secondly, the colonial legacy is another background factor. Nigeria began as an annexation of Lagos by the British in 1861, in an incursion that took place from the South to the North (Gofwen, 2004:58). In 1900, the Northern Protectorate was formed, and in 1906, the two protectorates in the South were merged. In 1914, the Northern protectorate and the colony, and the protectorate of the South were amalgamated into what came to be known as Nigeria. By amalgamation is meant the amalgamation of the numerous ethnic groups in Nigeria by the colonialists (Adebayo, 2010:214). This was conglomeration of approximately four hundred ethnic groups, each having their own distinct history, language, culture and political system before colonial rule.

Paradoxically, for their convenience, the colonial masters compressed and merged the various minority groups with the majority groups in their respective regions, namely the North-east and West. Ironically, the amalgamation at this point was more theoretical than practical, because each of the two regions was administered separately (Gboyega, 1997:154). This is why, according to Awe (1999:8), the amalgamation was contested, because many people at that time concluded that the amalgamation was not done primarily in the interests of the Nigerian people, but for the convenience of the colonialists. However, the indigenous people in the North were allowed to rule themselves, as British administration was instituted on the principle of indirect rule. This scenario created the basis for the colonial preferential treatment of the Northerners (Best, 2000:11).

Thirdly, ethnicity and citizenship are a problem in Nigeria because, according to Salawu and Hassan (2011:28), the factor of ethnicity is reflected in all political activities in the country. It is particularly obvious in areas such as voting, the distribution of political offices, employment and general government patronage of the country’s citizens. In the same way, Lenshie and Johnson (2012:48) note that the elite have played down inter-ethnic relationships through the manipulation of ethnicity and citizenship. The “elite does this by exploiting proximate causes of conflict such as poverty, unemployment, land tenure issue, group identity while struggling for power in the primitive accumulation process”. Therefore, it is recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria should find a lasting solution to this and make it a constitutional matter.



Fourthly, the mixing of religion and politics in Northern Nigeria is the final assumed background problem. Religion and politics in Nigeria are mixed. Dickinson (2010:1) says, “Politicians have been quick to influence one another to follow their constituents’ retreat to religion. They are conspicuously present at churches and mosques, allied with specific pastors and imams. They raise constituencies among their religious peers, and pour patronage on their fellow faithful”. This has been the practice of both Christian and Muslim politicians in Nigeria, to such an extent that religious leaders have fallen victim to taking sides. Dickinson adds that politicians support the religious institutions financially to render religious leaders incapable of criticizing them – especially when they have become corrupt. Perhaps this is why Lamido (2004:15) and Enwerem (1995:34) argue that Islam has tended to have a clear and long intermix with politics, especially when addressing the theme from the perspective of Danfodiyo’s Jihad of 1804 to 1808. Coincidentally, the emergence of Christianity in Nigerian politics also motivated Pentecostalism in Northern Nigeria, creating competition between Christians and Muslims. Therefore we can argue that the mixing of religion and politics has resulted in some problems in the politics of Nigeria, as well as in people’s religious activities.

In view of the above contextual background, the researcher, as a Hausa Christian from Northern Nigeria, was motivated to conduct this research because of his ten years of participation in the peace-making iteration under PROCMURA. This participation contributed immensely to the researchers’ exposure to the daunting challenges of dealing with multiple identity issues and their related conflicts, especially Christian-Muslim encounters. In some of our conferences, which involved both Christians and Muslims, the conference participants paid close attention to identifying the problem of categorisation and ethno-religious encounters that are usually motivated by religious politics, socio-economics, power struggles, ethnocentrism, cultural factors and injustices. These problems are transformed into challenges, and finally provide possible opportunities for religious and mutual coexistence. Through the process of dialogue, prophetic dialogue could be a way forward in addressing Christian-Muslim encounters in Northern Nigeria. Therefore, prophetic dialogue in the documents of PROCMURA in Chapter 4 of this dissertation will be evaluated.

Secondly, I was also motivated to carry out this research based on my involvement in theological education over the last 20 years. Interacting with my students from various parts of Nigeria led me to understand that there is a need for the sensitisation of church leaders with regard to possible opportunities for church commitment to witness and dialogue, so as to foster mutual understanding and coexistence as a basis for peace and reconciliation between Christians and Muslims through the use of the prophetic

dialogue of Bevans and Schroeder (2004:371-4) and Kritzinger's (2008:770-785) seven-praxis cycle. Prophetic dialogue, according to Nemer (2007:30), is a term that was introduced into mission literature by the Divine Word missionaries. It emerged at their General Chapter (a meeting of about 120 representatives from the 6 000 plus members of this international missionary congregation) in the year 2000. The phrase, according to Bevan and Schroeder (2004:348-349) and Bosch (1991:489), describes speaking and listening, inductive and deductive methods, theory and experience, insiders and outsiders, as well as confidence and humility. It is also about speaking boldly and yet humbly, which may mean that Christians can share the Good News of Jesus, being prophetic and speaking God's word with those around them, but that this needs to be done in humble conversation.

## 1.2. The research problem

Nigeria has experienced lots of violent conflicts of different kinds over the past few decades. In recent times, multiple identity issues and inter-religious encounters have been a challenge, especially with the activities of the "Boko Haram", an Islamic extremist group, sometimes called Taliban or *Yussufiyyah* (Agbibo, 2013:1). This indicates that, apart from socio-economic and political factors and ethnicity, religion plays a major role in fuelling and pulling off violent conflict in Northern Nigeria. Inter-religious conflicts have resulted in people losing their lives and property, and these occurrences seem to undermine religious and mutual coexistence. Many Christians, as well as many Muslims, have adopted a fundamentalist approach to dealing with these multiple identity issues and inter-religious encounters (Mohammed, Mohd & Ibrahim, 2012:115; Omotosho, 2003:17). Clearly, the recurrence of these negative encounters in Nigeria has done much damage to many people and organisations, and also to churches, mosques, residential and business centres, and one is left to wonder how peace initiatives can be achieved in this kind of situation.

In the face of these different forms of conflict in Nigeria, achieving peace and unity becomes a major challenge, hence, instead of searching out these important issues (peace and unity), Christians and Muslims are wasting their energies fighting each other instead of developing the resources they have in the country. In the process, the adherents of the two religions – Christians and Muslims – have ended up missing valuable opportunities for the socio-economic development and transformation of the society at large. Even though it appears that some effort has been made to counter the violent conflict, the present violence and untold suffering in many parts of the country indicate that "peace is not only important, but it is a rare and urgent commodity that the nation needs and must continue to struggle to achieve it at all

cost in order to survive as a nation” (Cajon, 2012:12). It is in this kind of context of multiple identities and conflict that this research considers the concept of mission as a prophetic dialogue, in and through PROCMURA, in order to reconceptualise and rethink identity and encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

PROCMURA’s vision is to see Nigeria, as well as other African countries work together for the holistic development of the human family despite their differences. For over 50 years now, PROCMURA has worked to concretise this long-existing vision by continuing to employ practical approaches to achieving its objectives, more especially in Northern Nigeria. Because PROCMURA has identified the multiple identities and encounters and has immersed<sup>4</sup> itself in the need for peace and unity in Northern Nigeria, my identity within this organisation led me to hold the view that peace is something you toil for; hence it is inherent in both Christianity and Islam. Perhaps this might be the reason why Mbillah (2015) argues that religious people should pray for peace, but also ensure that their actions depict peace. I also will use Kritzinger’s (2008:769ff) formulation of dialogue, which includes the following: agency, contextual analysis, ecclesial analysis, theological reflection, spirituality, practical projects and reflexivity, as the basis for an analysis to address identity and inter-religious encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, to provide an open space for peace and reconciliatory opportunities towards coexistence, as well as for doing mission.

### **1.3. Objectives of the research**

The main objective of this research was to ascertain whether the seven praxis cycle of Kritzinger’s mission as encounter logy can enable mission as prophetic dialogue through PROCMURA, to contribute to addressing the challenges of inter-religious encounters and coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, which may result in peace and reconciliation in the context of religious diversity and religious plurality. This objective challenges the argument that Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria may perhaps not appreciate their differences of beliefs and practices that will lead to mutual understanding and coexistence.

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<sup>4</sup>PROCMURA, according to Mbillah (2015:15), has over the years worked tirelessly with religious communities in Nigeria for peace and the wellbeing of the country. Conferences and consultations have been held in their bid to strengthen systems and networks that will safeguard peace and ensure that the two main religious groups of Christians and Muslims live and are at peace with one another.

Other objectives were:

- To explore and evaluate the context of identity and factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue.
- To explore theories of prophetic dialogue in the theology of religions and churches.
- To conceptualise mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA and how it might contribute towards addressing inter-religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.
- To explore an approach using Kritzinger's seven-praxis cycle (2008:769ff), which Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria can employ to coexist and work together in the context of their religious diversity and religious plurality.

#### **1.4. Significance of the research**

The research significance is important, in that, according to Marshall and Gretchen (2011:70-73), it is an opportunity to discuss ways of creating spaces. This research is an analysis of how the praxis cycle of Kritzinger's mission as encounterology can empower mission as prophetic dialogue in and through PROCMURA to contribute towards addressing the issue of identity and inter-religious encounters, which may lead to peace and reconciliation in the religiously and ethnically pluralistic Northern Nigeria. Emerson and David (2006:127) have noted that the "encounter between Christians and Muslims is not confined to Northern Nigeria, but also takes place in other parts of the world". Perhaps religious-related encounters in Northern Nigeria are more pronounced in the political arena, because there is an assumption that plurality and religious diversity and practices have been politically manipulated to produce envy and hatred, and inadequate understanding in the church's mission.

The significance of this research is manifold. Firstly, this research could serve as a tool in sensitising the churches in Northern Nigeria to redefine their existence and calling in the light of their missiological roles, which are mission of love, mission of touch and mission of service, defined as both witness and dialogue by Bevans and Schroeder (2004:371). Furthermore, Bevans and Schroeder (2004:371) captured the idea when they said that "the church should not only engage in the corporal works of mercy through charitable service, but it is also to be involved in human development, the practice and establishment of justice and the struggle for liberation in cultural and religiously pluralistic contexts". Similarly, Kalu (2005:14) and Bosch (2011: 382-383) seem to maintain that the church as the people of God, the body of Christ, a band of pilgrims, a leavening of yeast, salt of the earth, a light on the hill for a truly missional

Church, among other things, is a group of people always looking further than itself in a religiously pluralistic context.

Secondly, from a missiology and science of religion perspective, the contextual factors that was investigated appears to surround identity and that motivate the inter-religious encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, which are notably complex. This research could help other countries that share similar experiences of the challenges of identity and inter-religious encounters to understand the dynamics of conflicts, thus it is also attempting to find a sustainable way of addressing the situation.

Thirdly, the research will contribute to the missiological scholarly research on the issue of identity and inter-religious conflict, based on an approach and methods from a Northern Nigerian contextual perspective. In other words, the research will be an additional contribution to the field of the theology of inter-religious encounters. The current issue of identity and inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria and elsewhere will find it a useful resource for understanding mutuality and coexistence, creating an opportunity for peace and reconciliation.

Lastly, Kritzinger's (2008:770, 785) approach of mission as encounterology (agency, contextual analysis, ecclesial analysis, theological reflexion, spirituality, practical projects and reflexivity), or rather, mission through a pastoral cycle, and a praxis matrix (contextual dynamics), which is communal and practical was used. Hence, therefore the used of this approach provided a useful dimension to mutual and inter-religious coexistence. This approach might stimulate more discussion and research on identity and inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria, as well as in other African countries. This will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. Therefore, in view of this, Bosch (1991:xv) accurately noted that mission is both witness and dialogue and remains an indispensable dimension of the Christian faith and that, at its most profound level, its purpose is to transform reality around it. Given that missiology and being missional are a theological endeavour, this study will contribute to the field of missiology as an independent discipline in dialogue with other theological disciplines (Bosch 1991:489-490), which are also challenged by religious diversity in Africa.

## 1.5. The scope of the research

Patton (2002:223) advocates that “There are no perfect research designs, which means that there are always trade-offs”. Thus, the scope in doing research is crucial. To this end, Smith (2008:141) notes that delimitations help the researcher to focus on what is relevant to the problem of the research. Therefore this research is limited to Northern Nigeria. The far north,<sup>5</sup> if taken to comprise the twelve states that re-introduced Shari’a<sup>6</sup> (Islamic Law) in 1999 for criminal cases, is home to over 52 million people (Poole & Vihara, 2014:1). The majority are Muslim, but there is a substantial Christian minority,<sup>7</sup> both indigenous to the area and the product of migration from the Southern part of Nigeria and who, by the law of the country, deserve the fundamental right to “life, respect for their dignity, liberty and freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion” as Nigerians (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, Chapter 4, section: 33-38).

It therefore is essential to maintain that addressing the issue of identity and Christian-Muslim encounters in Northern Nigeria is a difficult task because of the social, religious and cultural prejudices found. It was not the intention of this research to address the entire phenomenon because of the size of the problem. The research is limited to identity and inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria and the impact of mission as prophetic dialogue in and through PROCMURA. The research is significant because it is an

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<sup>5</sup>Northern Nigeria predominantly consists of the Hausa and Fulani tribes. It was a British colony formed in 1900. The basis of the colony was the 1885 Treaty of Berlin, which broadly granted Northern Nigeria to Britain on the basis of their protectorates in Southern Nigeria. Britain’s chosen governor (Frederick Lugard), who had limited resources, slowly negotiated with and sometimes coerced the emirates of the north into accepting British rule, finding that the only way this could be achieved was with the consent of local rulers through a policy of indirect rule, which he developed from a necessary improvisation into a sophisticated political theory. Lugard left the protectorate after some years, and served in Hong Kong, but eventually returned to work in Nigeria, where he decided on the merger of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate with Southern Nigeria in 1914. Modern Northern Nigeria is made up of the following 19 out of 36 Nigerian states: Adamawa, Jigawa, Kogi, Sokoto, Bauchi, Kaduna, Kwara, Taraba, Benue, Kano, Nasarawa, Yobe, Borno, Katsina, Niger, Zamfara, Gombe, Kebbi, and Plateau.

<sup>6</sup> The word Shariah is defined as the complete universal code of conduct drawn up by Allah through His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) to humankind, detailing the religious, political, economic, intellectual and legal systems. It is meant for universal application, covering the entire spectrum of life, prescribing what lawful (halal) is and prohibiting that which is unlawful (Adekunle 2009:2-3). In other words, Sharia is an Islamic law that is formed by traditional Islamic scholarship, which most Muslim groups adhere to. Literally, it carries the idea of the path leading to the watering place. Shari’a constitutes a system of duties that are incumbent upon a Muslim by virtue of his or her religious belief.

<sup>7</sup> According to Amaza (2011:1), of the 19 Northern states, at least five have a majority Christian population: Plateau, Adamawa, Nassarawa, Taraba and Benue. At least six more have a Christian population at least 40%. These states include Niger, Gombe, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara and either Borno or Bauchi. That then leaves only Kano, Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara as having Muslim populations above 60%. How then are we all seen as Muslims?

effort to motivate an opportunity for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. The next section deals with the research methodology and method.

## 1.6. Research methodology and method

According to Mouton (2001:56), the research process and the kind of tools one uses in conducting research are crucial. This is why Kothari (2004:8) maintains that research methodology is the “science of studying how research is conducted”. It is concerned with “underlying philosophical logic and the knowledge that inform the research, as well as various research activities, such as data collection and data organization” (Ridley, 2009:33). Perhaps this might be the reason why Louw (1998a:2) noted that the nature of the research question and the data determine the methodological approach, while the ‘how’ question of the research refers specifically to research techniques.

This is qualitative research located within the interpretive paradigm, hence pragmatism and hermeneutics were used to analyse the relationship between the concept of mission as prophetic dialogue, identity and inter-religious encounters between Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria. The research further is non-empirical: I relied on the existing literature because there is sufficient data on prophetic dialogue, PROCMURA, identity and inter-religious encounters. Therefore, literature and other documents found in the Stellenbosch University library and accessed online through the Internet were utilised. Materials used were both published books and unpublished documents. Additionally, the literature on PROCMURA, which includes both local and international books and articles, journals and academic papers, was scrutinised.

The researcher maintains the use of qualitative research for three reasons: Firstly, qualitative research, according to Louw (1998b: 7), “implies an emphasis of processes and meanings that cannot be measured in terms of quantity, number, intensity or frequency (it is more ideographical)”. The documents in qualitative research are socially structured, hence according to Leedy and Jeanne (2010:7), this kind of research ensures a close link between the researcher and that which is studied. Furthermore, it was value-oriented research; hence the “variables” were not controlled, because they had the freedom and natural development of accomplishment and exemplification that the researcher wished to capture.

Secondly, following Henning, Wilhelm and Smith (2004:3), the use of the qualitative research approach entails looking at *what* happens, *how* it happens and *why* it happens in the way it happens. Its focus is not

only on the actions of humankind, such as their speech and writing, but also on “how they represent their feelings and thoughts in these actions”.

Thirdly, I preferred to use the qualitative approach because, according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:2-3) it generally examines “people’s worlds and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants”.

In view of the above argument, my choice of the interpretive paradigm is appropriate, as it has various dimensions. Cavell (1979:191ff) introduces traditional epistemology by acknowledging two forms of interpretive understanding – phenomenological interpretation and conceptual interpretation. Phenomenological interpretation is based on empirical facts, while conceptual understanding is based on the meaning of a concept made up by claims relating to the reasons that led to the understanding of various concepts through scepticism, using consciousness and the senses. The interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this research because it has to do with “what is happening that were observed in the episodes, situation and contexts” (Cavell, 1979:191ff). It also deals with the identification of the issues within the episodes, contexts and situations in order to draw on theories from the arts and sciences to help in understanding the issues. Hence, “thoughtfulness,” “theoretical interpretation,” and “wise judgement” are required (Osmer, 2008:83).

Osmer’s hermeneutic is followed closely all the way through the entire dissertation as a guide for the research, which thus follows the four tasks of Osmer’s (2008:4) hermeneutical spiral. Hermeneutics was engaged for this research hence, according to Caputo (1987:177) it provides clarity on the “mystery beneath, the ongoing historical, epochal process by which things emerge from concealment into unconcealment”. Hermeneutics was used as a method for conceptual analysis in understanding how mission as prophetic dialogue and Kritzinger’s seven-praxis cycle in PROCURA can provide nuances for enhancing religious and mutual coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

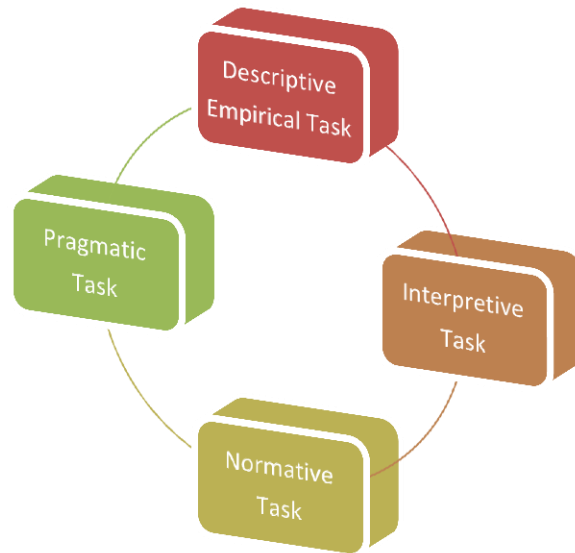
Although Osmer (2008) provides models that are mostly used in practical theology and are introduced primarily for the purpose of “equipping the congregational leaders to engage in practical theological interpretation of episodes, situations and contexts that confront them in ministry”, they have also been found to be very helpful in this missiological research. Consequently, the context, interpretation, pragmatist and hermeneutic perspectives are outlined. In his theory, Osmer calls these models four tasks: descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic.



The first task is what Osmer (2008:31ff) describes as the descriptive-empirical task: it pursues the question, “What is going on in a particular social context or field of experience?” (Chapter 1 of this dissertation provides the description of what was going on as background to the entire research). The second task is the interpretive task (Osmer, 2008:79ff). Research findings are not self-interpreting. Thus, the interpretive task of practical theology seeks to place such findings in an explanatory framework, providing an answer to the question, “Why are these things going on?” Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation explore the social, political and religious contextual factors that influence inter-religious encounters.

The third task described by Osmer (2008:129ff) is the normative task. Practical theology does more than investigate and interpret contemporary form of religious praxis. It seeks to assess such praxis normatively from the perspective of Christian theology and ethics, with a view to reform when this is needed. The normative task thus pursues the question, “What form ought current religious praxis to take in this particular social context?” Chapter 4 of this dissertation, an evaluation of PROCURA’s activities in Northern Nigeria and Africa, will be considered here. Osmer further asserts that, in the new model of practical theology, explicit attention is given to forming norms that can be used to assess, guide and reform contemporary praxis. The final task in Osmer (2008:175ff) is what he calls the pragmatic task. The primary focus of this task is matters of “how to”, although it is informed by the “why to” gained from the description, interpretive and normative reflection in addressing mission as prophetic dialogue, understanding identity and religious encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, and the theological implications of mission. Chapter 5 of this dissertation also uses Kritzing (2008:769-773; 2013:39-40), who proposes a seven-praxis cycle of mission as encounterology. Pragmatism is helpful in this research because of its communal and practical approach.

These four tasks that form Osmer's (2008:11) hermeneutical spiral are illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Osmer's (2008:11) Hermeneutical Spiral**

Therefore, as a possible theological evaluation of ideas and responses to Christian-Muslim encounters in the context of identity struggles and inter-religious encounters, the threefold paradigm of Bevens and Schroeder (2004:36, 61) and Bosch (2011:445-448) helped me to address the research questions. The first paradigm is mission as saving souls and extending the church. Bevens and Schroeder (2004:49) call this kind of theology “Type A Theology”. It is “developed around the insight that true humanity is achieved in submission to an order that is beyond human making but accessible to humanity through God’s gracious revelation” (Bevens and Schroeder, 2004:49). The emphasis here is that mission is an effort to save souls and extend the church in which, without the “structures of the church, the reign of God on earth, men and women cannot avail themselves of the means of salvation” (Ibid. 2004:49).

The second paradigm has to do with mission as discovery of the truth. This type of theology is called Type B, and is characterised by a search for “Truth”, a truth that is accessible to humanity through paying attention to human experience and human reason. Bevens and Schroeder (2004:61) maintain that mission is carried out as a search for God’s grace that is hidden within people’s cultural, religious and historical contexts. “It is an invitation to discover the Truth because in Truth lies human salvation”, (Ibid. 2004:61)

and it is already realised and presented in human experience and human culture. The last paradigm is mission as commitment to liberation and transformation. This is the Type C theology. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:71) allege that this type of theology focuses on the commitment of Christians toward the liberation and transformation of humanity, and indeed of the entire globe. Christians are to proclaim Christ as the true liberator and transformer of culture. Perhaps this reveals that the church is the community of liberated humanity.

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters.

*Chapter 1:* This chapter gives the general background to the study with regard to identity and inter-religious encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, and the use of mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA, to provide space for reconciliation, coexistence and gospel proclamation. The research problem(s), objectives and significance were also presented, and the scope, methodology and method were explained. Finally, the outline of the chapters and a conclusion are provided.

*Chapter 2:* This chapter is thematic and descriptive, therefore it provides a brief historical background to inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria and analyses the social, political and religious contextual factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue. What are the religious and contextual factors? How these influence Christian-Muslim dialogue is crucial.

*Chapter 3:* The third chapter describes and analyses identity and encounter in theology of religion and churches as a factor influencing inter-religious conflict. A conceptual understanding of mission as prophetic dialogue, theology of religion and churches and how each concept is integrated to provide an opportunity for Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria to coexist is provided.

*Chapter 4:* This chapter suggests mission as prophetic dialogue in the documents containing PROCMURA's aims, outcomes and activities. The underlying assumption of this chapter is that PROCMURA can influence reconciliation and inter-religious coexistence and provide an opportunity for the proclamation of the gospel in Northern Nigeria.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter explores Kritzinger's seven-praxis cycle of mission as encounterology, a dialogue on religious encounter that is communal and practical in action – “Face to Face,” “Faith to Faith,” “Shoulder to Shoulder” or “Back to Back” – to provide an opportunity for mutual and inter-religious coexistence among the Muslims and Christians of Northern Nigeria. Kritzinger's (2008:769ff.) seven-praxis cycle as missiological framework of encounterology entails the following: agency, contextual analysis, ecclesial analysis, theological reflexion, spirituality, practical projects and reflexivity.

**Chapter 6:** The last chapter revisits the research question and objectives formulated in the initial chapter. This chapter also summarises the entire study and makes recommendations based on the findings, as well as proposes further research. The final conclusion of the entire research follows at the end of this chapter. The question is: “How can the praxis cycle enable mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA to contribute to inter-religious encounters and coexistence among Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria that can lead to peace and reconciliation in the context of religious diversity and religious plurality?”

## **1.8. Conclusion**

This section concludes the introductory chapter as well as provides a brief background to the context of the research focus. The sole aim of this chapter is to provide the background, the format and path taken to do the research. The main aim of this dissertation is to ascertain whether the praxis cycle can enable mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA, and in so doing, contribute to addressing the challenges of identity and inter-religious encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, which might result in reconciliation, peaceful coexistence and mutuality in the context of religious diversity and religious plurality. This study follows the qualitative and interpretive paradigmatic approach (Mouton & Marais, 1990:193). The research was based on the conceptualisation that encounter using Kritzinger's seven-praxis cycle of mission as encounterology and mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA can transform Christian-Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria. Osmer's hermeneutical method was also applied throughout the research.

The research is both a contextual and conceptual analysis. Regarding the scope of the research, it should be noted, however, that addressing the issue of identity and Christian-Muslim inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria is a difficult one, and therefore it was not my intention to address the entire phenomenon. The research is limited to addressing identity and inter-religious encounters in Northern

Nigeria and the impact of mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA. The research is exceptional because it is an effort to create an opportunity for reconciliation and inter-religious coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria using Kritzinger's seven-praxis cycle of mission as encounterology and prophetic dialogue through PROCMURA in lieu of the deployment of troops and judicial methods, otherwise called coercion, which the government of Nigeria has been using with little success (Cf. Section 3.1; 3.7). The motivation for an interest in the research was derived from my background as a Hausa Christian from Northern Nigeria, my personal involvement in the activities of PROCMURA, as well as my personal involvement in theological education and passion for holistic transformation. The following chapter will discuss 'what' and 'how' socio-religious and political factors influence Christian-Muslim dialogue.

## CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the background to the research. This chapter analyses the contextual factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue in Northern Nigeria. This involves providing a brief historical context of inter-religious encounter(s), as well as highlighting the factors and their implications for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. The economic, socio-religious and political factors that influence religious conflict are numerous. Stiftung (2008:19) identified three broad categories, namely conflicts over limited resources, psychological needs, and values/cultural needs. These three categories symbolise the Nigerian situation, but most of all, the value and/or cultural needs that appear to be represented by identity issues.

According to Stiftung, conflicts over resources are easily identified because they are tangible and easier to resolve. He argues that, whenever resources are made available, this kind of conflict is ended. The second type of conflict is the one over psychological needs, such as denial of love, security, friendship and a sense of belonging. These psychological needs can lead to frustration and aggressive behaviour. The third category of conflict is the conflict over values and culture. This is the most difficult conflict to resolve or understand, as it is based on belief systems and worldview. Stiftung (2008:19) believes that, “Most time’s people could die for what they believe”. Conflict over values can only be prevented, managed or resolved when parties are willing to re-examine their own value system and respect the differences in each other’s value”. Hence the situation in Northern Nigerian appears to be in these three categories of conflict described by Stiftung. This is the reason why I used Kritzinger’s seven-praxis cycle to address the scenario in Chapter 5 of this research. The above illustrates contextual factors that have the ability to influence mutuality and coexistence, while the following are the suggested factors that contributed to the Northern Nigerian inter-religious encounter over the past two decades.

In Africa, as well as in other parts of the world, conflicts are caused by a variety of factors, such as ethnicity,<sup>8</sup> race, religion<sup>9</sup> and limited resources. It is argued that in Northern Nigeria, colonial legacy,

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<sup>8</sup>Ethnicity as an inscriptive phenomenon that usually comes with traits believed to be innate, and that gives rise to a sense of group identity. Horowitz (1993:6) sees the conception of ethnicity as appropriately, broadly inclusive of any type of inscriptive group identity, whether based on colour, appearance or language. It therefore is

national economic crises, and the politicisation of religion are some factors that influences conflict. Additionally, religious fanaticism, cultural plurality and diversity, the divergent perceptions of the Nigerian population of the intra-elite power struggle, provocative statements, intolerance and inclusive religions as well as superiority complex are other factors that influences inter-religious conflict. Other factors could include discriminatory policies, solidarity and illiteracy.

In view of the factors listed above, the focus was emphasised on regionalism, political factors, the national economic crisis, socio-religious factors, and the perception of the Nigerian state population and elite's power struggle. The motivation to do this was on the basis of discriminatory policies enacted by some of the governors of Northern Nigeria, poor leadership, endemic corruption within the government services, and poverty. Other motivations include: historical antecedent and inability to reverse the ills of history, unresolved anger and religious bigotry (Adeyeye, 2013:116). These factors that influence conflict can be analysed at different levels, such as the local level, regional level, national level and international level. Consequently, it can be argued that the government of Nigeria, the religious bodies and their affiliates, the international organisations and the common people are the actors, causing and participating in these kinds of conflicts.

The aim of this chapter is to understand the socio-religious, economic, religious and political factors influencing Christian-Muslim encounters and the effects on humanity so as to create an opportunity for inter-religious coexistence through dialogue. The explanation provided by Kritzinger (2008:769ff) of contextual factors is helpful for this chapter, where he poses questions such as: "What are the social, political, economic and cultural factors that influence the society within which we encounter each other? How do I (we) analyse this context? How does the other person (community) of another faith analyse it? How do these factors influence our encounter?" Similarly, Osmer (2008:32-34), in his approach to understand the context, poses questions such as: "What is going on in a particular social context or field of experience? In this context of identity and Christian-Muslim encounters: How do Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria view their prevailing circumstances? How do we (they) read the signs of the times?" However, in Kritzinger, the relational identity dimension forms an important part of the

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fundamentally a political and social phenomenon associated with interaction among members of different ethnic groups. It is often representative of supreme loyalties overpowering other political divisions.

<sup>9</sup> Religion is associated with sociology and therefore is a "unified system of beliefs and practices which unite people into one moral community" (Horowitz, 1993:6).

descriptive task in the first phase of the praxis cycle. This, according to Kritzinger (2008:769ff; 2013:38), has to do with historical factors: gender, culture, racism, societal structure, nationality, poverty and privileges. We may describe all of these issues as identity challenges. Perhaps understanding religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in a historical context will help us understand the contemporary context.

## **2.2 Religious conflicts in the historical context of Northern Nigeria**

Religious conflict is a situation in which the relationship between members of one religious group and those of a similar group in a multi-religious society is characterised by a lack of cordiality, by suspicion and fear, and by a tendency towards violent confrontation. This section seeks to provide a brief analysis of multiple identities and inter-religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in the historical context of Northern Nigeria, which I categorise as an intractable conflict. The analysis will highlight inter-religious conflict before and after independence. The following questions were helpful to me in responding to this section: What were the arguments about the religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria before and after the Nigerian independence? How can the encounter help Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria to address their relationship towards reconciliation and religious coexistence? What informs the conflict in general?

Humankind has been caught up in situations of countless conflict since the start of time. Perhaps this is why Mpanyane (2009:5, 6), notes that some conflicts arise as a “result of scarcity of resources or over territory. Other conflicts are a result of differences between people, groups or nations. Similarly, Salawu (2010:348) observes that conflict arises in Nigeria because of “neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry”. In a similar way Barnard and Salawu, argues that in Africa, conflicts are cause by a variety of factors, such as ethnicity, race, resources and religion. Some conflicts develop from “objective factors, others from subjective factors or from trigger factors” (Barnard, 2009:5).

Objective factors are factors such as fighting for control over territory or resources. Subjective factors can be factors like religion, race, ethnicity or language. Trigger factors may be instantaneous or act as a trigger (but in themselves they do not explain the causes of conflict). Barnard further argues that these events may include political assassination, new enforced discriminatory policies and electoral fraud, or manifest in longstanding political and socio-economic structures in society.



Salawu (2010:346) argues that “religious bigotry has become a fulcrum of various form of nationalism ranging from assertion of language, cultural autonomy and religious superiority to demands for local political autonomy and self-determination”. The end result of this attitude is discrimination, lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear. Perhaps this is why conflict is often avoided for the fear of defeat; hence “it has been known to bring about an array of outcomes from food shortages to prosperity; economic recessions to gender equality” (Salawu, 2010:346). Igbinjesu adds that “civil conflict has been known to leave people with little or no time to practice farming, hence, causing food shortages. Countries with large defence industries have been known to make profits from armed conflicts across the world” (Igbinjesu, 2013). Reasons for the inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria can be argued to include many factors influencing it; this is what informs the complexity of the encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria before and after independence.

### **2.2.1 Religious Conflict(s) Before and During the Colonial Period**

This section addresses religious conflict before and during the colonial period. Argument was built on the basis of the common belief in Nigeria that the foundation of ethno-religious and political conflicts was laid by the colonial administration. It is helpful as a background to identify the various types of identity-based conflicts that developed in Nigeria over the years before independence. Osaghae and Suberu (2005:14) say that these identity sources for conflict include “ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, communal conflicts and the more complex conflicts involving more than one identity, namely ethno-regional conflicts, ethno-religious conflicts, and ethno-cultural conflicts”.

Perhaps this is the reason why Okpanachi (2010:6) argues that these identities have been significant in the Nigerian political process under colonial rule, as well as in the post-colonial dispensation. He adds that, during the colonial era, there was exigency for the administration to ensure the nurturing and exacerbation of an “us” versus “them” syndrome: Muslim versus Christian; Northerner versus Southerner; Hausa-Fulani versus Yoruba versus Igbo, and so. In fact, religious, regional and ethnic differences were given prominence in conceiving and implementing social, education and economic development policies and projects under the indirect system of colonial administration favoured by the British. Therefore, the differential impact of colonialism set the context for the regional, educational, economic and political imbalances in Nigeria. These later became significant in the mobilisation or manipulation of identity consciousness in order to effectively divide and rule, as well as in the politics of decolonisation and in the arena of competitive politics in the post-colonial era (Okpanachi, 2010:6).

Inter-religious conflict in Nigeria as well as in other part of the world is historical. Kagan (1991) argues that it started in the 16th century AD, when there was a constant upheaval between Judaism and Christianity. It became more prominent with the ascendance of Christianity as a state religion in Rome during the reign of Emperor Constantine (306 to 336 AD). Ezeibe (2012:1ff), suggests that religious conflict started between “Judaism versus Christianity; Christianity versus Islam; Islam versus Traditional religion; Christianity versus Traditional religion, Buddhism versus Hinduism or Islam versus Buddhism,” etc.

In Nigeria, the colonial policy of “indirect rule” and “divide and rule” has contributed in no small way to the promotion of the spirit of politics, social classes, and economic and educational dichotomy between the Northern and Southern sections of the country (Agbodike, 1991:113). Colonialism brought a radical departure from the original and traditional setting of the “political and cultural values of Nigerians; hence, it brought a new religion, new education style and a new culture” (Agbodike, Ibid: 113). The new religion, according to Jacob (2012:13), thus “re-oriented the people and destroyed the traditional pre-colonial non-capitalist economic system. It also dismantled the pattern and structure of indigenous socio-economic life and generated a culture of dependency and a class of natives that are exploitative and ethno-religious conscious”.

Perhaps this is the reason why Jacob (2012:14), says that, the separation of government, which the colonial administration introduced in the North and the South, was designed to add to the growing ethnocentrism. Ethno-centrism as identity marker is a notion that overemphasises one’s ethnic self-interest and identity versus that of others. Jacob (2012) further states that the era of provincial development, although it was relatively peaceful, was built on the future foundation of an unending conflict, which the Nigerian general population is still being experienced in the country today. The divide and rule applied by the British, as mentioned earlier, enabled them to control the country’s political economy and incite one ethnic group against the other.

It is generally agreed that colonialism was the cradle of ethnicity in Nigeria and, more especially, that the politically prominent identities evolved within the context of the contemporary Nigerian state. Osaghae and Suberu (2004:15), citing Nnoli (1978), argue that some of the conflicts that have ensued in the country have remote origins in the patterns of pre-colonial migration, conquest and control, such as the shari’a crisis of 2002 in Kaduna, which claimed some lives and saw properties being destroyed. This shari’a mayhem, according to Osaghae and Suberu (2004:15), can be traced back to at least the mid-

nineteenth century, when the non-Muslims of Southern Kaduna were raided, enslaved and eventually inequitably incorporated into the emirate structure by the Hausa-Fulani Muslim. This history has focused on current attempts to alleviate ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna state by the establishment of separate chiefdoms, autonomous of the Hausa-Fulani emirates for the Southern Kaduna peoples.

Another example is migration. Migration during the pre-colonial era was stimulated by wars or natural disasters. This kind of migration continues to generate conflicts today because of the discriminatory attitudes of some Nigerians, especially by the original settlers, against the immigrants. Osaghae and Suberu (2004:15), citing Isumonah (2003) and Mustapha (2000), provide for example, Jukun-Chamba migrated from Cameroon to present Taraba state in Northern Nigeria which is originally settled by the Kuteb; and the sixteen century settlement of Hausa merchants in Zongon Kataf within a territory occupied by the Kataf<sup>7</sup>. Another example is the colonial economical migration in the early twentieth century. This migration had to do with the influx of Southern Nigerian immigrants, especially the Igbo and Yoruba, into Northern cities such as Kano, Kaduna, Zaria and Jos, to mention but a few.

Currently, many Northerners migrate to places such as Ibadan, Lagos, Onisha and Enugu for business. Instead of these migrations integrating Nigeria as a nation, the contrary has been the case. Perhaps, as Osaghae and Suberu (2004:16) argue, it might “partly be due to the continuing strands of state consolidation by the Muslim over lords in the core North in the after math of Fulani Jihad of 1804 that produced an acute sense of territoriality, and partly to the response of the British colonizers to this situation”. This depicts the British approach of basically trying to preserve the Islamic Puritanism of the North and avoid potential inter-group tensions by discouraging the movement of the non-Muslim migrants into the core Muslim areas (Osaghae & Suberu, 2004:16). This is how *Sabon Gari* (strangers’ quarters) started in Nigerian cities such as Ibadan, Lagos, Kano, Zaria and Kaduna, to mention a few. The strangers’ quarters reinforce discrimination against migrant communities and serve as a seat of multiple identities and categorisation.

Therefore, in the light of the above statement, it can be argued that the policy of separation developed by the colonialists did not encourage horizontal interactions amongst the various people of the nation, although it was helpful to the colonialists in running the country at that time. Henceforth, can we argue that colonialism brought with it a radical departure from the original and traditional setting of the political

and cultural values of Nigerians? Can we also contend that it was the colonial masters who brought a new religion, a new education style and a new culture in order to divide us? The new religion,<sup>10</sup> thus, according to Jacob (2012:13), “re-oriented the people and destroyed the traditional pre-colonial non-capitalist economic system, dismantled the patterns and structure of indigenous socio-economic life, and generated a culture of dependency, a class of natives that are exploitative and ethno-religious consciousness”. Therefore, for Jacob (2012:14), the separation of government introduced by the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria and the South was designed to lead to growing ethnocentrism. The policy engendered unequal and uneven distribution of economic and social development in the different zones making up Nigeria (Mbao & Olusegun, 2014:169).

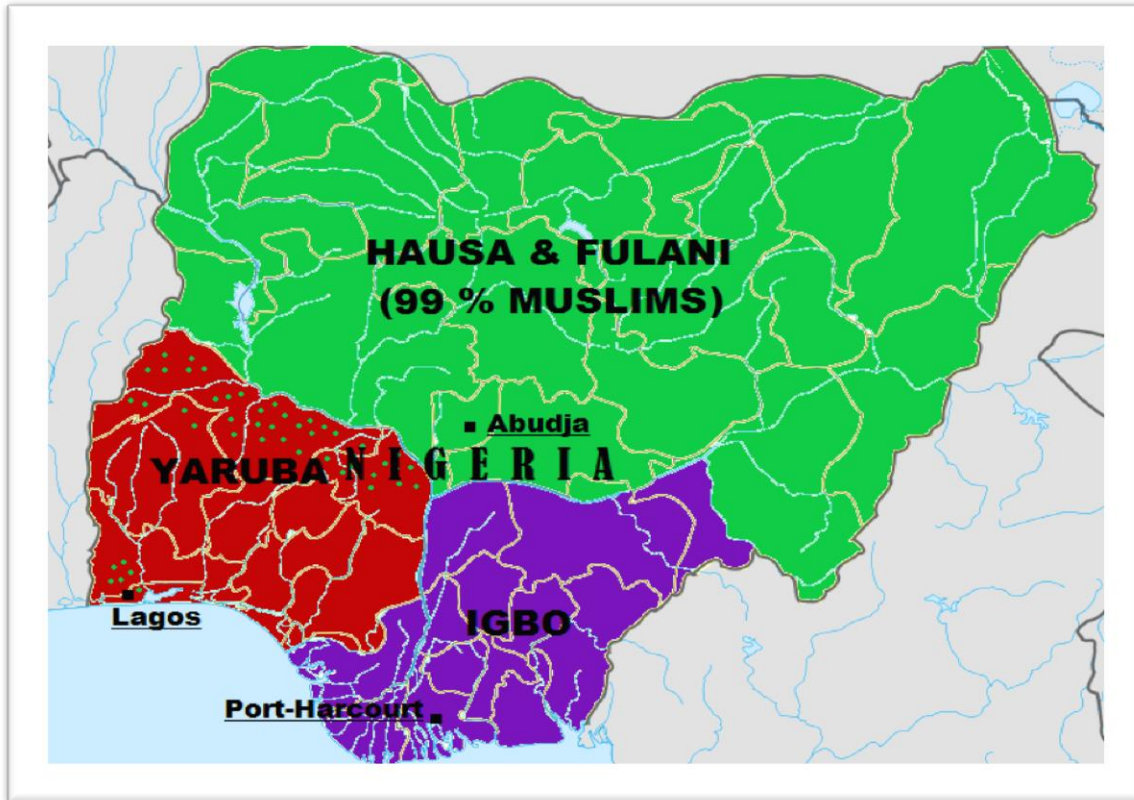
The more damaging aspects of the British colonial policy of uneven development were firstly, the exclusion of Christian missionary activity. Secondly, the highly prized mission-sponsored schools from the predominantly Muslim areas of the North, created a huge imbalance in westernisation between the North and South (Okoye & Roland, 2014:2) This British policy curtailed the spread of Christianity and Western education, leading to a considerable educational gap between the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria. In addition to this discrimination, the single most divisive aspect of the British administration, however, involved the establishment of a federal structure of three units, namely the Northern, Western and Eastern regions.

The division of these regions promoted the invidious political hegemony of the Hausa-Fulani-dominated Northern region, which officially contained over half of the country’s population and two-thirds of its territory (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005:16). This single act fostered an ethnic majority and minority, erected boundaries between the Northern, Western and Eastern regions based on the identity of ethnicity (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo respectively), religion, politics, culture and regionalism. Hence, from the above analysis it can be established that the colonialists used divide and rule, the new religion and new educational style to achieve their desired goals, and finally succeeded in sowing the seeds of ethno-religious consciousness, resulting in multiple identities giving rise to different kinds of conflicts.

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<sup>10</sup>The type of religions introduced into Nigeria carried with it a message containing the idea of colonialism, therefore creating disparity between people of the Southern part of Nigeria and those in Northern Nigeria. This can be explained not only by the way Christianity was introduced in the southern part of Nigeria, but also by the Islamic Jihadists who captured the Northern part of Nigeria. This disparity notwithstanding, both religions served the purposes the colonial masters assigned to them. The two religions were used to consolidate the status quo, which were continuous impoverishment of the masses and the orchestrated exacerbation of class conflicts.

Northern Protectorate, Eastern Protectorate and Western Protectorate are the three regions created from the time of independence. The map of Nigeria below shows the three protectorates, which were represented by Muslim majority in the Northern Protectorate, a Christianity majority in the Eastern Protectorate and both Christianity and Islam in the Western Protectorate.



**Figure 2: Map of Nigeria showing the religious composition of Northern Nigeria**

Source: [www.nairaland.com/2453728/map-ethnic-groups-nigeria-it](http://www.nairaland.com/2453728/map-ethnic-groups-nigeria-it): Map of Ethnic Groups in Nigeria As it Revolves from 1901-2015 by Petkoff Drake (M):2.53pm on July 15, 2015

Northern Nigeria, which informs this research, consists of 19 out of the 36 states, clustered into the three geopolitical zones of North-West, North-East and North-Central. These are currently divided into six geopolitical zones, namely South-West, South-East, South-South, North-Central, North-East and North-West. The table below shows the six geo-political zones in the present Nigeria, indicating their ethnicity, number of states and religious identity.

**Table 1: Language and Religious Characteristics of geopolitical zones**

<i>Number</i>	<i>Name of zone</i>	<i>Geopolitical</i>	<i>Main language</i>	<i>Religions</i>	
				<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Christian</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>South-West</b>	Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti	Yoruba, <sup>11</sup> with several dialects	Minority	Majority
<b>2</b>	<b>South-East</b>	Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra	Igbo, <sup>12</sup> with several dialects	Minority	Majority
<b>3</b>	<b>South-South</b>	Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers	Edo, Izon and Igbo, with several dialects	Minority	Majority

<sup>11</sup>According to Michael (2010:8-9), the Yoruba people, of whom there are more than twenty-five million, occupy the south-western area of Nigeria. To the East and North, the Yoruba culture reaches its approximate limits in the region of the Niger River. The name 'Yoruba' was applied to all these linguistically and culturally related peoples by their northern neighbours, the Hausas/Fulani. A common Yoruba belief system dominated the region from the Niger, where it flows in an easterly direction, all the way to the Gulf of Guinea in the south. It is no accident that the Yoruba cultural influence spread across the Atlantic to the Americas. The Yoruba people in Nigeria constitute one of the three largest tribes. They are well represented in academics and business.

<sup>12</sup>The Igbo occupy south-eastern part of Nigeria. They are also found in other parts of Africa, and in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world. For instance, a significant number of Igbo are found in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Ghana and other African countries. The Igbo are also found in Canada, the United Kingdom, Finland, Malaysia, the United States and virtually every part of the world. Within Nigeria, the primary states where Igbo live are Anambra, Abia, Imo, Ebonyi and Enugu. The Igbo comprise more than 25% of the population in some Nigerian states, like Delta and River. According to Onyeozili and Obi (2012:31, 32), the Igbo constitute a population of over forty million people in Nigeria today. They have been described as the king in every man, which means that they have no kingship system. In pre-colonial times, the Igbo's means of subsistence were mainly farming and trading. Some are still engaged in fishing and hunting. Other Igbo are blacksmiths, weavers, potters and diviners. Onyeozili and Obi (2012:13) added that, pivotal to the Igbo social system is the theory of reincarnation. They believe that their deceased members and ancestors come back to temporal life. For the average Igbo, religion and law are intertwined. Onyeozili and Obi (2012) posit that Igbo social, economic and political life is profoundly influenced by a pantheon of supernatural powers, which operate within the human sphere in various ways. The Igbo, however, face many problems, especially when their attempt to gain a country of their own failed in the late 1960s, thereby causing them to migrate from their homeland. This led them to migrate to places such as Lagos, Benin City and Abuja, but they have also moved to other countries in the world.

<b>4</b>	<b>North-Central</b>	Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau	Hausa <sup>13</sup> and Yoruba, with several dialects	Almost Equal	Almost Equal
<b>5</b>	<b>North-East</b>	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe	Hausa and Fulfulde <sup>14</sup> , with several dialects	Majority	Minority
<b>6</b>	<b>North-West</b>	Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kano,	Hausa	Majority	Minority

<sup>13</sup> The Hausa states began to develop in the Sahel around 500 to 700 AD. There eventually were seven Hausa states: Biram, Daura, Gobir, Katsina, Kano, Rano and Zaria, which developed in trading and farming. According to legend, Hausa history began with a man named Bayajidda, an Arab prince who travelled to the Sahel from Baghdad. When Bayajidda arrive in Daura, he killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people and that gave him the privilege to marry the queen. Prior to meeting the queen, she already had six children; the seventh child was with Bayajidda. These seven children became the rulers of the seven Hausa states. In most of their early history the Hausa were polytheists; Islam only came to them in about the eleventh century. Islam had become a powerful force by the fifteenth century, though it was still often practised alongside traditional religion. Dan Fodio declared a jihad against the Hausa state to purify Islam and he ruled them for a century, which marked the Sokoto Caliphate, but the rule quickly adopted into Hausa culture. The rule of the Caliphate lasted for a century before the British took power. The role played by the seven Hausa states in the confederation by providing goods and trade made an important contribution to international trade (Lange, 2012:140-145).

<sup>14</sup>The history of the Fulani, according to Michael (2010:8-9), seems to begin with the Berber people of North Africa around the 8th or 11th Century AD. As the Berbers migrated down from North Africa and mixed with the peoples in the Senegal region of West Africa, the Fulani people came into existence. They spread out over most of West Africa and even into some areas of Central Africa over a thousand-year period from AD 900 to 1900. Some groups of Fulani have been found as far as the western borders of Ethiopia. They came into contact with different African indigenous groups as they migrated eastward. They conquered the less powerful tribes as they encountered other people. Along the way, many Fulani completely or partially abandoned their traditional nomadic life in favour of a sedentary existence in towns or on farms among the conquered peoples. The nomadic Fulani continued eastward in search of the best grazing land for their cattle. Their lives revolved around and were dedicated to their herds. The more cattle a man owned, the more respect he was given. Today, some estimate as many as 18 million Fulani people stretch across the countries of West Africa. They remain the largest group of nomadic people in the world. The Fulani were one of the first African peoples to convert to Islam and are today more than 99% Muslim. Historically it was a Fulani herder named Usman Dan Fodio, along with nomadic Fulani herdsmen, who was instrumental in facilitating the spread of Islam across West Africa through evangelism and conquest. The Fulani are usually very easy to recognise. They are taller, slimmer and lighter skinned than many of their African neighbours. Often they are referred to as “white” by other Africans. The Fulani women are very graceful. They are seen carrying their milk products stacked in tiers on their heads in calabash bowls.

		Jigawa, Kebbi, Katisna			
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Source: Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey in Okunola, (2007).

## 2.2.2 Factors of Inter-Religious Conflict after Independence

Demographically, economically and politically, Nigeria will remain an important country in Africa, if it remains a functioning integrated state. Unfortunately, the country is under considerable internal pressure over power and resources through competing regional, religious and ethnic camps that have racked it with chronic and severe violence to the point of it being fractured. According to Bouchat (2013:1-4), the internal political divisions in Nigeria have increased since independence from three to four states in 1963, to 12 in 1967 (to unsuccessfully counter the Biafran secession), to 19 in 1976, to 21 in 1987, to 30 in 1991, and to 36 in 1996. Bouchat points out that a call for an additional 35 states in 1994 was ignored by the framers of the 1999 Constitution in an apparent effort to stabilise the situation and halt further fracturing.

Nigeria provides the best example for studies of ethno-religious conflicts, with its more than 400 ethnic groups<sup>15</sup> distributed among Christianity and Islam. Perhaps this might be the reason why since its independence in 1960, it has experience several kinds of religious conflict. Inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria can best be described as intractable conflicts; hence the acts of violence have been perpetrated against the followers of the ‘other’ religions on the basis of social identity in conjunction with power struggles, politics, and ethno-centrism. In other words, the elites in quest of power have succeeded in creating in the populace of Northern Nigeria the idea of categorization using politics, religions and social identity. Additionally, it is arguably that, the influx of refugees from the Nigerian neighbouring countries, such as Niger, Liberia and Sierra Leone, etc, has significantly contributed to these challenges. At the national level, civil society is not adequately engaged in the policy issues of the country, therefore giving a sense of negligence.

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<sup>15</sup>In spite of the salience of the identity of ethnicity, Osaghae and Suberu present some estimations provided by (Salawu, 2010).



In view of the above, this section will address the inter-religious conflicts after independence. Having acknowledged the extent of this period and the numerous conflicts that have taken place from 1960 to date, the research has no intention of being exhaustive. Factors including regionalism, perception of the population of the Nigerian state and the elite power struggle, political factors, national economic crisis and socio-religious factors were considered as major factors for conflict in Nigeria.

### **2.2.2.1 Regionalism**

Nigeria is faced with the challenges of redressing the longstanding marginalisation claims of certain units of the country. When it has been blessed with a vast endowment of human and natural resources but prejudices in respect to regionalism have created some distance between the North and the South as well as the West. In this context, how can the praxis cycle enable mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA help in addressing the multiple identities in Northern Nigeria, more especially when considering how well the country is strategically positioned in Africa?

A regional issue in Nigeria became a challenge to the extent of showing to the world that the country has lack direction from the time of its independence in 1960. Hence, it has struggled to identify her identity as a nation in the midst of its multicultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-regional society. For over fifty years now, the country has had prevailing conflicts of varying natures and economic woes attributed to regionalism. This challenge has moreover assumed to have started from the forced amalgamation of the diverse ethnicities constituting Nigeria. The British colonialists seemingly conferred a secular regime on the new nation-state at independence, allowing the internal contradictions, which paradoxically were propagated by the colonial authority. Hence, this incubated and created challenges to the new state soon thereafter.

Perhaps, this might be the reason why Sampson (2014:311) said, “There was the Muslim North, groomed under the English indirect rule, which accommodated Shari’a legal order; and on the other hand, there was the Christian/Animist South, mentored under the British-secular regime”. Now the country’s challenge is to harmonize the relationship between the North, the South and the West. The country is to

make tally between religion and the state, and more so since the Northern Islamists<sup>16</sup> have consistently sought the establishment of an Islamic state to replace the existing secular regime.

Ploch (2013:1) made an assertion about Nigeria in her presentation, *Current Issues and U.S. Policy*, claiming that

Nigeria is considered a key power on the African continent, not only because of its size but because of its political and economic role in the region. The country's economy is Sub-Saharan Africa's second largest, and it is one of the world's major sources of high-quality crude oil. Nigerian leaders have mediated conflicts throughout Africa, and Nigerian troops have played a key role in peace and stability operations on the continent ... Despite its oil wealth, however, Nigeria remains highly underdeveloped. Poor governance and corruption have limited infrastructure development and social service delivery, slowing economic growth and keeping much of the country mired in poverty.

The above reference described Nigeria and its leadership that characterise ineffective governance that has created strife, division and poverty, and therefore resulted in different kinds of conflicts.

Hence, the focus of this research is on Northern Nigeria, it might be helpful to understand the reason why regionalization issue contributed adversely. Perhaps, because of the foundation lay by the colonialist in the aspect of religion, cultural, social and political orientation. This background appears to have given the Northern region the feeling of superiority above other regions in Nigeria. On the contrary, leadership from the Northern as well as leadership at the national level are faced with the challenge of addressing the variance between the North, East and Western regions as well as the socio-political impediments.

Consequently, the Northerners claims of religious rights which are already related with politics demanded for the practice of Sharia law with the notion of having life better. However, the practice of Shari'a law appears to be unsuccessful eventually constituted part of the regional impediment. Perhaps this is why Hoffmann (2014:1), said, when Sharia law was adopted in 12 Nigerian states, many in the Muslim

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<sup>16</sup>Islamists from the content are movements of the twenty first century who conceivably think Islam is the solution to the persistent crises of the contemporary Arab/Muslim societies. Brown, Amir & Marina (2006:5) said this group are well embedded in the social fabric, understand the importance of good organization, and are thus able to mobilize considerable constituencies. In most countries this kind of movement represents the only viable opposition forces to existing undemocratic regimes. Presently, the rise of Islamist movement has become a matter of great concerns for secular Arabs and Western governments who are suspicious of the ultimate goals and for Arab government fearful of the growing power of any movement they have trouble controlling.

community, as well as the Christian minority, envisioned this as a panacea for the complex problems of supposing social injustice, poverty, unemployment and political corruption. The notion here is that, Sharia law might be the way forward in addressing the regionalization challenges. But the opposite was the case. The failure of the practice of Shari law in the 12 Nigerian states has created more anger and disaffection towards the state government that adopted the new laws. It also opened up the North's social space for extreme religious ideologies from both the Christians and the Muslims.

Perhaps, this is why Ladan (2013:2) said, in the past ten years, Northern region has been characterised by violent ethno-religious and political conflict, a rise in violent crimes and widespread corruption, resulting in socio-economic and political insecurity. It also faces the internal displacement of the population, largely due to bad governance, socio-economic and political imbalances, injustice and inequality, as well as insensitivity to the plight of the region's citizens. Consequently, whenever there is an economic crisis, people lose their jobs, redundancy increases – which eventually leads to violence, and this results in the previously listed characteristics becoming a cycle.

This is why Hoffmann (2014:1) further argues that, when the expansion of Sharia failed to change the situation in the Northern Nigeria, it resulted in “growing distrust in political leadership, a lack of government presence and chronic underdevelopment created the perfect context for radical groups to take root and flourish in Northern Nigeria”. Perhaps this is why studies on economic growth indicate that economic growth is essential for poverty reduction. It is so when it leads to an increase in employment and an improvement in opportunities for productive activities among the common people. Hence, suggesting a direct relationship between increasing poverty and insecurity.

The reoccurring conflicts due to the assumption of being marginalized have affected the development in some regions within the country. Consequently, Northern Nigeria faces the greatest problems of poverty, unemployment, population rising and religious categorization because its peculiarity. It is for this reason, some Nigerians wonder if it will ever be possible to find a lasting solution to the regionalization problems, which will be necessary for peaceful coexistence as a nation. Development according to Noah (2008:132) is a concept that is seen as a “progression from one condition to another”. This might be the reason why Noah (Ibid: 132) disputed that development is a life-changing mechanism. However, the constant conflict in Northern Nigeria as well as other part of the country has made development stagnant.

According to Noah (2008:130-131), every society must generously invest in the development, building and nurturing of the minds of its youth in order to be certain that, when the current generation passes on, succeeding ones are sufficiently equipped with the required knowledge that will keep the society alive and continuously progressive. This may not happen if inequality within the population of Nigeria is practised, and might only happen when the government of Nigeria introduces programmes that address the issues of poverty, illiteracy, poor housing and better health management for everyone. This suggests the provision of educational opportunities for all, since in this contemporary world there is a wide gap with regard to education when Northern Nigeria is compared with the Southern and Eastern parts of the country. This seems to be the underlying problem of Nigerian's identity – interreligious and ethnic conflicts.

### ***2.2.2.2 Perception of the Population of the Nigerian State's Intra-Elite Power Struggle***

This section examines how the elite's<sup>17</sup> competition for power and dominance has resulted in the manipulation of identity, religion and ethnicity as a means of political mobilisation to gain an advantage and a strategic position at the expense of the masses, as a result of their mistaken perception of nationalism (Mahmudat, 2010:88). Mahmudat argues that the “elites are engaged in intra-class struggles in order to access power and resources. The outcome of this reveals that the pursuit of parochial interests among the elites on the one hand, and widening disparities in the life style of elites and the masses on the other hand, are creating a valid crisis”. This, in other words, explains that ethnicity and religion as a social construction are employed to serve the interests of the elite at the expense of good governance and legitimacy. However, this resulted in factional politics, bad governance, exploitation and a crisis of legitimacy.

Mahmudat (2010:88) reiterated that government of Nigerian lost its power of control hence; service delivery and good governance to the populace has become a challenge. Apparently, the country is governed by few individual rather than a collective effort of the citizenry. However, a critical condition

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<sup>17</sup>According to Hossain and Moore (2002), elites are people of high position in the society who are able to affect organisations and movement. They have the organised capacity to make real political trouble without being arrested. They consist of prestigious politicians, military officers, businessmen, etc. Elites are the most powerful people within any national political system. They may be few in a small country and more in a larger country like Nigeria.

for the transfer of loyalties to ecumenical levels is removed. Hence, some Nigerians are no longer loyal to their motherland; instead, they are loyal to their personal interests. Moreover, according to Lee (2010:18) discriminatory barriers were created by the elites in order to determine people's boundaries. As indicated in the introduction (Cf. Section 1.1), politics, religion and ethnicity are all by-products of the colonialist strategies in their effort to succeed in their administration.

Consequently, according to Mahmudat (2010:88), the colonialist approach of divide and rule was adopted by the nationals instead of the opposite. As Britain began to devolve political authority to native politicians, the competition among educated elites who wanted the new positions of power and prestige increased. Seeing that such, the elites, like their colonial predecessors, manipulated the identity issue, ethnicity and religion to forge seeming differences and raise fear of domination and marginalisation by the others in their struggle to control and overpower human and natural resources. Perhaps this is why Ukiwo (2003:118) argues that "conflicts between ethnic groups are not inevitable or eternal, they arise out of specific historical situations, are moulded by particular and unique circumstances, and they are constructed to serve certain interests by idealists and ideologies, visionaries and opportunists, political leaders and ethnic power brokers of various kinds", and that is probably why they linger.

According to Mato (2004:1, 2), these crises were mainly caused through manipulation by the elite, occasioned by the intense competition for space within the national political, economic and social interaction. Therefore using religious identity in most cases as an excuse, routed to those who were responsible for these conflicts. Similarly, Mahmudat (2010:88) established that "the exploitative elite that did not meet the aspirations or expectations of the people at times gave rise to a legitimacy crisis". Such unproductive elites use ethnic sentiments and emotions to enhance their strategic positions. Hence there is the need for the elite to play the necessary and relevant roles in aiding the Nigerian society to advance forward. Otherwise the masses need collaboration to stand against the tricks of the elite. Their coming together therefore could improve and build relational trust amongst them, and protect their human rights.

### ***2.2.2.3 Nigeria's National Economic Crisis***

The economic strength of any nation defines its societal situation. Scholarship has proposed a number of different elements of the concept economy. For instance, there is apolitical economy, as argued by Robbins (1932), a political economy of capitalism, as argued for by Scott (2006), and a social economy as argued by Restakis (2006). It is not the intention of this research to discuss these aspects of economy, but

rather to look at economy as a struggle in Nigeria as well as other countries. Perhaps this is why Bulgakov (2000:72) sees it when he argues that economy is a struggle of humanity. It entails the elemental forces of nature with the aim of protecting and widening life. Hence, conquering and humanizing nature, transforming it into a potential organism. This may mean that life is lived in constant struggle.

As a result, economic growth is the opposite of economic crisis, hence economic growth, according to Nafziger (2014:15ff), refers to “increases in a country’s production or income per capita...” Production is usually measured by gross national product (GNP) or gross national income (GNI), used interchangeably an economy’s total output of goods and services”. Economic growth is more than these, however, as Nafziger (2014:15ff) adds:

Economic development refers to economic growth accompanied by changes in output distribution and economic structure. These changes may include an improvement in the material well-being of the poorer half of the population; a decline in agriculture's share of GNP and a corresponding increase in the GNP share of industry and services; an increase in the education and skills of the labour force; and substantial technical advances originating within the country.

Therefore, when Gasiorowski (1995:88) argued about the relationship between economic crisis and political regime change, this characterises Nigerian situation. Hence many economic scholars have suggested that economic crisis triggers democratic breakdown, in conjunction with certain background conditions. According to Funlayo (2013:113), Nigeria has enjoyed a long period of sustained economic growth – since 2001 – with growth occurring across all sectors of the economy and accelerating at about 7%. And this growth rate increased to about 8 to 9% in 2003, despite the financial crisis. The growth had a little impact on the majority of the citizens.

Additionally, Funlayo (2013:113) states that, even in the wake of the global financial crisis in 2009, Nigeria’s growth performance fell only to about 4.5%. The reason for this has been attributed to the rapid growth rate in the non-oil export. Yet, with growth performance in Nigeria, there was still rampant unemployment in the country, even with this stable development in Nigeria’s economy. Studies have indicated that, although economic growth has a positive relationship with employment, the relationship is not significant, except in relation to public expenditure. This means that growth in the economy can support employment if the government gears expenditure towards areas like labour-intensive industry that can create more employment.

Unemployment has continued to be a challenge in contemporary Northern Nigeria because of the occurrences of inter-religious conflict that have been ongoing for more than two decades. The list of religious conflicts clearly illustrates the highly unstable nature of religion in the country. From the 1980s to date, the activities of *Boko Haram*, an armed group that promotes sectarian violence of a different dimension, has engulfed the entire Northern Nigeria (Cf. Section 2.2; 2.2.3). This group is neither inter- nor intra-religious, but essentially against the Western-educated Muslim elite and the government; they have carried out violent religious incidents that have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, and destroyed property worth millions of Naira.

This is why, on the whole, Mohammed and Ibrahim (2012:2116) summarises the outcome of inter-religious conflicts thus: “ethnic and religious conflict tends to destabilize the country and brings everything to a standstill. It results in loss of lives and properties and creates the impression that Nigeria as a nation is not politically stable”. As such, it encourages the proliferation of arms and ammunition and their acquisition by unauthorised persons and groups, and this has resulted in social tension and general insecurity in the country. Perhaps this might be the reason why Mohammed and Ibrahim (2012:2116) further reiterated that the problem of identity and inter-religious conflict affects a country in a broader dimension.

Consequently, it leads to the displacement of a large number of people from their homes and communities, and creates a situation of permanent distrust and suspicion among various ethnic and religious groups. Therefore, constituting an impediment to the national development, and poses a serious threat to the country’s democracy and national stability. In view of the above analysis it can be contended that no society with the abovementioned characteristics can ever have economic, physical and/or social development, and this may also lead to conflict.

#### **2.2.2.4 Socio-Religious Factors**

This section addresses socio-religious factors that influence inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria. The following can be considered as triggers of inter-religious conflict; thus, government policies, religion in politics, fundamentalism, intolerance and extremism, derogatory statements, and the role of the media. The section addresses socio-religious factors in agreement with the popular assumption that religion, politics and ethnicity are interconnected. Perhaps this is why Ajibola (2012) says that it is popularly accepted that religion, politics and ethnicity in Nigeria are intertwined and are clouded with corruption,

poverty and insecurity. Therefore it might be difficult to address the one without looking at the other. According to Nmah (2013:202), there have been debates on the issue of religious-related violence, such as religious extremism, fundamentalism, terrorism and other religious-associated criminalities leading to serious insecurity and religious antagonism that are threatening the economy, polity, human life and national unity.

This is the development that has created some major concern for both domestic and foreign scholars. Especially theologians all over the world when considering the commonality of Christianity and Islam on the aspect of the two greatest commandments, namely love of God and love of neighbour, and the link between the Torah, the New Testament and the Qur'an (Cf. Section 2.4.2). This is why Enwerem (1995:252) argues that the "pervasiveness of religion, i.e. of Muslim or Christian identity as a source of communal and political conflict, is now a constant preoccupation in Nigeria and is giving rise to a large amount of literature". Hence, suggesting that religious bodies are challenged to guide their members, as well as the public, into an understanding of what religions can do to obtain and guard peace.

The challenge, according to a report by an International Inter-Religious Peace Conference (2004), goes even further and calls upon religious bodies to meet across traditional religious, social and cultural borders. In such encounters, religious communities can find ways both to address conflicts and to minimise violence when conflict happens. For Christians and Muslims to come together is one thing; on the other hand, the implementation of the result of encounter is another thing. Consequently, this informs that religion has a dual legacy in human history – both peace and violence.

"Inter-religious violence in the Islamic World today has often been attributed to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and revivalist Islamic movements in the political realm of these countries where Muslims claimed majority" (Arifianto, 2013:1). This seems to be true, because religion has an impact on the causes of conflict, as well as its dynamic and resolution. Subsequently, according to Nimer (2001:3), a good number of studies have focused on the role of religion in conflict, many of them relating to its destructive role and arguing that religion can also bring social, moral and spiritual resources to the peace-building process. The following sub-sections will address some trigger causes of inter-religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria.



#### ***2.2.2.4.1 Government Policies***

Discrimination carries the idea of exclusion from full enjoyment of public provision within a given society. Examples include exclusion from political participation, civic, economic life and social/cultural and other freedom of any kind. According to COMPASITO (A manual on human rights education for children) (2009:225-229), discrimination may be caused by names, race, ethnicity, colour, sex, language, political opinion, culture, xenophobia, gender, religion, origin, property, disability, birth or other status. Additionally, social class, occupation, sexual orientation or prepared language, all might be describe as identity issues. COMPASITO further argues that discrimination is often based on ignorance, prejudice and negative stereotypes. Hence, many people fear what seems strange or unknown, and they react with suspicion or even violence to anyone whose appearance, culture or behaviour is unfamiliar.

According to Salawu (2010:348), a major cause of religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria, has to do with allegations of negligence on the part of government in delivering service to the public. Other assertions include; oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. These claims therefore, create legitimate crises. Hence, when “citizenship rights and benefits are largely denied, and the State seems out of reach, sub-national identities ... and sustainable human development fuses the two concepts of human development and sustainable development together” (Ladan, 2013:10). The outcome may constitute a platform for resistance against the state.

Therefore, Ladan, (2013:10) is referring to identical issues at hand. Thus; when the citizens’ right and benefits are denied, development on the one hand is affected. Moreover, Ladan’s understanding of development is essentially human, environmental, political, economic, social and cultural. Additionally, the environment must be utilised in a manner that meets the productive, domestic, cultural, spiritual and artistic needs of present and future generations. But when a given society is faced with the challenge of continues conflicts, economic growth which encompasses poverty eradication, empowering of people, jobs provision and protection of the environment becomes a challenge.

What the researcher observed from the legitimacy of religious conflict as argued by Salawu (2010:348) can be disputed when a society is developed. Moreover, this increases the legitimacy of the regime in power and promotes loyalty, patriotism and obedience from the citizenry. This is why Ladan (2013:11) says, it becomes easier for human rights to be guaranteed if a society is developed and experiencing

continuous prosperity. In the case of Northern Nigeria, the widening disparities in access and opportunities, socio-economic insecurity, corruption, the politics of exclusion of the vast majority of the populace from the state and the increasing enrichment of a few, and the politicisation of ethnicity and religion have led to a loss of confidence among many Nigerians.

Another important factor that is envisaged for identity and inter-religious conflict is the discriminatory policies of the Nigerian government in religious matters. What is the rationale behind government officials in Northern Nigeria choosing to patronise one religion over the others, even when they have the national constitution in their hands? This is ironic, example, Sampson (2012:122) argues that, at the federal, state and local government levels, public officials manifestly patronise particular religions at the expense of others. Government will use public funds to sponsor religious activities or even buy food for particular religious groups in many states in Northern Nigeria. Moreover, despite the constitutional prohibition of disqualifications inflicted on persons on account of their religious leanings or religious patronage. For instance, thousands of Muslims are sponsored to go to Mecca, in contrast to only a few Christians who are sponsored to go to Israel. This is on the account of Muslims being the majority in the North. It is observed that Muslims are provided with food and valuables for their Ramadan fast in some states in Northern Nigeria. Similarly, when it comes to the use of public media, Christians are marginalised. Arguing in this way, Sampson (2012:123, citing Tanko Yusuf Jolly), indicates:

Christians have been denied access to electronic media in 16 Northern states, while Islam monopolizes 24 hours for its broadcast in the same area ... Every hour the Muslims broadcast provocative statements about Christianity. It means nothing, they proclaim, that people attend church on Sunday only to dance and to listen to songs. Authorities merely wink ...

In the same way, both national and international media are inclined to report exaggerated details of religion in favour of Islam. Thus, in many cases has precipitated religious sentiment instead of promoting mutuality and peaceful coexistence. As to the religious symbols, when the government of the North introduced head covering in public schools, it became a concern and since has become another reason for negative encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. Currently, the use of *Hijab*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Hijab is used to conceal women's heads. But more than that, it is believed to cover the mind, will and intellect. It is a tradition of modesty and is reflected in Islamic teachings. Hijab is also called the clothing of righteousness, it is commanded of women to wear it to be protected from harm (Summayyah, Watch, 2004:16 (9):1) [Online], Available: [http://www.iisna.com/articles/pamphets/thehijab-reflectionsbymuslimwomen\[2013, December 10<sup>th</sup>\]](http://www.iisna.com/articles/pamphets/thehijab-reflectionsbymuslimwomen[2013, December 10<sup>th</sup>]).

has become a norm among the public with the introduction of Sharia in Northern Nigeria, where women are expected to cover their heads, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

In addition to the above, the inscription of the Arabic symbol on the Nigerian currency has always attracted tension between Christians and Muslims, hence creating a feeling that this action is a strategy on the agenda to turn the country into an Islamic nation. With the increase in intra- and inter-religious violence over the last two decades, both Christians and Muslims have never felt at ease with each other's attitudes. Perhaps this is why Sampson (2012:123) argues that Muslims have continuously opposed the use of the cross as a symbol on public hospital billboards and other hospital accessories, and desired the introduction of a pre-work day on Fridays for the sake of Jumma'at prayers, just to mention a few. These situations remain potential triggers for confrontation between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

Other discriminatory policies that have created suspicion, anxiety and violent clashes between Muslims and Christians, according to the Country Report on Human Rights Practices (U.S. Department of State, 2007:503), are the persistence of some Christian fundamentalists from the South, as well as Islamic fundamentalists, like the *Boko Haram*. However, another discriminatory policy is the introduction of *Hisba*<sup>19</sup> (gangs of Islamic fundamentalist who serve the public as security for life and property) introduced by Kano state government and now spreading to other Northern States.

Still other Form of Islamic marginalisation are the reintroduction and enforcement of criminal aspects of the *Shari'a*<sup>20</sup> legal system and the continued use of state resources to fund the construction of mosques

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<sup>19</sup>The Hisba are a collection of gangs of Islamic fundamentalist vigilantes in Northern Nigeria who take it upon themselves to oversee the implementation of Islamic law in the region. The Hisba in Kano state, one of the Shari'a states, can reprimand, arrest or even beat Nigerians caught violating the law. Offenses that are punishable in shari'a states such as Kano are drinking or selling alcohol, having premarital sex or soliciting a prostitute, etc. The Hisba also seek to ensure that shari'a is implemented faithfully and completely in the states that have adopted it.

<sup>20</sup> Shari'a, also called *Sharī'ah*, *Shari'a*, *Shariah* or *Syariah* in Arabic, is the Arabic word for Islamic law, also known as the Law of *Allah*. Islam classically draws no distinction between religious and secular life. Shari'a has been in force for many years in Northern Nigeria, where the majority of the population is Muslim, but until 2000 its scope was limited to personal status and civil law. The manner in which Shari'a has been applied to criminal law in Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2004:1) has so far raised a number of serious human rights concerns. It has also created much controversy in a country where religious divisions run deep, and where the federal constitution specifies that there is no state religion. Hence, Shari'a covers not only religious rituals, but many aspects of day-to-day life, which include politics, economics, banking, business or contract law, and social issues twelve states in

and the teaching of *Qadis* (Shari'a court judges) across the 12 Northern Nigerian states, which has amounted to the adoption of Islam as the *de facto* state religion. At this point, Christians and others are arguing that introducing Shari'a or an Islamic federal court of appeal amounts to giving undue preference to Muslims in a religiously pluralistic society with a secular constitution.

Another example of heated debate according to Mawoli (2012:1) was about Nigeria's membership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1986. The other is the introduction of the Islamic Bank by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in 2010/2011 to meet the financial needs of the predominantly Muslim segment. These two issues were highly criticised by non-Muslims as an imposition of Islamic religion on Nigerians and a misuse of national resources to favour a particular religion, namely Islam despite Nigeria being a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society. The Islamic Bank has come to stay, though, and it is argued that Muslims and others are likely to benefit from it.

In 2003, the Federal Government of Nigeria took over Qur'anic education, called the *Almajiri*<sup>21</sup> system of education (Islamic Education in Nigeria and indeed of Qur'anic education dates back to the early days of Islam), which is purely a religious matter for which the adherent is responsible. This adaptation at the expense of the others legitimatised inter-religious conflicts. By no means are these listed government policies exhaustive when it comes to the notion of Muslims and Christians living in mutual and peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria. These policies have caused many questions with regard to the actual responsibility of a public government to the ordinary citizens. Certainly, in view of the above analysis, the necessity of Christian-Muslim dialogue is called for. The next section will concentrate on the politicisation of religion and ethnicity in Northern Nigeria.

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Northern Nigeria have added criminal law to the jurisdiction of *Shari'a* (Islamic law) courts and this has given rise to some contention that has led to the loss of many innocent lives.

<sup>21</sup>The word *Almajiri* simply means a seeker of Islamic knowledge. Its origin was the migration of Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. According to Fowoyo Joseph Taiwan (2014:244), these emigrants had no means of livelihood on getting to Medina, but based on the fraternity established by the prophet between their hosts and them, were co-opted into different trades and vocations as apprentices who were paid for their services. In the Northern states, where it is dominant, it is described by different names, such as *Tsangaya*, *Makarantar Allo* and *Islamiyyah*, based on its variety of levels and content; whereas in the Southern part of Nigeria it is known by the name *Ille-Kewu* or *Ma'had*. Children between the ages of three and 12 years who attend these categories of schools and who have never attended formal basic education system are normally referred to as *Almajirai*. The total enrolment in Qur'anic schools as revealed by the report of the ministerial committee on *Madrasah* Education is 9 523 699, with 148 614 Qur'anic schools and 187 802 teachers nationwide in 2010 (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2010:8).

#### ***2.2.2.4.2 Religion in Politics***

Despite the oft-cited claims about the secular nature of the Nigerian state, as prescribed by the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, the contradictions between the asserted claims of state secularity and the strong influence of religion on state-society relationships, and elite politics in particular, has been pointed out – the use of religion, ethnicity and regionalism has assumed centre stage in Nigeria. For this reason, numerous scholars have analysed the intrinsic value of religion in most African societies as endemic (Ovienloba, 2011:72). But the intricate historical variable that knits these realities together to underpin the fecundities of conflicts in modern African societies, especially in Northern Nigeria, have for the most part not received serious contextual analysis; that is why religion is often hijacked, politicised and subsequently used as the basis to justify certain predetermined goals. There seems to be a clear understanding that both Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria are interested in the political future of the nation. Nevertheless, this interest is advanced from different dimensions.

In view of the above, Laguda (2008:123) argues that a major interest in the Nigerian polity is the relationship between religion and politics. He believes that Nigerian society is religiously pluralised and this significantly influences the political decisions and policies of the nation. He therefore suggests that religion and politics should be dependent on each other, whereas other arguments are very strongly of the opinion that the relationship between politics and religion should not be stressed, and that religion and politics should be allowed to operate independently of one other.

Therefore, Tar and Shettima's (2010:1) assertion, that the emergence of religious politics posed as "Islamic Northern" versus "Christian Southern" interests, is both complex and misleading. They argue that this "formulation needs to be interpreted, both in terms of the ways in which religion is manipulated by elite struggles to gain powers and resources in which advantage is taken of a 'fractured and uneven citizenship' in various parts of the country" (Ibid. 2010:1). The question of how religion is instrumental in the politics of Nigeria is a matter of concern for the church; hence, Nigerian state has always been characterized as secular. Until the present claims of secularism conveyed within the official circles of the elites and undermined by the sectarian agenda of those in power (Tar & Shettima, 2010:8).

Interestingly, Bujra and Igwe (2006, cited in Tar & Shettima, 2010:8) argue in an interview that, in a multi-religious and multicultural society [like Nigeria], it is imperative that the state remains impartial in

relation to any religious or non-religious groups, or it will lose its significance and value. Therefore, it is very clear that it is only a secular state, which is religiously and philosophically neutral, that can guarantee the equal rights of every individual to freedom of rights, conscience and belief. But the opposite is the case in Nigeria, hence, according to Adegame (2006:128), “the governing class has always been held captive by religiously motivated interests and forces”.

Coincidentally, Nigerian politics is chiefly characterised by the ‘politicisation’ of religion and the ‘religionisation’ of politics. While Abogunrin (1984:118) argues that religion and politics are two inseparable institutions in the human social psyche and structure. He equally asserts that “earthly governments are mere agents of God’s theocratic governance of the physical and the spiritual world” (Abogunrin, 1984:118). But, when looking at it from an Islamic perspective, Islam as a way of life dictates the political ideology and practice in any Islamic society. This is why Abubakre (1984:129) points out that the ideals of Islam are a good guide to political conduct, but the practices of such ideals are usually influenced by the socio-cultural institutions in society, including politics. Islam does not discriminate between religious and secular matters.

Sampson (2012:117) argues that, according to the Christian perspective, Christians establish their position on the statement made by Jesus Christ, where He said, “Give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:17-22), indicating that this phrase has often been used to exclude some committed Christians who want to venture into politics. However, Kukah (1998:16), a Catholic Bishop of Sokoto and author and human rights campaigner, disagrees with this school of thought with the following exegesis of this passage:

What Jesus meant was not that religion and politics do not mix, nor did He mean that Christians should not participate in politics ... the coin was representation of the power of Caesar and that was why the coin had Caesar’s sign ... In the case of God, His authority is over and above the realm of Caesar’s empire. In that sense both Caesar and his coin are under the aegis of God and the issue of separation is an aberration.

According to Kukah’s argument, it appears that the direct relationship between religion and politics is quite a challenging one. Therefore, whilst considering the need to promote good governance, a corruption-free society, an increase in moral values, political stability and stable economic development, religion and politics need to be intertwined. The question is which religious beliefs and practices the government will apply to justify Kukah’s argument? Generally, it has been argued that “politics corrupts religion,” especially in Nigeria, where political leaders repeatedly use religion as a platform to pave the

way to leadership positions and accumulate wealth at the expense of the masses. Therefore, in my view, religion and politics are not a good mix, particularly in the Nigerian context, where the understanding of religion among Nigerians appears to be superficial.

In agreement with Laguda (2008:123), who suggests that, if religion is mixed with politics, it is likely to engage various vices associated with politics? Besides, politics may not be properly and dispassionately played if mixed with religion. Additionally, it is helpful to listen to what Laguda (2008:126) says further: the “relationship between the sacred and the profane is symbiotic; there is no reason why religion should not influence political ideologies and *vice versa*”. Laguda further suggests that, where this interaction is possible and allowed, the nature of the society and the strata therein have a lot to do with dictating the mode of such a relationship.

However, Laguda (2008:129) made a helpful contribution while on the other side of the coin in respect to the argument of mixing religion and politics, he stresses that “Judaism provided a background to Christianity, the God of Israel, Yahweh is the God of war (Josh. 6:20ff), economy (Exodus 16) and God of obedience and moral virtues” (Numbers 21:4-8). Yahweh is all-in-all in traditional Judaic thought, religion and politics. Laguda (2008:129) reiterates that:

In the apostolic age, the Church witnessed effective interplay between religion and politics. Where such interaction tends towards negative ends, the Apostles often adopted Christian principles to solve the problem as the Church spiritual motivators. Perhaps the most significant interaction between religion and politics in church history was witnessed during the Constantine and the post Constantine era where the emperor often used machinery of the state to promote Christianity; thus religion became politicized and it was politics that marred the progress of the church during this period. Jesus teachings and Pauline theology encourage political process and respect for those in political offices, since they are representatives of God (Matthew 22:17 – 20; Romans 13:1-7).

From this historical perspective, the above analysis provided the understanding of what took place when religion and politics were merged – the outcome had some challenges. The argument might be that, ‘if Christians and Muslims in Nigeria will live in accordance with the ethics and disciplines of these two religions (Christianity and Islam), then it may be helpful’, to consider Awoniy’s (2013:128) argument. Hence, he argues that “religions build brotherhoods across human races. Therefore, members of the same religious sects tend to offer each other unmerited help, favour, and consideration”. In Nigeria, according to Awoniyi (2013:128), the alternative to the same ‘brotherhood’ in public offices blurs merit in appointment and performance in a heterogeneous community. Therefore, the politicisation of religion

appears to be a natural outcome of a multi-religious society. Thus, these exclusive ideological worlds lead to religions not coexisting easily. This is because, once religions are politicised, they become an exclusive political party whose members may never adhere to, nor respect, the outcome of normal democratic processes. The result is instability and bloody rivalries.

An example in Nigeria is that public policies have to be religiously justified and the key appointments to the armed forces, judiciary and various political offices have to be balanced in terms of ethnic, regional and religious composition. It is not uncommon to hear shrill cries of marginalisation from different sectors in the country. This further is why Tar and Shettima (2010:12-13) point out that employment in federal, state and local governments is required to reflect the 'Federal', 'State' and 'Local Government' outlook in terms of geographic spread, ethnic and religious composition, etc. In the federal universities, polytechnics and colleges, admission is supposed to use a quota system from the catchment areas or merit, but the situation on the ground is the reverse.

In some cases, employment, promotion, scholarship, indigenisation and so forth cannot be provided to the person in need as a result of regionalism, religion and ethnicity. However, even when the Nigerian constitution call for the Federal Character Commission to comply with this delicate balancing act in all sectors. Can this be argued that the above analysis is related to religious fundamentalism in both Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria? Islam and Christianity are obviously different religions. Their formal differences cannot be downplaying. However, it is clear that the two greatest commandments found in these two religions, namely love of God and love of neighbour, are an area of common ground and a link between the Qur'an, the Torah and the New Testament. Nevertheless, what is the role of religion in all of these developments?

#### ***2.2.3.4.3 Fundamentalism, Intolerance and Extremism***

Fundamentalism is the practice of strictly following the basic rules and teachings of any religion. It is always at variance with the lessons of love, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, which are preached by both Christianity and Islam. However, religious fundamentalism, intolerance and extremism are sometimes used deliberately in Northern Nigeria to kick-start discussions with those driving religious violence because they are substructures upon which other sources of religious violence rest. Therefore, there is always the need to note and check on them closely. In fact, religious fundamentalism and



extremism are similar to, and indeed manifestations of, religious intolerance. Sampson (2012) views religious fundamentalism and extremism from three perspectives: Firstly, from a cognitive understanding of fundamentalism, the word appears to be associated with a closed personality type that expresses exclusivity, particularity, literality and moral rigour. Secondly, from a cultural theological viewpoint he sees fundamentalism expressing opposition to religious and cultural liberalism in defence of orthodoxy and religious traditions. Lastly, from a social movement perspective, the word fundamentalism denotes organisational and ideological uniqueness from other types of religious movements (Sampson, 2012:114)

In this case, it might be suggested that fundamentalism is a religious movement that promotes the literal interpretation of and strict adherence to religious doctrine, more so, as a return to orthodox scriptural prescriptions and doctrinal originality. The emphasis here is on the right doctrine and the necessity for organised warfare against the forces of modernism. For Mohammed, Omar and Bakr (2012:2115), religious fundamentalism is an issue that affects all the major religions of the world, and it is turning out to be a problem to development. Hence, it is one of the factors influencing inter-religious conflicts. These authors believe that the increasing emphasis on religious fundamentalism in contemporary Nigerian society poses a serious threat to the peaceful coexistence of various Nigerian ethno-religious groups; hence, it has resulted in an unimaginable loss of lives and property worth millions of Naira and has displaced several thousand in their country of heritage.

Religious leaders are henceforth being challenged to rise against religious fundamentalism, which is undermining peaceful coexistence amongst people and the system. But the question of how fundamentalism can activate religious violence in any given society remains. It all depends on the individual understanding of the degree of fundamentalism. Therefore, the researcher is of the opinion that it is a result of the degree to which Christians and Muslims, being the two major religions in Northern Nigeria, are willing to compromise on religious issues. This may mean, to what extent would Christianity or Islam compromise or give up some religious or doctrinal rights for the sake of societal change? How liberal or dogmatic can both of the religions be?

For Christianity, the basis of respect for political authority is Jesus' directive to his followers to give unto Caesar and God what belongs to each of them respectively. This basis for authority is laid in these verses: Romans 13:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:13-14, NIV Bible (Cf. Section 2.4.2). By virtue of the literal understanding of these passages, Christians are commanded to submit to temporal authorities as long as the authorities are not acting contrary to the divine authority, whereas in Islam it is the other way round, hence Islam,

according to Danjibo (2009:3), is not just a religion, but a way of life that encompasses the entire gamut of the economic, judicial, political and cultural lives of its *Umma* (faithful); therefore, from its definition that Islam is a total submission to the will of *Allah* (God) as revealed by the prophetic message of Mohammad. This suggests that Islam does not admit a narrow view of religion by restricting it to within the limits of worship, specific rituals and spiritual beliefs. This might be the reason why Olayiwola (1988:227) declares that “Islam in its precise meaning is a social order, philosophy of life, system of economic rules and government”.

From the above argument, Islam might be viewed as a holistic entity. It is affirming when Abakan (2009:94ff), sees a Muslim as an individual “covering all facets of life; because his spiritual and moral worth is tested against his/her daily interaction with others at the congregational prayers, in marital union, in the pursuit of his legitimate livelihood and in the holding of public responsibilities amongst others”. Therefore, we can draw on what Seda (2002:56) and Tachin (2010) put forth when they say that Islam is a religion of justice, peace, mercy and forgiveness. Of course, when doctrine and practice are contradicting each other in Christianity, Islam or any other religion, it may be argued that such a religion is misrepresenting itself and people might challenge its claims. Seda (2002:56) and Tachin (2010) also claim that “Islam means to surrender one’s will to God and peace. Islam is the way of life for anyone who chooses to accept that there is only one God, and none is worthy of worship but Him”. These are unique and fundamental statements; practising them has become a challenge not only to Muslims, but also to Christians, in Northern Nigeria.

As stated in the above paragraph, both Christians and Muslims beliefs and claims appear to be theoretical rather than practical. Especially, when considering the negative outcome of the current situation of identity issues and inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria. The challenge for these two major religions in Northern Nigeria according Sampson (2012:118) shall not only the desire to strictly practise the basic rules and teachings of their religion. However, both religions are to fight the pervasive ignorance amongst some Islamic faithful, who often associate Christianity with profanity, on account of its accommodation of social, economic and cultural activities that are seemingly immoral or perverse. On the other hand, Christians must not uttered words of condemnation. The argument at this point is to challenge the absence of any genuine desire to understand each other’s beliefs and culture which contributes to the lack of understanding and respect between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

#### **2.2.2.4.4 Impact of Derogatory Statements**

Derogatory statements as a trigger for inter-religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria come from both religious leaders and their followership. According to Sampson (2012:114), the term ‘derogatory’ suggests the idea of provocative and inciting utterances, sensational journalism, political manipulation of religion, and incitement in the social media and mobile telephony, amongst others. On the one hand, complaints about the use of derogatory words in Northern Nigeria by some faithful Muslims, addressing other religious adherents with words like *Kafiri*, *Kirdi* or *Arne* infidels, reflect a common way of categorisation of Muslims and others and usually instigate violence.

Christians, on the other hand, use phrases such as ‘anyone who does not believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ is a lost person’ and ‘he will die and go to hell’, etc. This seems to be a problem, but Knitter’s (1985:35) contribution is insightful. Hence, he said: “We can never know whether one religious figure is superior to another because each religious figure and each religion is confined to its own culture and historical context”. Therefore, it is unfortunate that some militant religious leaders not only utter statements that are defamatory, but also are in the habit of inculcating negative attitudes in their followership. These kinds of leaders are often very dogmatic, narrow-minded and intolerant, and advocate social exclusion for their followers (Mohammed, Ormer & Bakar, and 2012:2115). Thus it can be contended that any religious leader who has these personality traits is, more often than not, predisposed to use his followers to achieve narrow religious objectives or inordinate personal ambition. This kind of attitude may lead to outbreaks of religious violence.

Identity becomes a problem when Muslims and Christians do not recognise one another, and campaigns of hatred and blackmail between the two major religions in Northern Nigeria are ongoing. Omotosho (2003:17) argues that;

Muslims in particular believe that Christianity does not recognize Islam as a religion that is entitled to exist, and consequently, it does not recognize the rights of Muslims. They maintain that if there is any recognition of Islam by Christians in Nigeria, it is simply because the Muslims have refused to be ignored.

Omotosho further explains that both Christians and Muslims are actively involved in hate campaigns against one another. This is manifested in various forms, including incitement, distortion of facts about each other, and blocking each other’s chances, as demonstrated in the issues of *Shari’a* (Islamic Law) and

the OIC).<sup>22</sup> The argument here may attract fairness, equity and justice on the part of both Christians and Muslims in presenting issues such as *Shari'a* and the OIC in a multi-faith and multicultural context like Nigeria. The analysis above cannot be separated with the use of the media, which constitutes another forum that motivates inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria.

#### **2.2.2.4.5 The Role of Media**

The role of the media in a multi-faith and multicultural society such as Nigeria constitutes a significant factor for creating identity and inter-religious conflict. Nahor (2008:163) argues that, by nature, religion has to do with matters of life and death. Therefore, the challenge becomes more obvious when we consider the activities of an individual journalist who at a given time maintains a set of religious convictions and persuasions. The question is: How can he or she report the facts without distorting the views and doctrines of the other religion, which he or she is not a part of? It is a common assumption in Northern Nigeria that, when a journalist misrepresents the truth of a religion other than his or her own, simply because he or she is ignorant of it, such reporting might lead to religious conflict, as has been the case on several occasions.

The Society of Professional Journalists (2014:1-2) says in relation to four ethical expectations of a journalist's report. Firstly, a journalist must seek truth and report it; secondly, he must minimise harm; thirdly, a journalist must act independently; and lastly, the journalist must be accountable and transparent. These ethics are a general public assumption, but in the Northern Nigerian context it seems to be a different thing all together. Conceivably, this is what prompted Kaka (1993:197) to say that "the media's penchant for exaggerating details of religious violence, and thereby, fuelling their intensity is well known and documented". Kukah's argument is illuminating hence; the character of the media is another factor

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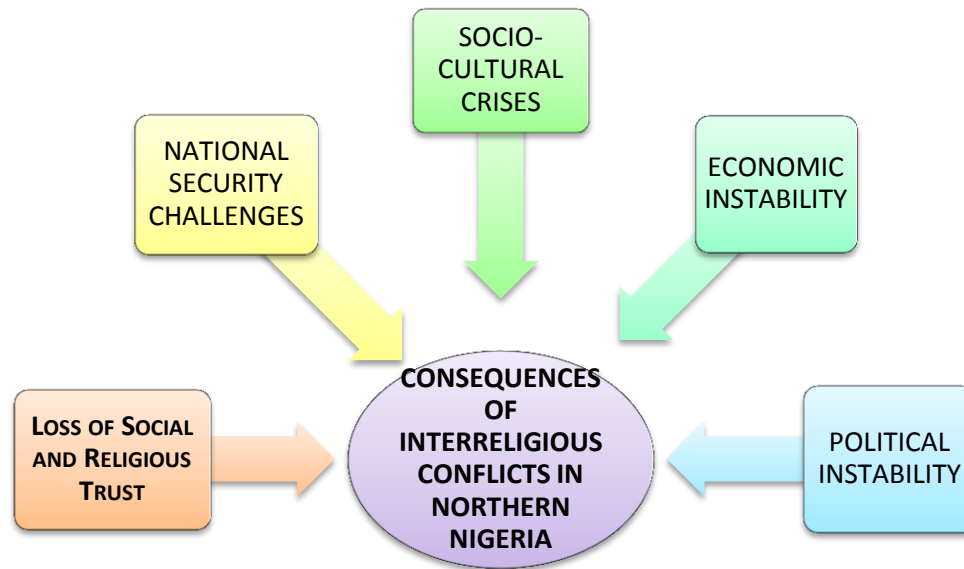
<sup>22</sup>OIC is an acronym for the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. It is an international organisation of fifty-seven (57) states, including Nigeria. These are countries that decided to pool their resources, combine their efforts and speak with one voice to safeguard the interests and secure the progress and well-being of their peoples and of all Muslims in the world. The organisation was established in Rabat in the Kingdom of Morocco on 25 September 1969. Its aims include: To strengthen Islamic solidarity among member states, cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields, and support for the struggle of all Muslim people to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights. Another aim is to coordinate action to: safeguard the Holy places, support the struggle of the Palestinian people and assist them in recovering their rights and liberating their occupied territories, and lastly, to work to eliminate racial discrimination and all forms of colonialism, and to create a favourable atmosphere for the promotion of cooperation and understanding between member states and other countries.

that motivated the 1987 Kafanchan religious crisis. News reports monitored on Radio Kaduna immediately after the commencement of the violence alleged that Christians were killing Muslims indiscriminately, burning their mosques and copies of the Holy Qur'an, and banishing them from the town (*News Watch*, 1987:10). The broadcasts further alleged that an itinerant preacher had misquoted the Qur'an and blasphemed the name of the Prophet Mohammed, urging Christians to kill Muslims and burn their mosques. Sadly enough, these reports ignited reprisal attacks by Muslims all over Kaduna state, causing an invaluable loss of lives and property.

Furthermore, news headlines such as Islamic Assailants Kill Hundreds of Christians near Jos, Muslims slaughter Christians in central Nigeria, Muslims slaughter 400–500 Christians in latest Jos crisis (Creeping Shari'a, 2010) are very common during religious disturbances (Etaghene, 2011). Such alarming headlines, coupled with gory images of victims, often trigger reprisal attacks. It is popularly argued that a good number of crises are caused by the manipulation of religion and its use by politicians for the reinforcement of power and politics, suggesting that there are those who use religion as a war-horse to fight other battles, including politicians!

In view of this, we could argue that either some of journalists are unaware of the manipulation of religion and its use to reinforce power or for selfish reasons, or therefore they decide to suppress the truth when it comes to reporting about religion in Nigeria. According to Samaila (2008:165), this kind of reporting usually generates an imbalanced truth and has led to horrible occurrences of religious crises, with immediate loss of lives and property, and also yielding suspicion, mistrust, hatred and revenge that last for a very long time. Therefore, an argument can be established in agreement with Sampson (2012:124), which a proliferation of media technology has made it easy for these emotive reports and images of slain persons to be transported far and wide. Hence, it is generating intense hatred between belligerent individuals and reprisal attacks in a cycle of violence, which has resulted in various challenges, such as political, economic, social/cultural and national instability.

Figure 3 below illustrates the consequences of these challenges and summarises the factors.



**Figure 3: The consequences of the challenges**

Source: Hassan, J. (2013)

## 2.3 NEGATIVE IMPACT OF RELIGIONS AND POLITICS

Discrimination loosely encapsulates negative ideas surrounding the practice of categorization. It is an action that denies social participation or human rights. It categorises people based on prejudice. Discriminatory policy of any multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural government is likely to a lack of trust and confidence, possibly resulting in political instability of a varying nature. In this section, five negative outcomes of the use of politics, religion and conflicts are presented and analysed. These are political instability, economic instability, social and cultural crisis, national security challenges and loss of social and religious trust.

### 2.3.1 Political Instability

Political stability is the opposite of political instability. According to Powell (1984:20-23) and Bashir (2012:62), political stability refers to the ability of any political system to maintain self-confidence in all its ramifications. It also implies the ability of an eligible government to preserve and carry out its required duties, while retaining the support of its people within the framework of the established system. The

political instability, identity issues and the undercurrent of ethno-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria has severely affected political stability, not only in the Northern region, but in the entire nation. It has resulted in widespread disregard for law and order, which reflects the inability of the federal, state and local government to handle the leadership of the nation.

People might characterise the political instability in a giving society as caused by the populace, which may be accepted. However, the inability and ineffectiveness of the three tiers of government [federal government, state government and local government] in Nigeria also has contributed to a severe threat to peaceful coexistence. Additionally, political stability, meaningful development and national security can be associated with good governance and service delivery. It also has created a lack of trust and confidence in the government, therefore causing people to take the law into their own hands by using deadly arms to defend their lives and properties. Indeed, the religious and related conflicts have destabilised the country and brought everything to a standstill, creating the impression in the eyes of the whole world that Nigeria is politically unstable. I believe this is why Ojo (2010:184) and Mohammed *et al.* (2012:2116) estimate that about “10,000 - 20,000 people to have been killed in clashes mainly in sixty three related religious and ethnic group’s crisis across the nation, as well as over a million people displaced from their homes”. Political instability is not the only outcome of identity and inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria; it also gives rise to economic instability.

### **2.3.2 Economic Instability**

What do we mean by economic instability? How much damage can it cause within a society? How can we address it? Economic instability may be described as the financial system of a country that shows no consistency in handling inflation and variation in output growth. This kind of situation usually attracts conflict, breeds insecurity and discrimination, slows economic and educational development and leads to mutual distrust (Nwaomah (2012:101). Considering the effect of economic instability, the level of loss and destruction cannot be underestimated, hence lots of “precious lives [are] lost, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their sources of livelihood stretching from businesses, assets or personal properties, thereby, increasing the already saturated labour market and unemployment” (Bashir, 2012:62). Bashir (2012:62) adds that “most Ibo people who lived in the Northern region have retreated back to their homeland or elsewhere, therefore creating a vacuum in the region”. Consequently, resources that are meant for development projects are diverted to relief services and the deployment of security personnel,

which in turn affects the economy of the country decrease its development, leaving the populace in abject poverty.

### 2.3.3 Social/Cultural Crises

Considering the challenge of identity issue and inter-religious conflict, it can be argued that, in a society that is multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, etc., only peaceful coexistence can promote harmony, trust and love. Hence, when people are living in peace with one another it promotes a spirit of sharing and functioning together. According to Awoniyi (2013:138),

Negative implications of conflicts include physical injury and pain, death, mental agony from psychic terror, feeling of hopelessness, destruction of property, damage to infrastructural facilities like electricity, roads, public buildings e.g. installations and police posts, diversion of public funds from socio-economic development to security, abuse of human rights and loss of resources.

I will explore peaceful coexistence as an outcome of face-to-face or faith-to-faith encounters in Chapter 5. In view of the above scenario in Northern Nigeria, national security must be affected.

### 2.3.4 National Security Challenges

Insecurity in any given nation can emerge as a result of many factors (Ighomereho & Akpor, 2013:82-83). Ighomereho and Akpor (2013) are of the opinion that security in Nigeria has become a challenge due to porous borders, urban drifting of jobless youth from the rural areas to urban areas, social irresponsibility of companies, such as in the case of the Niger Delta crisis, unemployment, poverty and terrorism.<sup>23</sup> They further argue that when a country has a weak security system or lacks institutional capacity, it is bound to have national insecurity.

Therefore, it is popularly argued that, when there is a conflict of perception between government and its citizenry, or ethno-religious conflict, or even the loss of a socio-cultural and communal value system, a

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<sup>23</sup>Terrorism is the premeditated use of threat or violence by an individual or group of people to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state with the intention to compel those in authority to respond to their demands or expectations. According to Sampson and Onoha (2011:3-4), this is a worldwide phenomenon. On the one hand, terrorism in Nigeria is widely understood as an Islamic insurgency with a political undertone by a faceless group based in the Northern region of the country. Presently, the group called *Boko Haram* (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro 2013:82).



nation can suffer national insecurity. Perhaps this is why Human Rights Watch (2012:64) reiterates that the failure of any government to effectively perform its primary responsibility – of providing and guaranteeing the security of the lives and property of its citizens– can drastically affect its bargaining power and capacity to deal with identity issues and inter-religious conflicts. This might severely threaten national security. Therefore, the populace will place their loyalty in either ethnicity or religion instead of placing it in the state.

In fact, the volatile natures of ethno-religious violence have affected the services of the Nigerian police and other security agencies. The Human Rights Watch (2012:64), argues that this was the undermining of the core duty of the Nigerian police that led to several attacks on police stations and outposts, which claimed the lives of many police officers and of members of other armed forces, as well as led to the vandalising of security facilities and looting of armouries, with weapons falling into wrong hands. Additionally, Human Rights Watch correctly argues that conflicts are bound to occur in situations where the national constitution is not enforced. An example is Chapter 4 of the National Constitution of Nigeria, which makes provision for the fundamental human rights to life, to dignity, to personal liberty, to a fair hearing, to a private and family life, to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to freedom of expression and the press, to peaceful assembly and association, to freedom of movement, to freedom from discrimination, and freedom to acquire immovable property anywhere in Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2012).

Therefore, Walt (2005:146) is right in saying that “human beings are agents capable of making moral choices, of shaping their identity, resisting injustice and participating in the shaping of society”. It is also important to value the inherent dignity of human beings in a society, hence it’s ensures “that people enjoy civil and political liberties and also have effective access to the social and economic means indispensable to the development of their physical, emotional, creative and associational capabilities”. Van derVen (2004:8) says that, generally, human dignity is a complex concept with a long history.

What is dignity? Willard (1984:18) argues that “dignity as a term [is] used in moral, ethical and political discourses to signify that a being has an innate right to respect and ethical treatment”. This concept also carries a prospective and cautionary element in that Donrich (2009:9) asserts that, in politics, dignity is used to critique the treatment of the oppressed and vulnerable groups and individuals. However, it has also been extended to apply to cultures and sub-cultures, religious beliefs and ideals, such as the treatment of animals used for food and research, and even plants. Therefore, dignity signifies respect and trust, and

it is often used to advocate that something is not receiving a proper degree of respect. This might be in the case of people, which they fail to treat themselves with proper self-respect. Dworkin (1977:295) extended the meaning of dignity to refer to the intrinsic worthiness of human beings, which provided the spiritual aspect of the term.

In view of the above description of dignity, De Lange (2011:4, 5) is right to explain that human dignity is a “quality inherent in every single human person”. It is “a permanent, universal, a priori and absolute characteristic”. This according to De Lange (2011:4, 5) means, intrinsic worthiness of the human person’s dignity does not matter how young, or old, strong or weak, wise or naïve people are. However, people may differ, but when it comes to the issue of dignity they are all equal. Therefore is helpful when Nussbaum (2000:72) maintains that the core idea of human dignity is that a human being is a dignified, free being who shapes his or her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others. In other words, a life that is human is one that is shaped throughout by these human powers of practical reason and sociability. Therefore dignity exists exclusively as dignity to-be-acknowledged, and it reveals itself when it is infringed upon by violence, humiliation, neglect and indifference.

### **2.3.5 Loss of Social and Religious Trust**

Finger and Jishe (2013:125) assert that mutual trust, shared values and common objectives can enhance stability. Similarly, Mishler and Rose (1997:418-419) point out that trust is important because it serves as the “creator of collective power”, enabling government to make decisions and commit resources without having to resort to coercion or obtaining the specific approval of citizens for every decision. When trust is created within the populace in an extensive way, governments are able to make new commitments on the basis of it. More so if successful, such a government receives more support, in effect creating a virtuous spiral. Then features such as “collectivism, loyalty to authority and community, truthfulness, honesty, hard work, tolerance, love for others, mutual harmony and coexistence” will not be a challenge, but rather society will prosper. Therefore, it is necessary for the populace of Northern Nigeria to understand the above reality of life and put it into action.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The theme of this chapter was the contextual factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue in Northern Nigeria. The chapter was descriptive, thematic and explanatory. The argument was on the religious and

contextual factors of identity and inter-religious conflict and its negative effects on Nigeria as a nation and its people. These factors are; pre- and post-colonial legacy; divergent perceptions of the Nigerian state's intra-elite power struggle; economy; government discriminatory policies; and the politicisation of religion. Besides, the elites, who include business people, educationists, and government officials, the military, religious leaders, police officers and professionals also form part of the motivators of the conflicts.

The negative effects of this kind of encounter include; political instability; economic instability; social/cultural instability; national security challenges and loss of social and religious trust. Consequently, this negative encounter leads to elimination of human life and the destruction of property. It also creates affect coexistence and cause poverty and hunger. Similarly, it creates lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, fear as well as violent confrontation. Hence, suggesting the need to understand mission as prophetic dialogue.

It is widely accepted that human rights are the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world. Therefore I argue that the destruction of human lives and property in Northern Nigeria is a paradox to the national constitution. The next chapter is: Identity and encounter in three typologies. This chapter covers the theological aspects of this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: IDENTITY AND ENCOUNTER IN THREE TYPOLOGIES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter was a thematic and descriptive analysis of some socio-economic, religious and political factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue in Northern Nigeria. The fundamental issues in this chapter is on identity and encounter from the perspectives of the three typologies, which scholars call paradigms. These are inclusivism, exclusivism and pluralism. The chapter analyses these typologies and their claims from the foundational dimension, biblical/theological dimension, sociological and missiological dimension. As the world is a global village and religious communities are pressed to think of their attitudes to and relations with adherents of other religious traditions, identifying the relationship between identity and encounter will form a significant outcome for inter-religious dialogue in Northern Nigeria.

This means that the question of how Christians and Muslims view each other's religion(s), and how they view God's stance on other faiths, is of crucial importance and primary relevance. The meeting of two religions appears to have always been a challenge, and any opportunity for dialogue might provide a channel for encounter between them. It is in view of this assumption that dialogue is suggested to be an alternative in the case of Northern Nigeria's inter-religious conflict situation. The chapter is approached with an open mind because of the assumption that the church in Northern Nigeria needs to take an ecumenical stance.

### **3.2 Theology of religions**

Religious pluralism is broadly admitted to be one of the crucial challenges in this present age. Hence, the need to explore the theology of religions is widening. In view of the above, we need to understand the concept of theology of religions, before zooming to a discussion of it. Generally, theology of religions may mean the ways of human living. Importantly, this recognition has the effect of driving one's attention to a theology of religions, given that the challenging issues related to salvation cannot be taken lightly.

Matthew (2013) understands theology of religion as the branch of Christian theology that attempts to theologially and biblically evaluate the phenomena of religions. In other words, it is an area of theological reflection on inter-religious relations that raises fundamental questions for all people of faith

in a pluralist, postmodern world. Its aim is to give some definition and shape to Christian reflection on the theological implementation of living in a pluralistic world (Karkkainen, 2003:20). According to Hedges (2010:16), theology of religions is a constructive interpretation of how Christianity relates to other religions, the nature of other religions, and what may happen to the followers of other religions. Perhaps, Knitter's (2003:21) summary is more helpful; he says theology of religions involves meaning, values and relationships. For this reason, the study applies the praxis cycle of Kritzinger (2008:764ff) within the conceptual framework of prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA in Chapters 4 and 5 to provide a space for the possibilities of religious dialogue that might lead to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

To achieve this, the researcher recognises that the relationship between identity and encounter among Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria appears to stress a monolithic notion of identity, and there are no adequate tools to approach other religions. In fact, this is what Eyeruroma and Chidimma (2013:209-210, citing Tajfel & Turner, 1979) call intergroup discrimination –between the in-group in comparison with the out-group – and the consequences of this is categorisation. Eyeruroma and Chidimma (2013:220) also state that the direct consequences of this unhealthy comparison are discrimination and prejudicial attitudes. These elements are sufficient to trigger conflicts, be they political, social, religious or otherwise, especially in a pluralistic society like Nigeria. Conceivably, this is why Ahiokhai (2012:11) note that, with the reality of globalisation and the close proximity of multiple cultures and religions interacting within community borders, no religion can survive by itself. Similarly, this social categorisation makes sense when Bodenhausen (2010:12, citing Turner et al., 1994) says;

Once, one accepts the fact that people are inherently multifaceted, and that the extent to which any given social category is spontaneously seen as relevant can vary across contexts, it becomes clear that the level of diversity within group depends on which respects for diversity one considers...conversely, experiencing diverse group environments provides individuals with opportunities to develop greater creativity...

In short, diversity in the person and diversity in the group can potentially complement one another, resulting in better functioning at both levels. The argument here is that identity and encounter are related. In Christian theology of religions it has become commonplace among theologians to distinguish three approaches, exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Other divisions have been proposed, but this threefold approach continues to be dominant. The researcher was motivated to concentrate on inclusivism firstly, because of the understanding of the importance of collaboration and peace and the implication of destroying one another as Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. Secondly, the motivations to

concentrate on inclusivism outshine other reasons because of the importance of cooperation on matters of mutual interest and concern, and for the dissemination of information on both Islam and Christianity through dialogue. Thirdly, in agreement with Knitter (2002:27-28), the researcher decided to move towards inclusivism, because Jesus is the medium for salvation; in other words, God's offer of truth and saving grace through Jesus Christ, and no other one.

In fact, inclusivism is the most common concept today, particularly among mainstream religious believers of established religions. It acknowledges the universal presence of divine truth and its accessibility outside of one's own tradition, whenever and wherever people honestly seek the truth. It is only being criticised for limiting the opportunity for interreligious dialogue. According to Knitter (2002:103), in Jesus Christ alone has God done something very special, something that has not been done and will not be done elsewhere? This means that, in Jesus Christ alone the inclusivists have God's full, final and fulfilling words, therefore there cannot be real dialogue because it has no room. Hedges (2010:20ff) sums it up when he describes exclusivism as "either one religion is true, pluralism he describes as more than one religion is true, but inclusivism he describes as "one religion is true and others partially true".

Knitter (1995:28) argues that all religions want to include other religions in their own understanding of truth; this is what gives dialogue its substance, excitement and values. Similarly, Hedges (2010:30) suggests that each of the typologies is marked by a different motif, thus exclusivist approaches characterise discontinuity, inclusivist approaches exemplify fulfilment, whereas pluralist approaches epitomise openness. In view of these identities, the encounter, according to Hedges (2010:13), is important, as is discussion of the theology of religions. Hence, in his (Hedges, 2010:56) opinion,

if we are to move beyond the impasse we cannot simply opt for one position or another, but must develop a contemporary theology ... instead of placing ourselves in camps with fixed answers, or extolling a 'true Christianity', we should extol a humble Christianity that says: 'I'm not sure I can tell the truth...I can only tell what I know'.

### **3.3. Concepts and contexts of the three paradigms**

When taking into consideration the destiny of unbelievers, the un-evangelized or "Others" who are outside the Christian faith, there has always been a great divide in the church. For about two millennia, the church has taught the necessity of faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation. The question is has the church been wrong all this time? Is there a more proper hermeneutical approach to clarifying the Scriptures in determining the Bible's position on the theology of religion? This section will provide three

popular religious paradigms within a theology of religion, namely inclusivism, exclusivism and pluralism, and attempt to uncover what each of these philosophies represents in an objective manner.

In this research, however, concentrating on exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism is necessitated because each of these theological positions has described the relationship between other religious traditions and Christianity, and has also attempted to answer the questions about the nature of God and the salvation of humankind.

As we critically engage with questions of life, both in the present and as they have been answered in the past, the relationship between a theology of religions and mission as a prophetic dialogue is relevant and laudable. Therefore, in this section an attempt is made to analyse the conceptual understanding of the foundational, theological and biblical dimension, as well as the social and missiological dimension of each concept. The emphasis in this research is on the inclusivist paradigm. Suggestion on prophetic dialogue as an alternative will be provided in the final chapter in an attempt to respond to the research question. Thus, “How can the praxis cycle enable mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCURA contribute to inter-religious encounters and coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria that can lead to peace and reconciliation in the context of religious diversity and religious plurality?”

In other words, the church has a double calling of compassion and solidarity. The church has the responsibility for standing by the common people in any form of their suffering and needs, and also have to speak out against all powerful and privileged individuals who may selfishly pursue her/his own interests and thus control and harm others. In fact, this is exactly what the church is supposed to be doing in Nigeria, instead of hating and raging against each other, both Christians and Muslims. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:369ff) argues that mission is the liberating service of the reign of God when they exclaim;

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel...; if you want peace, work for justice; we discern two types of injustice: socio-economic-political injustice and environmental injustice; and because the earth is the Lord's the responsibility of the church towards the earth is a crucial part of the church's mission (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004:369).

However, the church's missionary work should stand for justice in the world. It is equal to witnessing and proclaiming the gospel and establishing a Christian community of shared faith, friendship and worship.

More importantly, justice as a wide concept comprising economic and political liberation to achieve basic human rights to peace activism, and commitment to working for ecological stability and environmental sustainability (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004:369). As it was in the time of Jesus, church mission is about cooperating with God in the call of all people always and everywhere to practise justice, peace and integrity of creation.

Accordingly, PROCMURA is dedicated to promoting the following mission within the churches in Africa: firstly, faithful Christian witness to the Gospel in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respects the spirit of good neighbourliness. Secondly, PROCMURA is dedicated to constructive engagement with Muslims for peace in society and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims for the holistic development of the human family (PROCMURA Constitution and By-law, 2003:1). This suggests that PROCMURA emphasises the church in its calling to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and should take the context seriously as an indispensable requirement for Christian presence in an interfaith environment. But it also is necessary to live according to Kingdom values, making peace and hungering after justice. As Christians share the gospel with Muslims, its message must not be contradicted by the quality of life of the Christian community.

Apart from being a faithful witness, and being involved in constructive engagement and building peace and reconciliation, PROCMURA recognises that in the Christian-Muslim engagement, the churches have to assume a comprehensive approach that covers five broad areas, namely: Christian-Muslim relations in the economic sphere; Christian-Muslim relations in the cultural sphere; Christian-Muslim relations in the political sphere; Christian-Muslim relations in the social sphere; and Christian-Muslim relations in the religious sphere. Johnson Mbillah<sup>24</sup> (2010) argues that these five broad areas constitute the core of any Christian-Muslim interaction, seeing that economic, religious, political, social and cultural issues cannot be isolated from one another in Islam; therefore, the exclusion of any of them would constitute a partial approach to the Christian-Muslim encounter. The categories of inclusivism, exclusivism and pluralism are discussed in more detail below.

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### **3.3.1 Inclusivism**

#### **3.3.1.1 Introduction**

Inclusivism is an approach within the three typologies (inclusivism, exclusivism and pluralism) in the theology of religions. It is an approach that stands between exclusivism and pluralism. These typologies may be contended to be extreme when compare with inclusivism on the one hand, as well as the other hand. This section analyses the foundational, theological/biblical dimension, as well as the social and missiological dimension.

#### **3.3.1.2 The Foundational Dimension of Inclusivism**

It is a popular assertion that all religions have some beneficial component that brings their adherents into fellowship with God Almighty. Both Knitter (2002:33-36) and Hedges (2010:23) describe inclusivism as a 'yes' and a 'no' to other religions. Knitter characterises the inclusivist approach as the fulfilment paradigm. Inclusivism recognises that all religions have some good and bad elements; consequently, the good elements of the world's religions help to prepare a person for accepting Christ Jesus. In view of the above statement, Kuligin (2008:5) provides a positive portrayal of natural theology and general revelation when he establishes that Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and humankind.

Standing between exclusivism and pluralism, inclusivists agrees with exclusivists that Jesus Christ is the final and complete revelation of God. In other words, salvation is effectually and particularly found in the person of Jesus Christ, but denies that knowledge of his work is necessary for salvation. But, unlike the exclusivist, the inclusivist holds that an implicit faith response to the general revelation can be salvific. This means that God expects from humankind a personal response to the understanding s/he is given. Similarly, inclusivist consent, along with the pluralists, that God's grace and love are universal, because God and the Holy Spirit are gracious, loving and omnipresent.

Generally, inclusivism is the belief that God is present in non-Christian religions to save adherents through Christ. Inclusivism greatly appeals to people because of its sympathetic approach to religion. Moreover, according to Netland (1991:5, 6), this concept also maintain that the central claims of the Christian faith are true, but adopts a much more positive view of other religions than does exclusivism. Although inclusivists hold that God has definitively revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, and that Jesus

somehow is central to God's provision of salvation for humankind, they are willing to allow that God's salvation is also available through non-Christian religions (D'Costa, 1986:54; Netland, 1991:5-6). Furthermore, Netland and D'Costa disagree that Jesus is still held in some sense to be unique, normative and definitive, but God is said to be revealing Himself and providing salvation through other religious traditions as well. Hedges (2010:23) seems to differ; he argues that "inclusivisms hold only one religion as ultimately true, and therefore leading to salvation, but other religions lead people towards this true religion". This informs that inclusivism and exclusivism are very much holding the same viewpoint on the issue of salvation through Christ alone.

Therefore, in view of this description according to McCarthy (1998:103), inclusivism is an attempt to straighten the delicate balance between the affirmation of God's unique revelation and salvation in Jesus Christ and openness to God's saving activity in other religions. The great challenge within the inclusivist position, according to Stott (1992:319) is that, "while we know that Jesus is the only saviour, we do not know 'exactly how much knowledge and understanding of the gospel people need before they can cry to God for mercy and be saved'. This is a Gnostic perspective. This is probably why Graig provided that God has made Himself clear as on the issue of salvation of humankind. The gospel has not revealed how God will deal with those who have never heard His gospel. Ataman (2008:14) suggested that this argument must be left with the God of mercy and justice.

When compared to exclusivism and pluralism, inclusivism is a recent development that emerged from the Enlightenment period. The theology of inclusivism was motivated by the wide hope and scope of God's salvific plan, which started before the birth of Jesus Christ. Dupuis (1997:54) says "Inclusivism started with the advent of Christ and the founding of the church's belief in a universally accessible salvation". This firmly took root in the second century, when the Church Fathers did not seek to justify inclusivism, but it simply came naturally in their development of a Logos<sup>25</sup> Christology. The Church Fathers that developed a Logos theology include Flavius Justinus or Justin Martyr, from c. 130-165, Irenaeus, c. 120-202, Alexandria, c. 150-215, Clement of Rome, c. 30-100, and Origen, 185-254 (Dupuis, 1997:53ff).

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<sup>25</sup>*Logos* means the "Word" and it represented God's revelation and Christ. The concept of 'Logos' during the first century was prominent within the Hellenistic and Semitic traditions. It became imminent in the world and, in the minds of Hellenistic philosophers of that time; it became a principle of intelligibility.

The arguments Dupuis raises from these Fathers are all about the working of the salvation of humankind through Jesus Christ. In the middle ages, Father Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) claimed a position that presented explicit faith for salvation, but also believed that God would make an opportunity for all to come to that faith (Dupuis, 1997:114). Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) believed that salvation was accessible outside the church. John Wesley (1703-1791), who lived at the dawn of the Enlightenment and at a time in which new lands, people and religions were being discovered, held to a belief of universal prevenient grace and the knowledge of God for salvation (Tiessen, 2004:62).

Karl Rahner, an influential voice in the inclusivistic movement, found and argued in Vatican II that, while there is a path to salvation outside the Catholic Church and Christianity, salvation was provided by Christ alone (Rahner, 1986:136). Sanders (1995:35) argue that it is possible for the un-evangelised to be saved on the basis of the “Faith Principle”. For this reason he argues that the Father “reaches out to the un-evangelized through both the Son and the Spirit via general revelation ... and by the redemptive work of Jesus ... applies that work even to those who are ignorant of the atonement,” providing that the inclusivist faith in God is enough for God to save him/her, whether the truth comes from the Bible or from God’s work in creation. In summary, Sanders (1992:35) puts it thus:

The un-evangelized may be reconciled to God on the basis of the work of Christ even though they are ignorant of Jesus. I classify these people as ‘believer’s’ in God, while those who know about Jesus and exercise faith in God through him are called ‘Christians’. Despite this distinction, there is continuity between believers and Christians.

According to Sanders, there is such an opportunity to participate in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ because of His mercy and Grace. With this provision, the question may still be ask – if no human is excluded in being saved, why do some still perish in Hell? This is when the inclusivists suggest a possibility known as “Eschatological evangelization” or Post-mortem evangelism” (Sanders, 1992:177). To argue for the determination of the destiny of the un-evangelised after death appears to be controversial, hence the Bible states, in Hebrews 9:27: “It is appointed unto men to die once and after this comes judgement.” However, upon further investigation, according to Thomas Field in Sanders (1992:177), this passage argues that the amount of time between death and judgement is unknown, and should not be proposed as a fixed duration, because it is possible to have forgiveness beyond the grave. What does the Bible says about the inclusivist position?

### **3.3.1.2 Biblical and Theological Dimension of Inclusivism**

Biblical support for an inclusivist understanding seems challenging, hence there is no clear part of the Bible that suggests salvation outside of Christianity, but there are verses in support of an inclusivist theology in the narratives, which reveal the will and character of God in person. The historic narratives of salvation, beginning with Abraham, moving through Israel, reaching the time of Jesus and exploding through the church, contain the story of the depth and width of God's saving love (Romans 8:38, 39). Therefore, the joy we have today, of being able to look back upon biblical history, is that we can understand God's intention of saving the world and making salvation evident and real in the work of Christ.

It is in view of this analysis that this research concurs with Holtzen (2005:74), who suggests the following biblical passages to reveal a God with a salvific plan to save all humankind because of his grace and mercy. Firstly, (1Timothy 2:3-6 NIV) says, "This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all people, this has been witnessed to at proper time". God desires that all persons come to salvation, while the context is a charge to Christians to pray for everyone, including kings and authorities.

Holtzen (2005:74, citing 1 Timothy 4:10, NIV) says this "...is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe". He argues that this is another passage in the New Testament that appeals to the death and resurrection of Jesus as applicable to all persons. Consequently, "just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people..." (Romans 5:18-19, NIV). Other texts include Revelation 5:9; Titus 2:11, 23, 14, etc. All of these verses point to salvation for everyone. Going by the above verses, Marshall (1989:64) argues that "the grace cannot be separated from the coming and the dying of Jesus".

Hence, it is difficult to see how one might say "God loves you", without at the same time being able to say "Christ died for you", unless "the love is understood to be non-saving kind of love". Therefore, this expression is an expression of God's grace to all persons and it is directly linked to the atoning death of Jesus Christ. For this reason, the way theologians within inclusivism have argued for the particularity of Jesus Christ as the final and decisive revelation of God, and how they have described God's love to all

humankind, is quite sufficient to suggest that God has really extended his grace and opportunity for salvation to all, but Sanders (1995:26) argues that Jesus is the

Standard of what humanity is to be like. In him we find the fulfilment of our destiny, what it means to be a genuine human being. He is both the true image of God and the true image of humanness...the atonement of Jesus is absolutely essential for the salvation of any human being who has ever lived, whether they were born two thousand years before Jesus or two thousand years after him.

In view of the above argument, it is clear that Jesus is our perfect example though our saviour and Lord, therefore it is helpful when Pinnock (1992:49) argues that God provided salvation for the world through the work of one mediator, Jesus Christ. This means that salvation is provided only through Jesus in Christianity, and not through religious experience, natural revelation, through prophets alone, or through all the religions of the world. Conceivably, this is why Nash (Fackre, 1999:114) argues that the inclusivists' views with regard to the Gospel of Christ are deficient in theological content, and remove faith in Christ from the Gospel altogether. The logical fallacy in the inclusivists' view is pointed out simply by referencing John 14:6, which says: "...No one comes to the Father except through Christ."

In relation to the above analysis, Hedges (2010:23) argues that Knitter's characterisation of the inclusivist approach as the 'fulfilled' paradigm is compelling. Hence, he contends that other religions are fulfilled and find their completion and perfection in Christianity. Hedges further illustrates his argument, citing the example of the centurion's faith in Luke 7:9 and Matthew 8:10, and the preaching of Saint Paul on the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:22ff), where he suggests that the altar to "an unknown God is a sign that the religion of the Greeks pointed towards Christianity...", thereby concluding by describing inclusivism as the mainstream Christian option.

The story of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion (Acts 9) informs that he (Saul) had more or less passed every criterion of the inclusivist's faith principles. It appears that he not only believed in the "faith principle" (Cf. Section 3.5.1), or believed God exists, but also diligently sought God. Nash (1994:174-175) points out that Saul was a Jew who sought Yahweh with commitment and zeal, so much so that he participated in the persecution and murder of God's enemies (Acts 22:20). The argument here is that, if inclusivism is true, then Saul of Tarsus was already saved. However, as Paul the Apostle says of his own pre-conversion state in Philippians 3:4-11, there clearly was a desperate need for faith in Christ to complete his salvation.

Therefore, it is a helpful contribution when D’Costa (1992:18) said: “We cannot, as Christians, speak of the Father without the story of Jesus ... We cannot divorce our understanding of God from the story of Jesus and rend asunder the Universal and particular”. Thus, the love of God and the uniqueness of Jesus form the inclusivists’ theology of God, who is seeking to save the lost everywhere while respecting their right to refuse salvation. This conclusion agrees with the implication of mission as prophetic dialogue.

### **3.3.1.3 Sociological and Missiological Dimension**

In an age of religious legitimacy and political conflict, where religion is an excuse for violence surrounding matters of nationalism or socio-economic alienation in places like Nigeria, how religions relate to each other is important. Egan (2014:44) observes it well when Lotter says the church can and does play a significant role in relation to the challenges of poverty. Egan describe poverty thus;

As an evaluative concept used by human societies to set minimum standards for those aspects of lifestyles acquirable through human capacities or resources to participate in social activity, second, lack actual resources; third, occupy low and un-influential positions in society, fourth, perform menial unworthy tasks in society, or fifth, make little or no contribution to society as a result.

Egan (2014:44, citing Lotter) further elaborates that poverty can be a vicious circle. People will be too poor and will lack access to skills to get them out of poverty. In trying to distinguish between extreme poverty and intermediate poverty, he argues that “extremely poor people are as a result of poverty excluded from accessing skills, knowledge and the where of how to better themselves. Certainly, this leads to a kind of social illiteracy that creates a circle. On the other hand, intermediate poverty occurs when people, although poor, have basic economic capacity to participate in the broader society: although they barely survive. This is to say – this level of poverty is a privation and a disease, since it excludes not only the poor, but all too often their descendants. Poverty is a trap that generates humiliation, powerlessness and ultimately leads to social exclusion.

Simultaneously, Knitter (2002:136-137) makes a valid point when he says that there is one reality this world is confronted with, and it is identifiable – “One religious fact”, “really real”. Knitter (2002:136-137) admits that

“There is a tremendous amount of suffering in our world today. If there is not more of it than there ever was, we seem to be more aware of it. Also, it seems to be more threatening or

unsettling than ever before. We're talking, first of all, of human suffering. The pains that afflict millions of people today take on a variety of different but interrelated faces.

In essence, the suffering of the humankind includes poverty, victimisation, violence and patriarchy. Hence, Knitter (2002:130) suggests the need for working together to fight this common suffering.

It is interesting that, scholarship has provided that, inclusivists are both gracious and conceivable when it comes to the issue of social concern, and the essential unity of humankind. Hence, inclusivism opens much more room for religious freedom and interreligious dialogue. Perhaps the call of Pope John Paul II, in his speech at Assisi, Italy in October 1986, is appropriate when he inquires after respect for one's personal conscience, rejecting all form of coercion or discrimination with regard to faith, freedom to practice one's own religion. Therefore, with humility, witness can be done as well as appreciation and esteeming for all genuine traditions. This appeal allows for the practice of mission among the people.

As regards the missiological dimension, it is helpful to understand the inclusivists' position with regard to salvation. Firstly, Jesus is the final and decisive revelation of God; hence He is the unique, exclusive, particular, ultimate and matchless revelation and effecter of salvation. Salvation is solemnly attained by the work of Christ and the grace of God. Secondly, God is a serious lover of humanity who extends his grace and an opportunity for salvation to all. God's love is a mystery, because it is greater than possibly thought. God cares for those whom we often deem unlovable. Therefore, according to Pinnock (1992:112), what matters to God are faith and not theology, trust and not prevailing attitude? The question is how much faith? As stated in Matthew 17:20 and Luke 17:6, the amount of faith to be accepted into the presence of God needs only be a little. Faith, the size of a mustard seed is said to 'move mountains' or 'uproot trees'.

In fact, salvation is spoken of in the Scriptures as being multifaceted. For example, in Luke and Acts it is interpreted as rescue, healing, delivery or keeping safe. The question that needs to be addressed is, 'what is the essence of mission?' In the Old Testament, deliverance is the primary salvific theme and it appears over and over as God delivered Israel. In the New Testament, the kingdom of God is imminent/at hand; and the gospel is a message much bigger than deliverance from hell. Therefore, salvation is about the truth of the Christian message. It is also about giving all people an opportunity to be blessed and to be enriched by the saving knowledge of Christ. This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

When Pinnock (1995:205) stresses that exclusivists claim that they do not only deny the necessity of evangelising those who have not heard the gospel, he also argues that they also hold out the possibility that many who have actually rejected the gospel after hearing it may still end up being saved. To the exclusivists, inclusivists have lost the drive for the mission of sharing God's message to effect and change the world for Christ. But inclusivists do take a strong stance on Christian mission, in which they claim that mission is more than simply keeping the un-evangelised from going to hell; hence salvation is a much richer performance than that. This is why Sanders (1995:54) says,

Jesus commands us to go (Mt. 28:18-20). Second, we who have experienced the love of God in the Son through the Spirit should desire to share the blessing of the Christian life with those who are ignorant of it. Third, there are, of course, people who are not believers in God, and they need to hear of Christ so that they may come to know the love of God. Finally, even though un-evangelized believers will be given eternal life on the basis of Christ's work, God wants them to experience the fullness of life that came at Pentecost.

In view of the above argument, Knitter (2002:103) points out that, for Christians, proclamation is a non-negotiable. Hence, trying to describe as broadly as possible how Jesus is non-negotiable, we note three Christian convictions about him, thus:

Firstly, in Jesus, God has done something very special something that has not been done, and will not be done, elsewhere. Secondly, because of this something special, Jesus may have a lot in common with other religious figures, but he will always remain different, irreducibly different. And thirdly, the something special that God has done in Jesus is important-very important-not just for all people.

Therefore, from the above argument it can be suggested that both pluralists and exclusivists tend to see salvation as one dimension of escaping from hell, or liberation from the self. But while this is important, the depth of mission for salvation cannot be limited to just one notion (Sanders, 1995:53-54). To an inclusivist, mission is not about providing a secret knowledge that will be the key that unlocks the door of heaven. Knowledge and truth are part of mission, perhaps the bulk of mission, but it is not knowledge of the truth that saves. God wants communion with all human persons, not just in the hereafter, but in the here and now. This is the truth we make known, this is the truth that God has revealed in Jesus Christ. This is the essence of mission as understood by Newbigin (1989:127) when he says:

The true meaning of the human story has been disclosed. Because it is the truth, it must be shared universally. It cannot be a private option. When we share it with all peoples, we give them the opportunity to know the truth about themselves, to know who they are because they can know the



true story of which their lives are a part. Whenever the gospel is preached the question of the meaning of the human story – the universal and the personal story of each human being is posed.

In understanding mission from the perspective of Newbigin, inclusivists believe what appears to be ecclesiocentrism is a problematic motivation for mission. Hence Newbigin (1989:168) argues that the belief that God cannot and will not save those outside of the church, or without the right knowledge of Jesus, and that we thus must take salvation to all the people, diminishes God's role in the saving act and even undermines the meaning of God as Saviour. Bosch (1991:9) says that mission is persuasion. If God is the primary 'agent' of mission, people are inactive or, vice versa, the more we recognise mission as God's work, the better we ourselves become involved in it.

Exclusivists condemn inclusivists for allowing many Christians to ignore the urgency of getting the gospel to the un-evangelised. Inclusivism maintains a tension between God's desire for all to come to salvation and the teaching that Jesus is the only means to salvation. They also keep up tension between the imminence and transcendence of God, the humanity and divinity of Christ, the oneness and trinity of God, the church universal and the church local, universal and particular, and tension between the believer and Christian allows the inclusivist to maintain the church as God's body while also extending salvation beyond its walls.

The inclusivist understands the universality of the Spirit, allows for a tension to exist between the proclamation of the message of Christ and a genuine and open dialogue. If all truth is God's truth, and if Christianity does not have every answer, then it is worth listening, as well as speaking (Bevans & Schroeder, 2012:95cf). Besides, in his response to Christian theology, Bosch (1991:489) acknowledges Kung's subdivision into four fundamental positions as helpful for our present purposes:

Such language "We appreciate this tension, and do not attempt to resolve it" – JNJK boils down to an admission that we do not have all the answers and are prepared to live within the framework of penultimate knowledge, that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding.

Inclusivists believe that we can move the gospel into all parts of the world, sharing the good news of Christ while resting on the truth that it is God who brings eschatological salvation and not his workers. From the entire argument it can be concluded that the inclusivists respect the tension in the call to mission, and their approach respects the message and the dialogue partner. They have been given the

subtitle of salvific optimism, for it maintains hopefulness that God will make his salvation available to an extensive audience, and that the world's great religions might be his wide and profound salvific will, which the researcher concludes that this paradigm merely tolerates. But in contrast to inclusivism, exclusivism might be considered.

### **3.3.2 Exclusivism**

Exclusivism as a theological position esteems the Christian faith in Christ as the final answer, and holds that the opposite of this belief is damnation. This appears to be an extreme position when compared with the pluralist, who believes that the entire world's religions are true. The inclusivist holds that one religion is true, but there is also truth in other religions. In this section I discuss the foundational, biblical/theological, and social and missiological dimensions of exclusivism.

#### ***3.3.2.1 Foundational Dimension of Exclusivism***

Exclusivism is a theological position that holds on to the conclusiveness of the Christian faith in Christ, consequently instituting the distinctiveness and identity of Christianity among world religions. Therefore, exclusivism is a term that holds very strongly that penitence and belief, and the preaching of the Gospel, are indispensable for salvation, thus suggesting that salvation is solely dependent upon the hearing of the gospel and a conscious acceptance of it. For the exclusivist, all persons who have not heard, understood and positively responded to the gospel message are pessimistic about God, using the non-Christian as a vehicle for religious truth.

Hedges (2010:20) explain that exclusivism is the range of beliefs that say only Christianity leads to salvation and that, generally, anyone who holds on to another religion must therefore be going to damnation. Admitting, Christianity as the only true religion, the exclusivist (Knitter, 2002:22-23) said,

For all of those Christians, the Bible is the rock-bottom guide to all that a follower of Jesus does and claims ... all of these believers hold that their Christian lives must be more than a verbal "I believe" in the Bible or in what the Bible says ... so it is Jesus who makes all the difference in their lives- and in the life of the world...because of the wonder and power of what they have found in Jesus the Christ, these Christians are committed to sharing with others the gift they have been given. They want others to see and feel what they have seen and felt. That means they do want to convert the world, not because they feel superior to others but because gifts are to be shared.

The exclusivist declares the Bible as the source of all knowledge about spirituality and salvation, therefore it must be told to others. Bible is the criterion for all religious truth. Hence, according to Knitter (1985:98), the Bible relates the history of redemption, it gives a foundation to personal faith, it is a guidebook for the Christian community, and it also speaks about the future of the world that links up all of history, life and service with meaning and purpose. More precisely, exclusivists argue that all religious truth concerning God and his ways is known exclusively through the teachings of Christianity, and also believes that all religious truth is vested in the teachings of Christianity and that Jesus is the one and only revelation of God. Exclusivists argue on the finality of the Christian truth with regard to salvation of the souls of humankind after life here on earth; in other words, none can be saved after life here on earth. Salvation is achievable only to those who have heard this truth and have made a positive response to it. Thus, according to Holtzen (2005:6), the Christian exclusivist has:

Threefold argument: an ontological argument which states that Christianity is ultimately the one and only true religion, secondly, a soteriological argument which states that salvation is accomplished solely through the work and sacrifice of God in the person of Jesus Christ, and thirdly, an epistemic argument which holds that salvation is limited to those who have meaningfully responded to this truth.

In view of the above argument, Christianity is the ultimate and salvation is accomplished and found only by those who accept it. Hedges (2010:20) describe it simple as ‘in’ or ‘out’. Taringa (2007:186) admitted that this paradigm “fosters monologue rather than a dialogue”. Citing Knitter (1995:4), Taringa also argues that this “model has an inclination to convert the other into one’s own religion”. This is why Netland (1991:34) argues that “exclusivism has for many people undesirable connotations of narrow-mindedness, arrogance, insensitivity to others, self-righteousness and bigotry”.

This means that the exclusivist identity of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or and ‘saved’ and ‘unsaved’ should be regarded as one of the biggest stumbling blocks to establishing stable and harmonious relations in a society. Hence, exclusivist identities seem to be constructed in opposition and, in the worst cases, against the “Other”. In other words, “exclusivist” identification represents the process of creating a national identity in opposition to the “Other”. The negative consequences of this might certainly be dividing people into “Us” and “Them,” “insiders” and “outsiders,” “saved” and “unsaved” (Cf. Section 2:2). Taringa (2007:186) argues that cooperation in this kind of encounter may be difficult among different religions. Perhaps this is why people holding onto these types of religious ideas in Northern Nigeria go so far as to suggest the zeal to eliminate other religions and propagate their own as the only true one.

Unlike the inclusivists, the exclusivists claim the understanding of the biblical revelation more pragmatically. To exclusivists, the philosophical and theological debates with regard to no salvation outside of Jesus Christ are secondary matters. This is a dominant position in the conservative evangelical circle, such as the Free Churches. According to Karkkainen (2003:135, 138), churches with Congregationalist church constitutions are those such as the Anabaptists, Quakers, Baptist, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) (of which the researcher is a member), Pentecostals, Charismatic's, Anglicans and their branches, as well as some sects in Islam in Northern Nigeria. These churches affirm a consistent separation of the church and state, and can be referred to as the heritage of the radical Reformation. Many of these churches generally believe that the ultimate truth has been revealed in Christ; many do not assume that other religions know nothing about it at all, but the major motives of their openness are Christological love, sharing and embrace, rather than intimidation and oppression of others.

Simultaneous to the aforementioned explanation, some of these churches certainly stand by the position that witnessing to Christ amongst humankind is a directive by which we are to be saved (Acts 4:12). In fact, according to Young (2000:185-187) churches like the Pentecostals adopt a very restricted stance towards other religions and have discouraged openness towards others as a result of their approach to biblical interpretation. Similarly, Hedges (2010:21) when describing varying concern about the nature of other religions, argues that they "...are satanic perversions, perverse systems of deceit to keep people from true faith". Consequently, these churches may be called the Evangelical movement. In other words, they are an orthodox version of Christianity, as opposed to the liberal form. Their position is an affirmation of the central Evangelical principles, famous for the authority of the Scriptures, the centrality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the need for personal experience of His saving power, and the need for Christian witness to the world.

### **3.3.2.2 Biblical and Theological Dimension of Exclusivism**

What is the motivation behind the exclusivist categorisation of other religions? On what basis are the exclusivists holding to their position of being exclusivist? Nash (1995:107) argues that biblical texts are an essential part of the evangelical's belief system, even though, according to Sproul (1978:19-20), it has been a subject of criticism for not being reliable. This criticism left the integrity of the Bible's trustworthiness seriously in doubt. Yet it is suggested that the Bible appealed not only to the exclusivists because of its support for their theological claims. Therefore, Christianity, unlike any other faith, offers

criteria by which its truth claims can be evaluated, and that can be done through the Bible. As such, with the provision of a few scriptural references, the claims of the exclusivists can be argued.

In view of the conceptual understanding of the word ‘exclusivism’ (Cf. Section 3.3.2), why will God impose such a strict standard of salvation for humankind if He (God) desires all to be saved? Since the exclusivists profess limited access to God’s grace, criticism is often levelled at the exclusivists as being intolerant, narrow minded or arrogant. When this criticism about the position of the exclusivist in relations to salvific plan of God was posed to Zacharias, his reaction was that exclusivistic teachings are not limited to Christianity alone, but are also evident in most religions today. Zacharias (2000:148-151) affirms that “Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs both maintain some form of exclusivism”.

What Zacharias is saying is not unusual for a religion to claim a “God-given right” to special religious truth? Zacharias associates the truth with being restricted and exclusive, for scientific truth is exclusive and does not wait for a vote. Perhaps this might be the reason why Nash (1994:54) devoted an entire chapter of his book, titled: *Is Jesus the only Saviour?* In this chapter, Nash maintains that religious truth is no different to any other truth and rests upon laws such as the “excluded middle” and “non-contradiction”. Nash added that, if anyone would become a pluralist, he or she “must first abandon the very principles of logic that make all significant thought, action, and communication possible” (Nash, 1994:54). In other words, Nash rejects the notion that religious truth is more existential and subjective than propositional and objective. Therefore, considering the position of Nash, Graig and other advocates of exclusivism, the first reason why God would make Christianity exclusive is not out of intolerance or narrow mindedness, but because truth is exclusive. However, the challenge of what truth is remains.

As to the infallibility of the Bible, considering Sproul’s (1978:19-20) argument that, if the Bible were universally regarded as an authoritarian source of religious truth, many of the questions encountered today would easily be resolved. But since the exclusivists’ position on God’s revelation is in the Bible, then belief in the infallible and inerrancy of the Bible is unavoidable, hence salvation is limited to people who have the right knowledge of Jesus Christ. Sproul further maintains that, if God clearly reveals His glory, and that glory is replaced by the worship of creatures, the ensuing religion is not pleasing but displeasing to God (Sproul, 1978:54-55). Therefore, to portray God as tolerant of all form of worship is to deny the God of scripture. If we believe the Bible, we cannot admit that other religions might be true as well.

John 14:6 is one of the popular passages that the exclusivists depend upon for their position. This is a verse in which Jesus responds to Thomas question of how the disciples are to know the way: “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’.” The argument here is about Jesus’ claims to be the one and only way available for anyone to obtain salvation. According to Sproul (1978:49) and Nash (1995:16), Jesus uses a universal negative proposition when he says, “No one comes to the Father except through me”. Otherwise, there is a condition that must be met before there is a result.

Another biblical passage is Acts 4:12. The context of this biblical passage has to do with Peter and John standing before the Sanhedrin to justify themselves after healing a lame beggar. In the course of their defence, they exhort, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved”. The emphasis here is that salvation is not found in any mortals (religious leaders), but in Jesus’ name alone, which implies the need for some knowledge. With regards to these passages of Acts 4:12 and John 14:6, Greivett and Phillips (1996:235) argue that the exclusivist does wish to add extra meaning to these verses.

Hence, Greivett and Phillips (1996:235) are emphasising that it is not enough for these passages to boldly say that Jesus is the way of salvation and wholeness, but must also say that Jesus is the effecter of salvation if one has the right knowledge and a proper response. They further argue that no inclusivist denies that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Neither do they deny that Jesus’ name is the power unto salvation. What the inclusivists questioned regarding the exclusivist use of these passages is the emphasis upon the epistemological and ontological aspect of salvation. This reaction appears to suggest that, for salvation to be attained there has to be an understanding of the message and a proper response to it.

Another Biblical passage is Romans 10:9-15, for which Greivett and Phillips (1996:235) argue that “To be saved, a specific confession has to be made, and a specific set of truths must be believed”. If this is the case, therefore, those truths must be learned from others who go out and spread the gospel. However, it can be argue that hearing is the prerequisite for believing the gospel, and believing is a prerequisite for being saved. In view of the above argument, conclusion can be drowned by admitting the Apostle Paul’s who emphasizes on the urgency of missions, more especially, when looking closer at the initial chapters in Romans. Paul emphasizes that “all humankind without exception are guilty sinners and therefore deserve objects of God’s wrath”.

Therefore, Romans 10:9-15 seems to be Paul's concluding part of his strong appeal for a missionary calling, which is believed to be an opportunity for dialogue. Yet Greivett and Phillips (1996:234-235) observe that it is "difficult to account for the evangelistic mandate" from this passage, hence, "for the suffering of God's witnesses are called upon to endure, on the assumption that the un-evangelised do not need to hear in order to be saved". This appears to be a compelling issue, for if God can and will save "Other (s)" outside the hearing of the gospel, then those who give their lives to missionary work have to consider what is at stake. John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 therefore emphasise Jesus as the way of salvation and wholeness, but he is the effecter of salvation if one has the right knowledge and a proper response.

One other relevant biblical passage is Romans 10:9-10, which clearly declares: "If you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believes in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved." Therefore, according to Graig (2000:38cf), "The Bible makes it clear that human sin is universal and all persons stand morally guilty and condemned before God, completely incapable of redeeming themselves through righteous acts". Graig adds that God, as a loving Father, provided the Christ-event as a necessary means for men to be saved. In other words, to reject Jesus as the sole saviour is to reject God's grace, forgiveness and salvation.

Consequently, this informs all humankind that the mind of God is clear enough when Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). All in all, Greivett and Phillips, upon Paul's statement, support the view that, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation".

In view of this, the exclusivists base their argument on the theological ground that the restrictiveness of salvation is through Jesus Christ alone. The question that still needs to be answered is, "Why would God place a standard of salvation according to John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Romans 10:9 & 19 and I Timothy 2:5-6, if he desires salvation for all humankind in a world of diverse religions?" Going by the restrictiveness of the exclusivists, this position can be argued as being narrow-minded, arrogant and intolerant (Cf. Section 3.4.1). Incidentally, Sproul (1978:43-49), Nash (1995:54-55) and Strobel (2000:150) each argue that, God cannot save everybody, because not everybody will willingly believe in His saving power, which portrays the misuse of humankind's free will give to it by its creator, therefore suggesting mission as prophetic dialogue.

### **3.3.2.3 Sociological and Missiological Dimension**

Social concern about the exclusivists seems to be controversial, hence their discrimination in terms of those who are saved and the unsaved. Onunwa (1995:7) argues that the exclusivists' religious exclusion of others is seen as the by-product of pride. Similarly, Egan (2014:48) argues that the extreme rigidity of the exclusivist position as to the means of salvation promotes exclusion. Therefore, the faithful remnant now becomes like a cult. Egan (Ibid:48) added that both positions might be contending once the church moves away from the religious response to poverty by way of promoting social inclusion. Hence, the theoretical ground becomes slippery. In other words, "if religions are to maintain their own integrity, how far can they be agencies of social inclusion?"

According to Mendonsa (2006:23), the exclusivists argue that the Old Testament records God's dealings with Israel that reveals God's nationhood of Israel. Thus, Israel's attitudes are revealed in her interaction with non-Jews. In fact, the reference to "the God of Israel" appears to us in Genesis 33:20 – "El-Elo'he-Israel", God, and the God of Israel. In addition, in the course of liberating Israel from Egypt, the reference to "the God of Israel" is mentioned as in opposition to foreigners. Thus the Lord, God of Israel, says "Let my people go, that they hold a feast to me in the wilderness" (Exodus 5:1).

In view of the above argument, Israel stood in a special relationship with God, a relationship that resulted from the image of choice (Deuteronomy 7:7). The tradition that God chose Israel is in fact present in the form itself, that "Yahweh the God of Israel". Israel is chosen by God and therefore He makes a covenant with Israel (Deuteronomy 5:2). Israel became God's own people, chosen by God and brought into a covenantal relationship with God, which made Israel into a "people holy to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 7:6). On the other hand, Mendonsa (2006:199), citing the world mission conference, provides helpful argument when he says,

The success of the church was measured in terms of non-Christians baptized. And Christian mission has to do with orphanages, hospitals, dispensaries, homes for the widows and the aged, leper asylums, schools for the blind and the deaf. The mission conducted hostels, technical, agricultural and industrial schools. Mission has brought to the people a great human awareness.

The above quotation is a description of the exclusivists' position and provides that the proclamation of the gospel can result in great fruit and the expansion of the church, but also can confront many challenges of



life, like the social, political, religious and cultural system of each place. The next sub-section discussed the missiological level.

With respect to the restrictive position of the exclusivists, this emphasises that Jesus Christ is the one and only way to be saved necessitates inter-religious dialogue. Thus according to Sproul (1999:50), “Salvation is the ultimate eschatological rescue from sin and its consequences, the final state of safety and glory to which we are brought in both body and soul”. Therefore, mission becomes a necessity. Perhaps this is the reason why Bevans and Schroeder (2004:357) argue that proclamation is the communication of the Gospel message, the mystery of salvation realised by God for all in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit. In view of this, Knitter (2002:23ff) refers to this kind of mission as the “total replacement model”, hence only Christianity is true and contains the knowledge necessary for salvation and, because all other religions are idolater’s attempts to save one, the end goal is to replace the other religions of the world with the one true religion, which is Christianity. Understanding this keeps the church motivated in carrying the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Going by the above statement, Nash (1994:54) argues that the missionary must assure that all are lost; otherwise why go to such lengths and great personal sacrifice to preach if one can be saved by his own sincerity or post-mortem evangelism? At this point, Nash offers this scenario, but notice what happens to many of these people when a missionary, at great personal sacrifice, leaves home and family to bring the gospel to their village. If then they hear but refuse to believe, the primary consequence is to assure their condemnation. If the missionary had stayed away and continued to enjoy the comfort of his/her home, the eternal hope of the un-evangelised would never have been jeopardised. Therefore, according to Sproul (1999:50), the exclusivist places the focus of mission upon the conversion of other people in order that they might be saved from hell. He says:

What a dreadful conclusion is this!...Not less than six hundred millions are heathens...A mighty stream is ever pouring them over the boundaries of time, and when once they have passed these boundaries, where do they fall? Alas! They fall to raise no more...Now these are not fictions, but facts-facts fully established by scriptures... Here is a broad current rushing downward from the heathen world into the lake which burneth with unquenchable fire, on which hundreds of millions of immortal beings are descending, and by which thousands upon thousands are every day destroy.

What a meaningful illustration, depicting a powerful call for mission. From the above analysis, exclusivism has made a history and is theologically accepted in the conservative evangelical church. It

has also been established that God has revealed Himself to the world in the person of Jesus Christ, and that salvation is found in no other name but the name of Jesus Christ to those who believe and confess the proper truth provided through dialogue (2 Peter 3:9). The accessibility of God's salvation and prejudice are suggested to be the greatest weaknesses of this theological position.

Sanders (1992:61-62) argues that it is either that God does not actually desire all persons to be saved and therefore unilaterally elects a few to salvation and a multitude to damnation; or that God does desire all persons to be saved, but their salvation is impossible without the right belief on the part of the hearers. For anyone to be saved, according to exclusivism, he/she must acknowledge a proper understanding of whom and what Jesus Christ is. This position has undermined the biblical account of those who demonstrate authentic faith with limited knowledge. Sanders (1992:61-62) adds that the position of the exclusivists emphasises God's incomparable expression of Himself in Jesus Christ and rightfully maintains that Jesus is unique amongst history's religious leaders, but it fails to emphasise God's effectual love for all human persons.

At this point I concur with scholars who argue that exclusivity is logically required for clarity of identity, and that clarity of identity is a necessary prerequisite for dialogical engagement. On the other hand, when taken to the extreme, exclusivity of identity militates against any sort of dialogical relationship by becoming exclusionary, and this is a characteristic of extreme religious fundamentalism. McCarthy (1998:100), when describing the strength of exclusivism, points out a weakness though strength, namely that the extreme position of the exclusivist brings undeniable liabilities to interfaith cooperative efforts. This suggests that Christian exclusivism remains associated with a pre-modern Christian worldview whose viability for interreligious collaboration is highly dubious.

In view of this, evangelism is a mandate for the exclusivists, hence, to them, the revelation of Christ is very important (John 14:6, "Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me," NAS; Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved", NAS). The exclusivist are supposed to have no room for the dialectical evaluation of religions, and their position with regard to the centrality of the Scriptures in Christian life is a strength on their account, but if there is the desire to go beyond tolerance, then pluralism appears appealing.

### 3.3.3 Pluralism

Pluralism holds that there is truth in all religions. This is a popular view, hence it appears to be a lot easier compared to exclusivism and inclusivism, which believe salvation must be through one source, Jesus Christ. In this section, an explanation is provided for the foundational, theological/biblical dimension of pluralism, as well as the social and missiological dimension.

#### 3.3.3.1 *Foundational Dimension of Pluralism*

Hedges (2010:26) says that, of all the three paradigms, pluralism see the least barriers between religions. Therefore, it simply suggests that there is more than one legitimate way to salvation. Pluralism takes many shapes in relation to world religions and the theology of religion in essence. However, the pluralist position maintains that Christianity and Christ are just one among many revelations of the infinite God. The pluralists argue, what is it about Christianity that has granted them with such direct access to God more than the other(s)? They also argue that, if the fruits of the Spirit are evidence of the indwelling God, are not these fruit also found in the other religions? In any case, it would be flawed to suggest that truth is exclusive only to the Christian faith. It is in view of this argument that religious pluralism has long been a trait of Northern Nigerian society, but never to the extent as in recent years.

Osimen, Balogun and Adenegan (2013:79) point out that

Nigeria's large number of ethnic groups, inequalities among them in size, resource endowment, education and access to state power and resources, her highly developed and factionalized indigenous bourgeoisie, makes her ethnic situation the most complicated in Africa. The experience has been equally bad and sad... Today in Nigeria, there is serious rivalry among the ethnic groups over issues such as power and resource sharing formula. The status quo is being resisted by the minor ethnic groups especially in the Niger Delta region that produces the bulk of crude oil in the country which Nigeria depends today for most of its foreign exchange.

From the above quotation it appears obvious that Nigeria is a group of nations. The reason for this is complex, largely due to its pluralistic nature and that most of its regions/states, especially in the North, are not ready to accept the reality of being pluralistic. Henceforth, it might be contended that the great challenge facing the country today is the threat to national unity.

The word pluralism is a complex system of concepts and philosophy because of the variety of ways it has been understood. Hence, the phrase is bedevilled by variations and ambiguities in their use. However, in

this context, it is basically the belief that the world religions are all true and equally valid in their communication of the truth about God, the world and salvation. God has chosen to reveal Himself through all the major religions of the world.<sup>26</sup> The three bridges proposed by Knitter 2002:112-113) are: the philosophical-historical bridge, whereby religions are viewed as historically conditioned responses to the real. Secondly, the mystical bridge, which has to do with religious experience as it is expressed by different cultural and historical circumstances, suggesting conflicting truth claims. The third and last bridge is the practical-ethical bridge. This bridge views salvific liberation as the common goal and aspiration of all the religious traditions. This might be the reason why Netland (1991:213) says pluralism genuinely accepts other religions, while exclusivism and inclusivism do not. The affirmation, according to Taringa (2007:187), is that “we can be open to diverse ways of being human and recognize that there are diverse ways of being human and recognize that there are diverse possibilities for our own lives”.

Therefore, this encourages us to be positive to persons of other religions and to try to see the world from their point of view, even though we can never totally leave our own religious assumptions. The leading proponent of this view is John Hick, who first proposed this in his book, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (1973). Other people who hold this persuasion include Gabin D’Costa, as advocated in his book, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (1990), and Stanley J. Samartha, a leading theologian on the problem of religious dialogue and theology of religions in India, as well as in the Ecumenical Movement (1968 to 1971; 1971 to 1980).

Hick (1973) says that rather than seeing Christ at the centre of religion, God should be seen at the centre of religions. His argument is based on the universal salvific will of God. This means that God is the God of universal love, creator and father of all humankind, who wills the ultimate good and salvation of all humankind. Therefore there is nothing unique or normative about the person of Jesus. He is simply one of the many great religious leaders who have been used by God to provide salvation for humankind (Ataman, 2008:20; Netland, 1991:5-6).

Pluralism goes beyond inclusivism by rejecting that there is something normative or definitive about Christianity. Christian faith is merely one of many equally legitimate human responses to the same divine reality (Netland, 1991:5-6). Therefore, when the exclusivist is resolutely Christocentric, the pluralist is

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<sup>26</sup>Therefore, according to the pluralists, each of these manifestations of the will of God is equally valid and equally salvific.

comprehensibly theocentric. Knitter (2002:117) claims that, because of their history, the pluralists avoid the use of terms such as “Yahweh,” “Father,” and even the term “God.” Hick calls it “Ultimate reality”. In other words, pluralism believes that real (God) is ever present in all of the world’s great religions and is equally known in all these traditions.

As for the development of pluralism, scholars have argued that it has been faced with the challenge of competing with religions since the beginning of Christianity. For example, the church has faced challenges from the Jews, the rabbinical schools, the Greeks, the pagan Romans and the Gnostics. It took time for the church to be able to distinguish itself from the rest of the claims of other religions. According to Johnson (1990:347), pluralism was never a problem until the 16th century, after the discovery and colonisation of the ‘West Indies’ and ‘East Indies’, when Christian Europe truly began to struggle with other religions that were worlds apart.

The 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation sparked a new era, not only in Christianity, but also in the history of humankind in the Western world. Some of these encounters brought about reformation, but others war. It was not until the end of the 19th century, according to Johnson (1990:347-356), that a new understanding of the religious encounter emerged. Johnson further argues that the Christian religion never appeared as a restricted or absolute at any moment in history. It has always been a succession of religious movements loosely connected through historical times by enduring texts and institutions. However, at every stage, Christianity has been conditioned by the particular forces of its social environment. It was not one religion but many, each of which was wholly embedded in its own historical era. Therefore, Johnson’s statement above suggests that the Christian faith must be understood as simply one religion among numerous others. The question is what is the voice of the Bible and theologians in respect to pluralism?

### ***3.3.3.2 Biblical and Theological Dimension***

Accordingly, the Bible is a special revelation to the pluralist. Hick (1995a:33) argues about the Truth, God, Salvation and the Bible when he says, The Bible is a collection of documents written during a period of about a thousand years by different people in different historical and cultural situations. The writings are of a variety of kinds including court records, hymns, letters, dairy fragments, memories of the historical Jesus, faith created pictures of his religious significance, apocalyptic visions etc.

Hick believes that the Bible is a record of human experiences of religious significance, and not a rule for behaviour from God to humankind. As such, Hick also believes that Jesus was not God in any sort of incarnation way, but merely a man. He says that Jesus was unambiguously a man, but a man who was open to God's presence to a truly awesome extent and was sustained by an extraordinarily intense God-consciousness. Therefore, according to Hick's view, the availability of Jesus to God made him revolutionise the lives of many who met him. Hick and many pluralists contend that the incarnation of Jesus cannot be argued historically; hence, incarnation is but a myth. Perhaps this might be the reason why Newbigin (1989:196ff) contends that Hick fails to realise that, when something is historical, it cannot be a myth: "It is indeed true that the being of God is beyond comprehension by the human mind. But this does not mean that we are free to make our own images of God. Nor does it warrant the denial that God could have acted to make him known."

Radiance and the depth of the divine mystery are presented to us in the incarnation and the whole fact of Christ. It therefore is suggested that the pluralist should not be closed to the fact that a myth may hold some truth. This is helpful when Samartha (1987:79) says pluralistic Christian Christology must see beyond the myths of miracles and resurrection, and the metaphors of incarnation and trinity, and instead recognise that these notions are human inventions expressing a mystery too difficult to express in literal language. He further argues that Jesus is but one symbol of many in which we find a representation of the transcendent. Jesus is the revelation of the reality, but he is our revelation, our symbol in the greater marketplace of faith, he is *a* revelation but not *the* revelation. This is over and against the gods of other people. This is probably why Samartha (1987:79) says the claim that "Jesus Christ is God" limits opportunities for dialogue.

Pluralists suggest that truth is in every religion of the world. It is so much the issue of truth, but all religions are valid. Hick (1995a:78-79) claims that it is expressed through creeds, traditions, rituals and rites. Truth then is expressed in the various religions as a phenomenological expression of the nominal real or ultimate. Hick points out that the different world religions – each with its own sacred scriptures, spiritual practices, form of religious experience, belief systems, founders or great exemplars, communal memories, cultural expressions in ways of life, laws and customs, are form and so, taken together as complex historical totalities. These, constitute different human responses to the ultimate transcendent reality to which they all in their different ways bear witness. But Panikkar disagrees with Hick's idea of one or the real, because God is one and not many (Panikkar, cited in Knitter, 1981:129). Hick says further that reality is everything pluralistic, but has failed to realise that God is that reality which all the world

religions are seeking to know and experience. Hick (1995:43) argues that, on a whole, Christians are no more caring or loving than the followers of other religions, thus:

If we desire salvation as the actual human change, a gradual transformation from natural self-centeredness (with all the human evils that flow from this) to radically new orientation centred in God and manifest in the “fruit of the Spirit,” then it seems clear that salvation is taking place within all of the world religions and taking place, so far as we can tell, to more or less the same extent.

In view of the above argument, salvation is a worldwide phenomenon; it is no longer limited to one religion, but is demonstrated in all the world’s great religions. But Knitter sees Hick’s approach to salvation in a different way when he maintains that salvation is rather freedom here and now from socio-economic, nuclear and ecological oppression. Knitter further argues that, for this kind of liberation to happen in the world, religions must come together under a common banner. Knitter (1990:415) declares that the centre, starting point, or foundation for the meeting of religions would not be Christ (or Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad), nor God (or Brahman, Allah, Nirvana), but liberal: that is the shared concern for the suffering and welfare of humanity and the earth. In Christian terms, it would not be a Christ-centred or a God-centred, but a “salvation-centred” dialogue with other religions. By implication, therefore, Knitter is replacing hope in Jesus Christ or God for salvation with a shared praxis of liberation by the world religions.

In contrast , Hick (1995b:121) argues that Christian mission towards conversion should be considered an outdated belief that reaches its peak in the European colonisation of the third world, and that the focus rather must not seek to convert the dialogue partner, for this only produces alienation and enmity. What is the way out? Pluralists therefore de-emphasise the mission of evangelisation. In their opinion, the incarnation is mythological and not literal. They also neglect the confessional and proclamatory elements of dialogue, and regard mission as a social service or for mutual enrichment. Perhaps this is why, Taringa (2007:187) said, people should be encouraged towards a deeper experience within their own tradition and, at the same time, be open to dialogue with other traditions to allow for mission as prophetic dialogue.

### ***3.3.3.3 Sociological and Missiological Dimension***

The prominent concern of the pluralist theologies is to promote interreligious dialogue. Hence, it is rather seen from the perspective of a coming together of equals working together for a common cause, trying to

understand common concerns, taking common adventures. Perhaps this is why Knitter (1996:3, 15ff) argues, “There is much to be done in the world to eradicate poverty and injustice ... A Christian no more lives for Himself or herself alone but also for the other”. Knitter has demonstrated that the concern for the “suffering other” and for the “religious other” belong together. Heim (2003:74) further suggests that Christians are not to lose sight of the dimension of Christian presence in the world through a renewed concern for the “eco-human crisis”, since the presence of the kingdom was, from the inception of Jesus’ earthly ministry, an implication of God in the distress of humankind in the world. This leads me to the missiological dimension.

Missiologically, pluralists believe in salvation but reject the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his resurrection. Hick (1995:11-12) declares that salvation is not the atoning death of Jesus Christ, or being justified in God’s eyes, but is about the transformation of humankind. He further says, “Salvation is taking place within all of the religions, so far as we can tell, to more or less the same extent”. Therefore, for Hick, salvation cannot be limited to one religion. In other words, God’s justice and mercy will no longer be alienated from humanity; salvation can be found in all religions of the world. Henceforth, there is a need for a pluralistic approach to religious dialogue, but pluralism is simply one more religion with which to enter into dialogue, and this has implications for mission as prophetic dialogue. In view of the above analysis of the conceptual understanding of identity and religious conflict, which inform the contextual factors, the theology of religions and the implication of prophetic dialogue, how can this understanding be of assistance in addressing the identity issues and conflict in Northern Nigeria? Can there be any alternative?

### **3.4 Prophetic dialogue: an alternative**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction**

This section is presented in three parts: firstly, mission as prophetic dialogue in the inclusivist/ fulfilment model; secondly, mission as prophetic dialogue in the exclusivist/replacement model; and thirdly, mission as prophetic dialogue in the pluralistic/mutuality model. The section will conclude with a diagram providing a brief summary of the three typologies or paradigms.

As point of departure, prophetic dialogue is a term that denotes word and action. In other words, it can be the entire being of a human person. Mission carries the idea of the total commitment of a total person, to



the total of humanity and creation. This might be the reason why Bevans and Schroeder (2004) perceive mission as a multi-dimensional as in reconciliation, evangelism, healing, justice and earth keeping. Bosch (1991) also observes mission to be multi-dimensional.<sup>27</sup> Kritzinger (2008) sees mission as a transformation that is a communal venture using the praxis cycle: agency, spirituality, contextual understanding, ecclesial scrutiny, interpreting the tradition, discernment for action and reflexivity. The diversity in terms of ethnicity, culture, religion and educational background in Nigeria, and the outcome of different kinds of conflicts, motivated this section –“dialogue as an alternative to the complex Nigerian situation of constant interreligious encounters”.

### 3.4.2.1 Mission as Prophetic Dialogue and Inclusivism/Fulfilment Model

Kritzinger (2013:35-36), in his article titled *Mission in Prophetic Dialogue*, raises some issues that are helpful in his effort to describe the relationship between prophetic dialogue and mission. He pursues the question – do the thirteen (13) expressions<sup>28</sup> (Bosch, 2011:377ff) mean mission as prophetic dialogue in Bevans and Schroeder (2011:59-63)? Thus, mission as prophetic dialogue is mission as dialogue and mission as prophecy, as well as mission as prophetic dialogue and contextual theology. Kritzinger (2013:36) adds Prophetic dialogue as used by Bevans and Schroeder (2004, 2011) does not elevate two dimensions of mission (prophecy and dialogue) above other dimensions such as evangelism, liberation or contextualization. It describes the basic attitude which all dimensions of mission ought to be carried out. Bevans and Schroeder (2011:9-18, 156) invite their readers to a way of life in God’s mission.

This proposal proper by Kritzinger harmonises with this section, which is responding to the challenge of the varying approaches of theology of religions. Hence, the framework says mission is...*missio Dei*, which stand for motivation to do mission for God dialectically and prophetically. Kritzinger (2013:36) calls it, “Yes to humanity and a No to its disobedience”. Mission as...dimensions of God’s mission reveal broadness or inclusivity. God’s mission is what Bosch (2011:524) describes as a “multifaceted ministry, in respect to witness service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship,

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<sup>27</sup>Mission is church with others, *missio Dei*, mediating salvation, and quest for justice. It is also evangelisation, liberation, and common witness, ministry by the whole people of God, witness to people of other living faiths as well as theology and action in hope.

<sup>28</sup>Mission as evangelism, mission as common witness, mission as the church with others, mission as the search for justice, mission as liberation, mission as witness to people of other living faiths, mission as inculturation, mission as contextualisation, mission as *missio Dei*, mission as mediating salvation, mission as ministry by the whole people of God, mission as theology and mission as action in hope

church planting, contextualization, and much more". Similarly, Bevans and Schroeder identify six elements: witness and proclamation; liturgy, prayer and contemplation; justice, peace and the integrity of creation; dialogue with women and men of other faiths and ideologies; inculturation; and reconciliation.

Although the above illustrations concerning the responsibility of doing mission through dialogue seem to be broad, the idea is to take part. The mission is God's mission, not men. Because of his nature as triune God declaring to be communion God, the church has the privilege to be part of this plan. Bevans (1998:102-105) says *missio Dei* means that the communion of giving and receiving love overflows into the entire cosmos of God, created out of sheer grace, and calls it into communion with God Himself.

According to Coleman (2007:10-11), dialogue within the inclusivist position is sometimes mistakenly seen to be so broad that it would exclude any preaching of the gospel, any attempt to convert or evangelise. Hence, if God, Christ and Spirit are already somewhere at work among Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews –why would we want to preach the gospel to them? This argument makes sense because, according to the inclusivists, every religion is equally true as the pathway to God/gods, absolution or salvation. Where the inclusivists excel in comparison to the exclusivists is in the area of considering other religious traditions in a more positive light as products of divine revelation. But according to Abdool and his co-authors (2007:550, citing Van der Ven, 2004:40), dialogue in the case of inclusivists is an intentional effort.

Besides, the difference between the form of inclusivism and exclusivism is only one degree. Abdool and his co-authors (2007:550) says

In terms of this version, non-Christian faiths would for example be regarded as containing partial or preliminary aspects of Christian truth, and every non-Christian believer as an anonymous Christian. The early church fathers Origen and Clement of Alexandria as well Augustine were exponents of this view that has since been rejected by many Christians.

This form of inclusivism that expresses the notion that conversation partners have partial truth might be offensive to the dialogue partner. This also is not an accepted position in terms of dialogue with others. On a general note, inclusivists can be accepted, according to Michaud (2008:13), since they are considered to be a persuasion that perpetually throws out dialogue and comparative study. Thus, fuels the never-ending work of theology to promote pious humility, simultaneously rooted in a deep commitment to the truth, goodness and beauty of Christianity and radically open to the possibility of truths.

### 3.4.2.2 Mission as Prophetic Dialogue and Exclusivism/Replacement Model

Exclusivism or the replacement model, stands for the “in” or “out” option according to Hedges (2010:20), and insists on the ontological necessity of Christ for salvation. They do not agree on the epistemological necessity of Christ for salvation, but on the necessity of making a conscious decision for Christ (Michaud, 2008:4). The replacement model is still common among the fundamentalist and conservative evangelical Christians. From this position one may conclude that the exclusivist may not have an open door for dialogue. Hence, their position is either you are “in” or “out”. In fact, they see other religions as satanic perversions, perverse systems of deceit to keep people from the true faith (Hedges, 2010:21). In other words, this position of the exclusivist might lead to dialogue.

In addition to the above description of the exclusivist’s position, Michaud (2008:5) says exclusivists undeniably hold onto their biblical message and church tradition, its acknowledgement of the reality of evil, the consequences of the fall of man, its faithful insistence on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as witnessed in the earliest Christian documents, and its sensitivity to the demonic, idolatrous aspects of human religiosity. From the above description, dialogue appears to be evident. But Abdool and his co-authors (2007:549, citing Erickson, 2001:307ff), observed exclusivists as saying that dialogue with believers of other religions will be limited to witnessing about the truth of one’s own religion. Therefore, no tailoring of one’s religious message is necessary for particular circumstances or time. For the exclusivist, the necessity is to proclaim the lasting message of the gospel. Hence, there is no real dialogue or dialectic between the giver of the gospel and the receiver.

Moreover, with this perception of the position of the exclusivist, which appears not to be conducive to the establishment of an inter-religious dialogue with believers of another faith, it might be helpful to understand that the stance of the exclusivists may not necessarily lead to intolerance. Abdool and his co-authors (2007:549) argue that the exclusivists’ approach is typical of the work of mother Theresa, who won the Nobel peace prize despite being an astute believer in the Roman Catholic faith. Similarly, no one can accuse Albert Schweitzer and Mahatma Gandhi of being intolerant (Abdool and his co-authors, 2007:549).

### 3.4.2.3 Mission as Prophetic Dialogue and Pluralism/Mutuality Model

The pluralist's believe that all religions are equal and that each in its own way is a legitimate response to the experience of the real. Abdool and co-authors (2007:551) observe that, since every religion does seem to have a deep spiritual base or level, an inter-religious dialogue is in principle possible among the adherents of all religions.

Kritzinger (2013:38) sees dialogue in the pluralistic or mutuality model as an avenue for a transformative encounter. This is an encounter that is critical, according to Kritzinger (2013:38), because competition, partnership, hostility and dialogue are involved. This might be the reason why Abdool and co-authors (2007:551) say that the dialogical pluralist becomes involve in dialogue to understand the tenet of other religions in terms of the other's preconceptions. In fact, they go beyond the mere impartial recognition of religious pluralism by urging religious believers to engage in dialogue with one another and to find out in what respects the various religious traditions differ, what they share and what they can learn from each other (Abdool et' al., 2007:551).

The motivation for the conceptual understanding of the theology of religions, multiple identities and conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, is the pervasive and detrimental impacts it has brought to the socio-economic, political and national security in the country. More so for the last few decades, the government has used military intervention and judicial methods in addressing these forms of violence, with no much result, for the reasons given below (Omorogbe& Omohan, 2005:556, 577; Salawu, 2010:350-351):

The problem with the deployment of security forces that are not backed by intensive mediation effort is that it necessarily prolongs the stay of such security forces deployed in different parts of Nigeria. This is because the units of mobile police or armies frequently deployed to quell disturbances in Nigeria have neither the mandate nor the training to act as conflict facilitator.

In trying to deal with crisis situations in Nigeria, the deployment of troops does not seem to be working for the following reasons: The nature of the military and their nonchalant attitude, the lack of discipline, negligence, total disregard for human lives and sometimes taking sides in carrying out their duties. Similarly, the judicial method has failed to address the conflicting situation in Northern Nigeria. It has failed because the selection of the judicial commission members is contended to be based on sentiments and the interest of a particular group of people and, above all, the reports of the commission/panel have

hardly been looked at by the government (Omohan & Omorogbe 2005:556). In fact, according to Salawu (2010:350-351), it is assumed that commissions such as these are another way of siphoning money from the government by corrupt government officials.

Other reasons for the inefficiency of the two methods [coercive and judicial] include a lack of sending troops to the scene of the crisis on time, and the delay or even non-implementation of a White Paper or recommendations submitted to the government by the panel of inquiry. These reasons suggest that the two methods of conflict management constantly used by the Nigerian government at different times have yielded little success in effectively solving the menace of inter-religious and related conflicts. It is on the basis of these discussions that the researcher suggests the use of inter-religious dialogue to provide an opportunity for Christians and Muslims to understand each other, which might result in mutuality and peaceful coexistence, especially when considering the impact of contextual factors that are influencing the inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria.

Reflecting on the previous argument concerning the religious and contextual factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue in chapter two, the researcher argues that the people of Northern Nigeria need to understand that 'faith' is a personal decision professed by an individual out of a conviction of the object of worship. Therefore, there is the need for both the Christians and Muslims of Northern Nigeria to consider the necessity of dialogue. Mohammed (2008:3-5), in his book *Muslim-Christian Dialogue Relations: Past, Present, Future*, argues that:

Together, Christians and Muslims encompass nearly half of the world's population ... From a pragmatic point of view, the pressing issues facing our increasingly interdependent world should stimulate all Christians to review and reconsider their understanding of Islam and relations with Muslims.

This is an attempt to reflect on the obstacles and opportunities facing contemporary Christian-Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria. The church in Northern Nigeria needs to understand the followers of other religions as they seek to address the issue of human persons' identity and peaceful coexistence, and must also understand that, just as every Christian has the missionary duty as a normal expression of their faith, so too every follower of Christ, by reason of their Christian vocation, is called to live dialogue in their daily life. Pope John Paul II suggested that:

No one can fail to see the importance and the need which interreligious dialogue assumes for all religions and all believers, called today more than ever to collaborate so that every person can

reach their transcendent goal and realize their authentic growth and to help cultures preserve their own religious and spiritual values in the presence of rapid social change (Pope John Paul II, *Bulletin Secretarius pro non-Christianis* 1984, XIX/I 19).

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the need to understand multiple identities and encounters in the theology of religion between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria so as to suggest prophetic dialogue as the way forward. Its focus was on the understanding of the concept of theology of religion, the three theological paradigms, namely exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism, and their relationship one to the other. Below is a table that demonstrates the three paradigms, representing some of their weaknesses and strengths.

**Table 2: Summary of the three paradigms and their beliefs**

SCHOOL OF THOUGHT	SUMMARY OF THE BELIEFS
<b>Pluralism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God has revealed Himself in all the religious traditions.</li> <li>• Jesus Christ is not unique or definitive for a person's salvation.</li> <li>• The great world faiths are different and independent, authentic contexts of salvation or liberation.</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusivism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The central claims of the Christian faith are true, but inclusivism adopts a much more positive view of other religions.</li> <li>• God has revealed Himself definitively in Jesus Christ, and Jesus is somehow central to God's provision of salvation for humankind.</li> <li>• God's salvation is available through non-Christian religions.</li> <li>• Jesus is still held to be in some sense unique, normative and definitive, but God is said to reveal Himself and provide salvation through other religious traditions as well.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Exclusivism</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The central claims of Christianity are true and only those who explicitly place their faith in Christ of the Bible are saved.</li> <li>• Salvation cannot be achieved through the claims or structures of other religions. Exclusivists do not claim that every religion is wrong in every respect; only where other religions contradict the self-disclosure of Christ.</li> <li>• God has revealed Himself definitively in the Bible, and Jesus Christ is the unique incarnation of God, the only Lord and Saviour.</li> </ul>
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This chapter has established that the theology of religions is a discipline of theological studies, which accounts for the meaning and value of other religions. The essence of the conceptual understanding of the meaning and value of other religions is to create an opportunity for dialogue as an orthopraxis, which might lead to coexistence, mutual learning and transformation in a context in which the religious community has lost its social and religious trust. Northern Nigeria has been experiencing difficulties in socio-religious and ethno-political relationships (Cf. Section 1.1).

The chapter noted that exclusivist and pluralism have much to offer, but in the end fail to adequately resolve the issues of God's salvific desire and the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ. It has been established that, the message of an all-encompassing creative, reconciling and redeeming love attracts some argument against the exclusivists – they neglect God's manifold ways of dealing with humankind. They also see other religions as sinful and therefore erroneous, with Christianity offering the only valid path to salvation. Therefore, to continue to promote Christianity, which is pervaded by domination and narrowness, is to be wilfully ignorant of God's grace and mercy for all humanity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: MISSION AS PROPHETIC DIALOGUE: PROCMURA RESPONSES**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Three chapters have been addressed thus far. Chapter 1 provided the background to the research. It suggested that Nigeria is a pluralistic society that is multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multicultural, multilingual, multi-regional, and therefore highly complex due to these multiple identities. The government's approach to handling these multiple identities has resulted in various kinds of conflict in the entire country. Inter-religious conflict, which has already claimed thousands of lives and destroyed properties worth millions of Naira,<sup>29</sup> is the focus of this research.

Chapter 2 analysed the contextual factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue in Northern Nigeria. The argument in this chapter concerned the religious identity and contextual factors that cause inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria. Other causes include the colonial legacy, the national economic crisis, the politicisation of religion, religious fanaticism, ethnic/cultural plurality and diversity, the divergent perceptions of the population of the Nigerian state, as well as discriminatory policies, as stated in Chapter 2.1. Religious solidarity and illiteracy factors were analysed. Chapter 3 dealt with identity and encounter in the theology of religion, which constitute a relational problem between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. This is due to the lack of appropriate theological encounter. The chapter considered prophetic dialogue as a response and the way forward.

The chapter is divided into two main sections: (1) Various organisations and associations that have addressed mutuality and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims prior to and during the advent of PROCMURA; and (2) Mission as prophetic dialogue as achieved by PROCMURA. The chapter provides some insight for understanding the activities of PROCMURA. As a faith-based organisation, PROCMURA bases its focus on theological, missiological and sociological dimensions. This is reflected in the fact that PROCMURA was instituted and devoted to work through the churches in Africa to promote contextual witness in the midst of the adherents of other faiths, and through constructive interfaith engagement between Christians and Muslims for peaceful coexistence in Africa. The

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<sup>29</sup>Naira is the Nigerian currency, which value is about N160 to US\$1.



programme and activities of PROCMURA are not only known in Nigeria, but also in more than 20 African countries.<sup>30</sup>

The chapter outlines the activities of and outcomes achieved by PROCMURA in Nigeria and in other parts of Africa. These activities include programmes on peace and reconciliation, women and education, youth, literature and communication, with the aim of serving not only to educate Christian and Muslim communities, but also to serve as a faithful witness, and to create peace, reconciliation and collaboration with others. Finally, the chapter also examines the collaboration with other organisations that have similar focuses in mission, and the strengths and shortcomings of PROCMURA.

This chapter is a literature study. In reference to scholars who discuss the use documentary analysis, and particularly to Glenn A. Bowen (2009), who examines the place and function of documents in qualitative research, the chapter analyses documents that are found in the PROCMURA archives. These documents include agendas, minutes of PROCMURA meetings, letters, news papers, conference messages and declarations, messages and teachings from during the conferences and seminar events, policies and statements, and institutional reports. The focus in this analysis is mainly based on how and why the theology of the mission of dialogue is described in the PROCMURA documents. Again, Bowen (2009:29-30) affirms that, whereas documentary analysis has served mostly as a complement to other research methods, it has been used as a stand-alone method. For this reason, documentary analysis was considered to be a useful approach for the purpose of this chapter.

Furthermore, thematic analysis is used in this chapter to identify and describe the issues and themes in the document. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006:4), is the “most common form of analysis in qualitative research”. It entails pinpointing, examining and recording patterns or themes<sup>31</sup> within the data. It is a flexible, easy method to learn and allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data.

Chapter 4 presents the mission of dialogue as a response to the consequences of inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria. This chapter also deals with the following questions, which assisted in achieving the

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<sup>30</sup>Accessed 26 November 2014 from [www.promura-prica.org](http://www.promura-prica.org). Provide this as a proper reference.

<sup>31</sup>Themes are patterns across data sets that are important for the description of a phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question. In other words, themes usually become the categories for analysis.

desired goal of this chapter: Were there any attempts to create an opportunity for understanding, mutuality and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims prior to the advent of PROCMURA? What is the vision and mission of PROCMURA? What are the activities of PROCMURA? What are the processes of its activities? How are service, dialogue, witness and transformation addressed in the activities of PROCMURA?

#### **4.2 Toward mutuality and peaceful coexistence between Christian and Muslims before and during the advent of PROCMURA**

The fact that Africa has continued to experience different kinds of violence due to the advancement of technology such as weapons around the globe, Christians and Muslims, as well as adherents of other faiths, are asking for the best approach to address the quest for mutuality and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Africa, and particularly in Northern Nigeria. In the light of this, Thistlethwaite and Stassen (2008:3-7) contend that the promotion of a considerable relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as alienated members of the households of Abraham across the globe, and how they may become more reconciled to each other and work together for the sake of reconciliation, justice and peace, is the core value of PROCMURA's activities in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. This is not to suggest that other religious traditions are unimportant, but acknowledges the special character of the family of Abraham and its particular covenantal obligations today.

This section provides an analysis of some attempts made to create opportunities through encounter to address multiple identity issues, mutuality and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, as well as adherents of other faiths in Africa prior to the advent of PROCMURA. It also outlines other contemporary organisations that are involved in a similar ministry as PROCMURA. The section is not exhaustive, hence selected only a few organisations to establish the argument, and by no means am I overlooking other efforts. Adamu (2014:4) affirms that, prior to the advent of PROCMURA; there were other attempts to bring about lasting peace and mutual understanding between the two major religious groups under discussion in Africa, and in Nigeria in particular.

For instance, the organisations that made an attempt to foster Christian-Muslim understanding in the 1950s include the International Missionary Council (IMC),<sup>32</sup> which was founded in New York, USA in

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<sup>32</sup> The abbreviation IMC will be used throughout the dissertation.

1921. This organisation was the unification of the protestant National Missionary Councils and Africa Council of Churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Their activities, according to Siddiqui (1997:26), included: To stimulate thinking and investigation on missionary questions, to make the results available for all missionary societies and missions, to help coordinate the activities of the national missionary organizations of the different countries and of the societies they represent. Other activities are: to help unite Christian public opinion in support of freedom of conscience and religion and of missionary liberty, and lastly, to help unite the Christian forces of the world in seeking justice in international and inter-racial relations.

The International Missionary Council (IMC) has two division in their activities; firstly, the ‘Faith and Order Movement’, and secondly, the ‘Life and Work Movement’, which were established in 1925 and 1927 respectively. Consequently, dialogue and witness with people of other faiths was the theme of the IMC’s conference at Tambaram in 1938. Accordingly, Adamu (2014:5) says that this also raised the need for intra-Christian unity and collaboration.

In addition to the IMC, the World Council of Churches (WCC)<sup>33</sup> was established in Amsterdam in 1948. Siddique (1997:27-28) maintains that the aim of the WCC was:

To facilitate the common witness of the Churches in each place and in all places; to support churches in their world-wide missionary and evangelistic task, to express the common concern of the churches in the service of human need, the breaking down of barriers between people and the promotion of one human family in justice and peace. To foster the renewal of the churches in unity, worship, mission, and service.

The WCC organised and sponsored a multilateral inter-religious dialogue in Addis Ababa in 1971, and this move gave birth to a sub-unit for dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies (DFI).<sup>34</sup> According to Siddiqui (1997:28), since the establishment of dialogue on life and ideologies, interfaith meetings and conferences have been organised by the sub-unit, with the anticipation of promoting good relations among Christians and others.

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<sup>33</sup> The researcher will use WCC throughout the dissertation.

<sup>34</sup> DFI means dialogue of life and ideology.

Another organisation that was founded for involvement in Christian-Muslim relations was the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA). The AEA has its head office in Nairobi (Kenya) and an office in Nigeria for training programmes in Christian-Muslim relations. It also owns the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.

In the same way, the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, in conjunction with the Lutheran Church of the United States of America, decided to start an interfaith centre after a series of meetings that took place in 1993, 1995 and 1997. The centre serves as a research and information centre. This interfaith centre started with the intent of cooperating with other denominations and Muslims as well. Hence, their intention was to promote peace and understanding between people of different faiths in Nigeria.

Other organisations that were started with a similar focus of uniting people are the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The organisation was started by George Williams and 11 friends in 1844. Their objective was to develop values and behaviours that are consistent with Christian principles. Originally, the YMCA focused on Bible study and religious activities. However, by the year 2010, the organisation greatly broadened its mission statement. Currently, the YMCA looks after the needs of people in a form of mutual aid. The objective of the association is not just "spiritual", but also "mental", improvement, and the concern is for young men in general (Smith, 1997:1).

Likewise, the Christian Reformed World Mission (CRWM) has the same purpose of bringing Christians and Muslims together (Adamu, 2014:7). Initially, CRWM began with the focus on Christian education, evangelism and discipleship, as well as development.

The Joint Christian Ministry in West Africa (JCMWA) also started with a network of 30 churches to promote unity among Christians for the sake of stronger Christian witness among the Fulani. There are about 30 million Fulfulde speakers in Africa. About half of the Fulfulde speakers live in Nigeria, and the other half are spread across West Africa, from Senegal to Central Africa.

Adamu (2014:7, 8) states that the Muslims were not left behind in the effort of promoting peace and understanding by interfaith communities. For example, the Muslim World League (Rabita) was founded in the Makka in 1962. This organisation is engaged in:

Propagating the religion of Islam, elucidating its principles and tenets, refuting suspicious and false allegations made against the religion. The League also strives to persuade people to abide by the commandments of their Lord and to keep away from prohibited deeds. The League is also ready to help Muslims solve problems facing them anywhere in the world, and carry out their projects in the spare of *Da'wa*, (call) education and culture. The League which employs all means that are not at variance with the shari'a (Islamic Law) to further its aims is well known for rejecting all acts of violence and promoting dialogue with the people of other cultures (Pew Research Centre: Religion & Public Life, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010).

The last part of the above quotation reflects Christian-Muslim dialogue.

There are international organisations and associations launched by different religious groups that currently are working together with PROCMURA in order to seek peace and the good of humanity. These organisations include:(1) the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), (2) the African Council of Religious Leaders (ARCL) and(3) Inter-Religious Dialogue and Cooperation (a programme of the WCC).

1). Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (AFAPA) is a pan-African body initiated by the general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Ishmael Noko,<sup>35</sup> in 2002. Various religious groups from all regions of Africa form its members, including Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Rastafarianism.<sup>36</sup> Its summit was held in Johannesburg in October 2002, where the name IFAPA was adopted. The aim of this conference was to obtain a solid commitment to inter-faith dialogue and cooperation for promoting peace in Africa; thus, among the topics discussed during the first inaugural conference were the following:

- The role of inter-faith dialogue in promoting a culture of peace in Africa;
- Freedom of religion and conflict prevention; the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Relations between religion and state, and
- African traditional methods of conflict resolution and reconciliation (cf. IFAPA's Newsletter, 2009:1).

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<sup>35</sup>Rev. Dr. Nokoa Zimbabwean is the immediate former General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, from 1994 to 2010. Noko was the founder and currently the president of (AFAPA). His mandate covers international affairs, refugee issues, ecumenical affairs and dialogue with people of diverse religious communities. Dr. Noko is a recipient of many internal awards and ten honorary doctorates accessed 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014, from <http://ifapa-africa.weebly.com/the-ifapa-president.html>.

<sup>36</sup>Accessed 1 December 2014, from [www.trustafrica.org](http://www.trustafrica.org)

In order to achieve the abovementioned objectives, IFAPA works together with different governmental and inter-governmental agencies with the responsibility of promoting peace, security and development in the region, especially the African Union, NEPAD and so forth. IFAPA has intervened and sent representatives to different countries in Africa, such as Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Togo, DRC, South Africa, etc., to discuss and resolve conflicts in these countries.<sup>37</sup> IFAPA is also concerned with the rights of women and children. It involves women on an equal basis with men in mediation, conciliation, post-conflict reconstruction and inter-faith initiatives. Women's campaigns, such as "Mother's Cry for a Healthy Africa", were initiated during the second summit of IFAPA in South Africa, in April 2005. It also cooperates with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on violence against children in armed conflict to promote greater protection of these children from conflict and its consequences.

Apart from peace building, the by-laws of IFAPA, article 2 (2014:6), affirm that one of IFAPA's objectives is human development. To meet this objective, IFAPA operates in different domains and works together with government officials, religious leaders and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc. For example, on 20 March 2008, as a result of cooperation between religious communities in IFAPA and the public and private sectors (including Nestlé), a community water project was inaugurated in the District of Kirehe (Rwanda). The emphasis of IFAPA was on the importance of bringing together and acknowledging the different religions and their perspectives, which has now become a tradition. IFAPA runs its affairs from Nairobi (Kenya).

2). the African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL). The ACRL is another pan-African multi-religious body drawn from each of the main religious groups from all parts of the continent. It was formed in 2003 in response to a call made by participants at the 2002 African Religious Leaders Assembly on Children and HIV/AIDS for a permanent inter-religious leadership body on the continental level. According to the ACRL Report (2008:2) of the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, which took place in Tripoli (Libya), the ACRL was created to strengthen cooperation between leaders and senior representatives of religious communities in order to serve the common good. Its inaugural meeting took place in Abuja (Nigeria) June 2003, and was presided over by Olusegun Obasanjo, the incumbent president of the republic of Nigeria.

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<sup>37</sup> Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014, from [www.lutheranworld.org/content/development-world-service](http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/development-world-service).

The ACRL is affiliated with Religions for Peace. It has its headquarters in New York and is accredited by the United Nations. The objectives of this organisation include, firstly, to address the pan-African challenges of transforming conflict and advancing sustainable development; secondly, to establish partnerships with the African Union and other regional institutions to advance peace and development; thirdly, to facilitate cooperation among African national inter-religious councils affiliated with religions for peace in responding to Pan-African challenges; and lastly, to take action within African states in times of emergency or crisis, in cooperation with the relevant national inter-religious councils (ACRL Report, 2009:11).

The mission of the ACRL is to advance African multi-religious cooperation in support of peace and sustainable development, working to transform conflict, promote human rights and good governance, combat HIV/AIDS and its impact on children and families, and overcome poverty (ACRL Report, 2009:11). In order to achieve these objectives, the ACRL has collaborated with relevant economic and political players at the national and continental levels (African Union and United Nations) and other inter-faith initiatives in Africa. The ACRL Report (2009:33-34) states that the African Women of Faith Network and the African Religious Youth Network were also launched to facilitate this initiative. An executive board composed of religious leaders based in Nairobi leads the ACRL. One-third of the team are women religious leaders.

3). Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation is the WCC programme. Its members include representatives from different religions across the world, such as Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Shinto, Sikh, Zoroastrian, as well as indigenous traditions. By creating the programme on Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation, the aim of the WCC was to promote respectful coexistence and peaceful integration in pluralistic societies. To achieve this objective, the programme initiated three projects: firstly, inter-religious trust and respect, particularly to strengthen these through multilateral dialogue and the search for identity in pluralistic societies; secondly, Christian self-understanding, where churches are engaged in reflecting on what it means to be a Christian in a world of many religions; and lastly, churches in situations of conflict, in which the project is to accompany and equip churches for advocacy in countries where religion is being used to fuel conflict, such as Nigeria.

In the light of the above description of these three different African inter-faith religious groups, namely Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA); the African Council of Religious Leaders (ARCL), which operates at the continental level to promote peace in Africa; and the Programme on Inter-Religious

Dialogue and Cooperation, a world-wide organisation, the researcher agrees with Adamu (2014:9), who maintains that PROCMURA appears to be the first organisation of its kind to be established with a single focus on Christian-Muslim relations.

Although the abovementioned organisations and associations have made some recognisable efforts in the pursuit of better Christian-Muslims relations, the problem of confusion within the church posed by Azumah<sup>38</sup> (2010:83) is laudable. He argues that one of the crucial issues facing Christians today is finding the right balance in their response to Islam and their engagement with Muslims. Azumah (2010:83) contends that “The quest for an appropriate Christian response to Islam has sadly polarised Christians along ‘evangelical’ versus ‘ecumenical’, ‘truth’ versus ‘grace’, ‘tough’ versus ‘soft’ or ‘confrontational’ versus ‘conciliatory’ lines.” The situation suggests confusion and the spread of rumours of fear and terror and stimulating hostility towards Muslims as well as Christians, and directly going soft and becoming collaborators with Islam or Christianity on the other hand. This is what informs the need for an intermediary such as PROCMURA.

Adamu (2014:10) claims that there has been some positive historical account of Christian-Muslim relations. For her, Christians and Muslims have lived alongside each other in many parts of the world since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The quest for tolerance, understanding and cooperation between Christians and Muslims has been an age-long pursuit. Hence, these issues are quite obvious during the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam due to different conflicting doctrinal issues that evolved between Muslims, Jews and Christians during the arrival of Islam in Arabia. On the one hand, there was a feeling that true Christianity and the gospel brought by Jesus had either been lost or distorted. This distortion of the original text is popularly known as *tahrif* in Islam is a concept that depicts scriptural alteration, corruption or distortion. It may mean substitution of words in the written text, or misinterpretation, or elimination of some passages (Zebiri, 1997:51). This argument seems to convey the idea that the original Bible was destroyed, as Zebiri (1997:51) further argues that the teaching of *tahrif* has:

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<sup>38</sup>Azumah is a lecturer in Islamic Studies, and director of the Centre of Islamic Studies at the London School of Theology, the founding director of the interfaith Research & Resource Centre of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and an author.



Usually been taken to apply to alterations made to the biblical text before Islam, the process of distortion is sometimes believed to be ongoing. Different translations are sometimes assumed to be significantly different ‘version’ of the text. While Christians consider that continuing research into early manuscripts or the discovery of new ones give rise to an ever more accurate scripture, for many Muslims any slight alterations to the text which may result, for example, from the discovery that a given verse is not in the earliest manuscripts is scandalous. From the above argument, according to Muslims, one can contend that the Bible has been altered through the translation processes.

In addition to this argument, Adamu (2014:11) observes that Christians were not only being critiqued for distorting the Bible, but also were criticised for their doctrine of the Trinity, and for exaggerating the sayings of Jesus that God could have a son. On the one the hand, when Christians read the Qur’an as containing some Biblical stories, although not told correctly, this renders (for them) the Qur’an as being a fabricated script. While the Prophet Muhammad was alive, Christians had to ask how they should understand his message, the success of Muhammad’s mission and about the Qur’an’s statement that it is complete and therefore has supersedes the Bible. Christ being God’s final, absolute, and sufficient for salvation of humankind; Christians cannot see how the Prophet Muhammad can supersede Jesus Christ. Perhaps this is why Gragg (1956:219) emphasises in his book, *The Call of the Minaret*, that

It is common in some Christian circles to speak of Islam as a “Christian heresy”, but for Muslims the “Christian heresy” is Christianity itself. Islam claims that in its historic faith the church has misconstrued the mission of Jesus. Inasmuch as these “errors” involve the central points of the Christian understanding of Jesus, his incarnation and his death upon the Cross, the issue admits of no reconciliation. The Muslim sees Islam as correcting Christian “distortion” of Jesus and of God. Christians see Islam as disqualifying the heart of their understanding of both.

Additionally, in agreement with Gragg, Adamu (2014:12) (1959:219) said,

The squabble between the adherents of the two religions is likely to be a source of potential conflict, mistrust and a spirit of rejection by both Christians and Muslims. Conflicting doctrinal issues created rifts between the early and later generations of Christians and Muslims, such as the situation between people who claim a common faith descent from Abraham who have called for and continue to call for religious and mutual understanding, cooperation and tolerance.

Sanneh (1979:410) stresses that: Christianity and Islam are united perhaps less by the things they have in common than by the things which divide them. It is true that both traditions teach doctrines of the virgin birth and of the messianic role of Jesus, among other things, and yet the crusades took place when these things were common knowledge. On the reverse of the coin, the Muslim experience of the Shari’a as the

required standard of human obedience and duty towards God and toward each other is in contrast to the Christian teaching about the person of Christ or about the Eucharistic Mass. The risk of misunderstanding appears less in the things that separate the two sides than in the things which link them.

Sanneh (1979:410) further observes:

Christian allegations that Islam is an imitation of Christianity are strongest in the similarities between the two, while Muslim claims that Islam has fulfilled and superseded Christianity are likely to be pressed hardest in area of overlap. One side or the other takes on such a role is more of divisive than a uniting factor in our relationship. Even the fact that both religions claim a divine revelation can arouse serrate feelings or induces over-confidence, in either case blurring genuine lines of complacency created by the other, together make difficult mutual trust and real encounter.

In view of the above analysis of the factors that pose a common challenge and opportunity, the distinctive Christian theological conception can be recognised alongside their desire for a common basis of approach and understanding. Sanneh (1979:410) also suggests that “The missionary obligation of Islam and Christianity, to take an instance, could be approached not in terms of negative competitiveness or polite indifference but in terms of involvement and mutual exchange and sharing”. In other words, setting up harmful rivalry or congenial statements both inevitably result in separation or over-confidence, and the missionary ambitions of Islam and Christianity could, if properly understood, open new areas of dialogue, particularly at points where both are engaged in self-interpretation through the idiom of other cultures.

In the light of all these arguments, Adamu (2014:13) remarks that the Qur’an tried to present some solutions to these conflicts when it claimed that people have the right to the different faiths they hold. There should be no compulsion, for it is God that has willed the diverse religions. Similarly, the constitution of Nigeria has spelled out the right and privileges of its citizens, including the right to the choice of religion (Poole and Vibara, 2014:5). However, it seems to be theoretical and not in practice. Hence, instead of engaging in categorisation and conflict or arguments with one another, each should try to excel in doing good deeds in his/her religion. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 5.

Since the respective scriptures became the main source of conflict among the adherents of the three monotheistic traditions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), Islam did not remain in the region of Arabia but extended its message and call to other parts of the world, including Africa and Nigeria. It therefore could not help but bump into more complicated doctrinal, political and social issues that had to be tackled. In

spite of this, there is a need to understand that, even with these differences, Christians and Muslims have experienced some good moments and good times of living together, even in Nigeria. It is for this reason that Adamu (2014:14, citing Balda) says;

There have been periods of war, confrontation and persecution, as well as times in which Christians and Muslims have shared the same life road without any signs of ill feeling, hostility and antagonism. It would be totally wrong, first of all to think that Muslims and Christians have always been enemies to each other in Africa, and secondly that the situation of violence and hatred, as it has recently been witnessed in Egypt, Nigeria and Sudan, will be the pattern of Muslim Christian relations in the years to come.

Far from it, because in history there have been good times and bad times between Christians and Muslims. For instance, there were times when Christians were living in Muslim-dominated regions and were protected. They were seen as *dhimmi*,<sup>39</sup> people of other religions allowed maintaining their religious identity and, in turn, they would pay a certain tax, called *jizya*.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, there were times when Christians were favoured by the Muslims and were given not only protection, but even high positions in government. Egypt serves as an example in the early centuries, and this is exemplified today by the appointment of Boutros-Ghali, who was the foreign minister of Egypt before becoming the Secretary General of the United Nations (Adamou, 2014:14).

By the 1950s, many African countries had gained their independence; therefore a lot of churches had to assume full responsibility for carrying out the great commission left for them in the midst of Islam and its

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The Dhimmi, as indicated in the early days of Islam, are the Christians, Jews and several other non-Muslim groups. Dhimmi literally mean “protected” while they were permitted to live within the Muslim community and practise their own religion. They were only protected in that they were not forced to convert, flee, or be killed, unlike pagans. However, they were not given equal status with Muslims and had to pay a special tax call *jizya*. They also receive less compensation for injury and were subject to many humiliating restrictions relating to their clothes, places of worship and transport, which reduced them to living as “second class citizens”.

<sup>40</sup>*Jizya* carries the idea of special levy to be paid by a non-Muslim living in a Muslim community. Zade (2010:149) has noted that *jizya* was one of the ways resources were mobilised in Islam to finance the welfare-oriented role of the government. Other levies collected by the early Islamic state included *Zakah* [on items of gold, silver, and articles of trade, agricultural produce and livestock]. Other taxes collected were the *Ushur*, a land tax, a levy on mines and *jizya*, etc. Some scholars argue that *jizya* is levied on non-Muslims as a rental, and others maintain that *jizya* is a form of punishment for holding a non-Muslim belief, while others see it as compensation, meaning a payment made for living in an organised society. This tax is supposed to provide protection to its members and control disturbances affecting their day-to-day economic activities. *Jizya* was paid by the Christian minority. They paid this money to the government for administration and safety, and for the protection of their lives. Still others see *jizya* as an Islamic invention in order to rob people. *Jizya* was a huge amount of money, and non-Christians who were unable to pay had to embrace Islam, and/or it was paid by every non-Muslim regardless of his/her race, age, financial and social status.

growing self-awareness. It was a challenging task. It was in this kind of situation that discussions arose among African church leaders about the growing challenge of Islam. This was the background to the introduction of PROCMURA on the African continent.

### 4.3. Background of PROCMURA

This section discusses the activities of PROCMURA, which include faithful witness, peace and reconciliation, and collaboration with others. Other important initiatives comprise women, youth and education programmes, literature and ICMR programmes, of which I am a beneficiary. The section also deals with the process used by PROCMURA in executing these activities. Since the chapter highlights some of the achievement of PROCMURA, some challenges faced by PROCMURA need to be examined in this section. Assessing prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA's activities might advance the interests of church leaders who are cynical and sceptical about PROCMURA's activities

The word PROCMURA<sup>41</sup> stands for "Programme for Christian–Muslim Relations in Africa". PROCMURA is the oldest pioneering interfaith organisation on the continent of Africa, with a specific focus on Christian-Muslim relations (Adamu, 2014:1; Mbillah, 2011). PROCMURA, formerly known as the Islam in Africa Project (IAP), was a programme established by the churches in Africa with the support of partner churches in Europe and North America, with the prelude:

Whereas Christian witness is an integral part of Christian identity, and whereas working towards peace on earth is to follow the example of Jesus Christ who is Himself the "Prince of Peace", churches in Africa in consort with the church universal established the Programme for Christian–Muslim Relations in Africa, to work through the Churches in Africa, to promote contextual Witness amidst the Muslim presence, and constructive interfaith engagement between Christians and Muslims for peaceful co-existence in Africa in obedience to the triune God in whom we live and move and have our being (Constitution and Bye-Laws, 2003:1).

This is the essence of the church, the sacred Scriptures, tradition and the reported words of Jesus established that mission and witness are imperatives for Christians. Hence PROCMURA's understanding of its responsibility "to encourage faithful and responsible witness to the Gospel", while also enhancing

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<sup>41</sup>This non-governmental organisation (NGO) is a project owned by the Council of African Churches (CAC), with the support of the Liaison Committee in Europe (LCP). It is an organisation with a commitment to promote Muslim and Christian relations in Africa. It also fosters understanding, tolerance and cooperation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and in Africa as a whole.

“the principle of good neighbourliness”, which is not only a virtue in Christianity and Islam, but also a traditional African virtue, is worthy of applause (Ellingwood, 2008:75).

The background to the founding of the programme goes back to the political and religious climate of Africa in the 1950s. The political climate of those years was marked by an increase in African nationalist movements, which agitated for independence from the colonial masters. These movements advocated for cooperation and collaboration across the diverse linguistic, religious and cultural frontiers to rid Africa of colonialism.

On the religious front, the churches were aware that Christianity was portrayed more and more as the religion of the colonialists, and the missionary presence seen as a symbol of the continuous presence of colonialism. In a situation like this, the churches were considering how they could become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating once independence was achieved. It was in the area of self-propagation that the seed of IAP/PROCMURA was sown. The churches became conscious that, in post-colonial Africa, nation-states would evolve and nationals of a particular country would be made up of Christians and Muslims, amongst others, and that the need for positive engagement between Christians and Muslims as co-citizens would be imperative.

Subsequent to the abovementioned motivation for starting PROCMURA was the idea of Christians and Muslims being aware of each other. For example, the blanket image of Islam as a religion of violence, and Muslims as enemies of Christianity, lingers to the present. Additionally, Christian mission was very focused on the propagation of the gospel to adherents of indigenous religions. It was in this context that the churches saw the need to evolve a programme specifically focusing on the Christian encounter with Muslims in independent Africa.

Therefore, in view of the political, religious and post-colonial climate at the time of Africa’s independence and the role the churches were to play, African churches expressed the need to evolve a more intensive study and action plan with respect to the Protestant churches’ approach to Islam during their participation in the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Accra, Ghana in 1957. In this year, the concern for a Christian approach to Islam was tabled, along with the need for plans to study the problems raised by missionary work in areas of Muslim influence in Africa. The same concern was discussed at the first All Africa Church Conference Captioned (AACC), “The church in changing Africa”, which was held in Ibadan, Nigeria in January 1958. After the meeting in 1958, the IMC took the initiative

to organise two consultations on Islam in Africa, both of which were held in 1958 under the supervision of the European Liaison Committee (ELC).<sup>42</sup>P. Benignus of the Paris Missionary Society conducted study travels and visited some churches in Africa as the first secretary of the European Liaison Committee. The first established area committee (AC) that was inaugurated was that in the North and West of Nigeria, after which the organisation (as the Islam in Africa Project (IAP)) was founded in 1959. In 1963, advisers took up work in Ghana, Cameroon and Kenya. From 1968 to 1971, work began in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Other countries followed. Today, PROCMURA has more than 20 African countries as members. In September 1958, a consultation was held with the help of the IMC, attended by twenty missionary leaders, including P. Benignus, T. Beetham, J. Crossley, E. Engskov, Count Van Randwijck and W.A. Bijlefeld, who later came to play an important role in IAP in Oegstgeest, Holland, with the same theme, “The Christian Faith and the Contemporary Middle Eastern World”. For this meeting, representatives came from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Holland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the IMC and the WCC.

Bijlefeld (1989:8) reports:

At the consultation in Oegstgeest 1958, Pierre offered a paper described humbly by Himself as a number of viewpoints. That paper is a remarkable document, in which he recommended an early survey of the strength of Islam, Christianity and the Traditional African Religion. Pierre warned that the project would miss its goal if it would focus its attention on Islam and Christianity only, without paying attention to points of strength in African Traditional Religion. Careful attention should be given to political developments as well as to theological issues. Finally, he called for an immediate contact with all churches and missions without an exception.

In view of the above urgent call, the second consultation was held in October 1958 at Hartford, Connecticut, USA. Adamu (2014:15) states that, in the same year, the All African Church Conference was held in Ibadan, Nigeria, and special attention was given to the issue of Islam, as it was raised in the Accra meeting in Ghana in a paper delivered by Bishop S. O. Odutola, the Anglican Bishop of Ondo in Nigeria, titled ‘Islam as it affects life in Nigeria’. The discussions from this paper stimulated Christians in Africa to see the need for interpreting the gospel in a more meaningful way to Muslims, without violating the principle of good neighbourliness. This proposal by the church leader from Nigeria might have been

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<sup>42</sup>The European Liaison Committee (ELC) is not an independent organisation or institution, but, according to Adamu (2014:40), it is a platform for representatives of the churches, church aid organisations and other institutions to engage in Christian-Muslim relations or have relations to African Churches to discuss how to promote the work of PROCMURA.

informed by what was happening as to the context of Christian-Muslim relations in the 1950s. Perhaps this is why Alao (2009:8) advanced that there were intra-religious struggles within the Islamic faith, hence Quadiyya<sup>43</sup> and Tijaniyya,<sup>44</sup> although similar, still had major doctrinal differences, especially during the colonial era. Alao (2009:8) says further:

Riot broke out in Sokoto in 1949, when the Sultan of Sokoto who also doubled as the *Sarkin Musulmi* (Head of Muslims) ordered the destruction of certain Tijaniyya mosques. Riots were to reoccur again in 1956. The period immediately after independence was to witness more tension in the relationship between the two groups and here again politics and ethnicity were to play prominent roles. Throughout the period of the first Republic (1960-1966), when Ahmadu Bello (the Sarkin of Sokoto) was the Premier of Northern Nigeria, the Tijaniyya had a difficult period and had to almost operate as an underground movement...

The intra-religious conflict of this nature sometimes ends up to the church. Example, the implication of the West and the Arab world conflicts, especially the Arab Palestine and Israel conflict on the region. Hence, according to Yake (2015:194);

The on-going Arab and Western world conflicts had negative impacts on some third world countries like Nigeria, especially in Northern Nigeria. This is clearly seen when some Islamic groups go on protest in Northern Nigeria streets on either over Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the invasion of Afghanistan by USA and also the immortalizing of Osama Bin Laden by certain Muslim clerics and individuals. Unfortunately, many fail to consider the political side of these foreign conflicts before demonstrating in a religious way or manner.

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<sup>43</sup>According to Sulaiman (2013:5), the Quadiyyah order is the older of the two orders. Its name derives from Abd al-Qadir al-Jalani (1077-1166). Al-Jalani was a native of the Irania province of Jalani. Qadiyyah had a very slow growth until the fifteenth century, when the order spread significantly beyond Iraq and Syria. The Qadiyyah believe in the fundamental principles of Islam, but emphasise the importance of humaneness and charity. They are characterised by the loud recitation of verses in praise of Mohammad and the singing of sacred hymns. They are also characterised by their absolute teaching on Sunna and condemn all objectionable vices. Sheik Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1877) founded Qadiyyah in Nigeria. He was the founder of Sokoto caliphate, a religious teacher, writer and Islamic reformer. Qadiyyah has been significant in the history of Islamic growth in Nigeria.

<sup>44</sup>Tijaniyyah is an order founded by Ahmed al-Tijani in about 1781. Hitti (1990:65) states that the influx of the Tijaniyyah brotherhood into West Africa can be credited to the activities of Umar Futi, who had been initiated into the brotherhood and appointed Khalifah of the Sudan. Tijaniyyah adherents can be found mostly in Senegal. It is believed that the Tijaniyyah penetrated from Senegal to Nigeria. It appears the order came to Nigeria during the lifetime of Muhammad Bello, but this is not confirmed. Sulaiman (2013:4) says that one of their serious doctrines is their claim of the Prophet visiting a human being in broad daylight. The other doctrine that they esteem is the pre-eminence of the palatal-faith above salatul Ibrahimmiyyah. It is believed to have been presented to the founder by the Prophet when he appeared to him in broad daylight, and is therefore considered more meritorious than the Glorious Qur'an (Sulaiman, 2013:6).

Therefore, it was better to create ways to have a constructive relationship when the church was enlightened. Similarly, according to Kukah (2007:1), faiths were growing in Nigeria; Christianity was on the rise, from twenty-one percent of the population in 1950; “This increase in numbers heightened Christian participation in Nigerian politics...it also increased religious tension between Christians and Muslims”. Furthermore, the conference held at Ibadan, Nigeria, was of the opinion that the church in Africa should avoid primitive responses to Islam in her bid to bear witness to Christ, as this would lead to polemics and eventually to crusades. An adequate and objective study of Islam and informed knowledge of the history of Muslims was suggested to be one way to avoid confrontation between the adherents of the Christian and Muslim religions.

While these discussions were going on, the Missionary Society of the Netherlands Reformed Church offered to send personnel trained in Islam to Africa to assist the African Churches in their quest to have a meaningful encounter with Muslims. At a consultation titled the *Islam in Africa Project*, with about twenty missionary leaders drawn from different countries in Europe at Oegstgeest in the Netherlands in September 1958, the theme *Islam in Africa Project* (IAP) was adopted. A similar meeting of the North American mission was held in the same year at Hartford, Connecticut to respond to the same request by the African Churches.

A resolution was tabled at the consultation in Oegstgeest to send a messenger to West Africa and some parts of East Africa to embark on a fact-finding mission. Pierre Benignus of the Paris Missionary Society, also the secretary to the consultation, was chosen to make the trip to consult with the leaders of Protestant and Anglican churches and missions in Africa on practical steps that could be taken to assist them in equipping the Christian community in Africa for its stated task of a Christian approach to Islam. Rev. Benignus travelled to Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania. According to Benignus (1959:1), the journey took two months, and the messengers undertook to do the following:

- (a) Arouse concern, interest and support within church and mission bodies and Christian councils in the areas visited, (b) make contact with persons of special competence already working on the approach to Islam in Africa to secure their collaboration and to discuss the whole project with them, (c) discover what church and mission bodies should and can become particularly, he should try to find the most favourable locations for pilot projects in areas of the three types indicated above, (Entrenched Islam, Neo-Islam situations and situations of Maximum Fluidity) and begin local consultations as to the nature of the work that might best be undertaken in each such situation, (d) to make contact with training institutions which should be related to this concern.



With the growing understanding of some scholars who had studied Islam in Africa, certain missionaries began to take Islam seriously. For instance, according to Adamu (2014:19), E.O. Oyelade, a former adviser of the Islam in Africa Project (IAP) Nigeria (who resigned from his formalities with the IAP in 1976) and a lecturer at the University Of Ife, Nigeria, became concerned about the growing socio-political influence of Islam and Islamic supremacy struggles in Nigeria. Similarly, Dikken (1995:1) observed that, if Islam succeeded in becoming a controller of Third World affairs, in particular African affairs, what would be the fate of the church? It appears that Africa needed not just dialogue with Muslims, but also a growing witness to Christ.

PROCMURA was born out of a deep concern for the present state and future of the church in Africa. The church realised that it had failed in her obligation to share the Gospel with Muslims. It unconsciously became indifferent to Islam and Muslims over the years in its bid not to offend Muslims. Perhaps with the movements advocating a radical Islam of African society, inspired by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jihadist movements throughout Africa, the church in Africa faced a strong tide of Islam in Africa. Adamu (2014:20) observes that there were feelings of fear and uncertainty with regard to Islam and its growing influence in Africa. There were in some instances feelings of superiority and disinterest.

The church was ignorant of Islam and the Muslims around them. There was a need of effective ways of Christian contacts. At times, Christians saw Islam and Christianity as only two different ways of worshipping the same God. Consequently, they refrained from making any evangelistic contacts. In this regard, Haafkens (1988:7) stresses that only Islam is the proper basis for the development of Africa. The principle of a national state which is secular or neutral in religious matters is rejected by significant groups of Muslims in countries like Senegal, Nigeria and Sudan. In their view, the state should be based on the law of Islam, and the Shari'a. These groups receive effective encouragement from Muslims in other parts of the world.

#### **4.3.1 The expansion of PROCMURA in African countries**

In view of the above background, what was the outcome of Benignus's travels to Africa? How did this journey affect the Islam in Africa Project? This journey provided some relevant outcomes. The countries Benignus visited during a three-month period of consultations (from January to April 1959) were Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania. The impressions of this visit were to establish an understanding of the need of learning about Islam. Perhaps, it is better than trying to understand through

interpretation by using probably the prejudices one has of a given situation. From Nigeria, Benignus (1959:7-8) observed:

Everything is in a state of evaluation, everything is in a continual state of change on this coast of Africa, and (Nigeria) nothing is static. Nor is Islam static...But from what is known already, it can be said that Islam has itself been transformed in the process of being adopted to Black Africa...Islam allows the continuation of certain ancient pagan rituals which it considers harmless...it has become tolerant, and it must be said, very ignorant. Paul martyr has written: "The robe of Islam, however plain and comfortable, was not designed for the Black people of Africa: They have recurrent it to suit themselves"

From the above citation, it may be argued that at least half of the population of black Africa was still neither Christian, nor Muslim, and had not yet been touched by either Christianity or Islam. Although Christianity and Islam were flourishing in Nigeria, Benignus's hope was for the church in Africa to reach out with the true Gospel to the population that had not been reached by either Christianity or Islam.

Benignus's (1959:13) impression about Cameroon was that:

The church was very ignorant of Islam. There was a race between Christianity and Islam to gain converts. The people of Duala lived in the mountains, in fear of having any contacts with Islam. In the Southern part of Cameroon, the church (Evangelical Church, Baptist, and Presbyterian) was lively. In the north, were the Sudan United Mission (S.U.M.), United Brethren, Swiss branch of Sudan United Mission and European Baptist Mission?

In Sierra Leone, according to Benignus's report of 1959, there were the Sunni traditional/orthodox Muslims and the Ahmadiyya movement. These groups were not stagnant, but alive in the field of education. In fact, at the time of his visit, Benignus (1959:10-12) noted that there were fifteen mosques in Freetown alone. These mosques made up a body that was called the "Muslim Congress". They were making many converts and developing into forces in the nation. Benignus (1959:10-12) said that he wished to emphasise the responsibility of the church to search for new form of witnessing based on an awakened and well-informed faith. He further said that there were Roman Catholics and the United Christian Council of Sierra Leone, but lamented that the Roman Catholic was so consumed with school work that "There is no special effort to make an encounter with Islam and nothing is being done in that direction in either one form or the other"( Benignus, 1959:10-12).

In Ghana, at Tamale, Benignus (1959:19) noticed a remarkable ignorance of Islam by the church. There was an urgent need for a specialist. The new restrictions on religious instruction in government schools

were in effect. In view of these reports, it was felt that the Islam in Africa Project (IAP) would be a means of integrating the church's mission effort, as the traditional form of mission were coming to an end. The outcome of Benignus's visit to Africa provided the following proposal: Firstly, three structures were set in place (two for Nigeria, Ibadan and Northern Nigeria); one for Ghana and another man for Sierra Leone. Secondly, he (Benignus) recommended the immediate training of personnel in the field of Islam and Arabic who would serve as reinforcements to the first men in these areas.

Benignus proposed the setting up of a committee outside of Africa to coordinate activities between local committees in Africa, and bring about the smooth operation of the whole structure. He emphasised the immediate start of the IAP in Northern Nigeria because Nigeria's independence was just around the corner, and the church there had offered to set aside one or two African evangelists for the project. He also saw the presence of J. Crossly in Ibadan as an advantage. It was his finding that led to the inauguration of the first Islam in Africa Project area committees (AC) in 1959, and area advisers took up work in Ghana, Cameroon and Kenya in 1963. From 1968 to 1971, work began in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Other countries followed. These officers, he proposed, were to help the Christian communities in their respective areas in their relationships with Muslims.

Another important body within the project was the European Liaison Committee (ELC). According to Adamu (2014:27), the area committees were being supported by the European Liaison Committee, established in Europe in 1959 to stimulate, encourage and assist churches and missions in Africa in the Christian approach to Islam. This European Liaison Committee was composed of delegates of Missionary Organisations from Great Britain, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Germany. The functions of the European Liaison Committee, according to Adamu (2014:28), were to give advice and financial support to the activities in Africa.

Additionally, the European Liaison Committee (ELC) arranged the Islam in Africa Project (IAP) to function as a service body at the frontline of Christian-Muslim encounters as a new mission organisation, and to encourage and educate Christians in Africa to fulfil their responsibility towards Muslims. It appears that there had been several attempts to form another Liaison Committee in North America in the 1960s, but this did not happen, although churches in North America have supported PROCMURA (Mbillah, 1991). For instance, in 1991, the North American support group included the Canadian Council of Churches, the Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church USA, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Christian

Church, Disciple USA, and the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions USA, who supported the activities of PROCMURA by giving either financial contributions or seconded personnel to the Council Area Committees. On the whole, therefore, Benignus's findings and recommendations led to the founding of the Islam in Africa Project (IAP), which was inaugurated in Accra in 1959.

In summary, the Islam in Africa Project (AIP) was PROCMURA's seed sown in Accra, Ghana in 1957, watered in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1958, nurtured in Oegstgeest in 1958, and planted as an African continental organisation. Klein (2010, citing Hock) says that, in 1963, advisers took up work in Ghana, Cameroon and Kenya.

PROCMURA has three regions in Africa. The following are the regions with their respective countries: Anglophone West Africa: (a) Nigeria North, (b) Nigeria West, (c) Ghana, (d) Sierra Leone, (e) Gambia, and (f) Liberia; Francophone West Africa: (a) Cote d'Ivoire, (b) Togo, (c) Benin, (d) Senegal, and (e) Burkina Faso; and East and Southern Africa: (a) Kenya, (b) Sudan, (c) The Republic of South Sudan, (d) Rwanda, (e) Tanzania Mainland, (f) Zanzibar, (g) Uganda, (h) Ethiopia, and (I) Malawi.

The regions each have their own regional leader, known as the "Regional Coordinator", who normally convenes a meeting in consultation with the General Adviser as and when the need arises and finances permit, in terms of the provisions of PROCMURA's constitution (By-Laws, no 8, 2003:22). The only injunction is that such a consultation cannot take place during a year that a General Council will meet. The Regional Coordinators have the responsibility from time to time to provide the General Secretariat with new developments in Christian-Muslim relations in their regions and to give yearly reports on programmes carried out in the various regions to the Executive Committee, while the grassroots ministry of the project is carried out by Area Advisers, who work with Area Committees within the different National Council of Churches' inter-faith programmes, or where such programmes do not exist, in close collaboration with the Churches. Below is a map of Africa, showing the presence of PROCMURA in some of the member countries.



**Figure 4: Substantive Area Committees**

**Source:** [www.procmura-prica.org](http://www.procmura-prica.org)

In 1970,<sup>45</sup> the responsibility was handed over to the IAP General Council, which had been established by the Area Committees. In 1987, a change of name was necessitated by submissions from the project's constituencies that the Islam in Africa Project neither reflected the project's affiliation to the churches, nor to Christianity, and that it also did not reflect the project's aims to build bridges of understanding between Christians and Muslims in Africa. Thus, the change of name sought to make it clear that PROCMURA was aimed at fostering constructive relations with Muslims and that it was a Christian project. An evaluation carried out on the project in 1997 demonstrated that Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, as elsewhere, were always part and parcel of the church's life and witness for all time and for all ages. Jane Ellingwood (2008b:75) and Bijlefeld (1989), in their analysis of the evolving nature of

<sup>45</sup>This year marked the turning point of the work of Islam in Africa Project, therefore having the European-dominated committee was no longer appropriate. As a result, an African council was established in 1970 with the name "Islam in Africa Project Council" (IAPC). The representatives of this committee came from Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Dahomey, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Kenya, and the European committee retained the name "European Liaison committee (IAP)" (Adamu, 2014:28).

Christianity and Christian-Muslim relations in Africa on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of IAP/PROCMURA, offer their perspective:

Going through the literature of the first 80 years of this century you will find a significant change in the popularity of the key word ‘mission’ ‘on behalf of’/‘to’ or ‘amongst’ Muslims. It changes in the fiftieth into almost an obsession with the word Christian ‘approach’ to ‘Islam’. This changed in the sixties into ‘encounter’ and in the seventies and later into ‘dialogue’ and ‘relations’.

Ellingwood adds that, in his opinion, one could write an interesting history of the twentieth century by focusing on the popularity of the terms ‘mission’, ‘approach’, ‘encounter’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘relations’. This is why the General Council of PROCMURA, at its meeting in Accra, Ghana in August 2003, took note of this and argued that a “project” has a shorter life span, whereas a “programme” can be on-going for a long time. The General Council made it clear that the ever-growing complexity of Christian-Muslim relations suggested that the issues would become more and more complicated, and that they would, humanly speaking, remain so until Jesus returns.

As a result of this argument,<sup>46</sup> the Council changed the name from “Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa” to the “Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa” (PROCMURA), so as to illustrate the on-going importance of Christian-Muslim relations in the life of the church. At its inception, the Islam in Africa Project had a study centre from 1965 to 1977 in Ibadan (Nigeria), because PROCMURA/IAP had always believed that Christians should understand the religion of Islam, their Muslim neighbours, and local Muslim traditions as a way of fulfilling their obligations to witness to Jesus Christ and to honour his commandment ‘to love your neighbour’. Therefore, according to Mbillah’s (2004a) e-mail briefing report, “there is a need to educate the churches about Islam in Africa so as to accomplish this responsibility in a way that is appropriate for fostering good relations with their Muslim neighbours, [hence] the organization has undertaken, over the decades, the research and education necessary for interpreting the Gospel in the Muslim world”.

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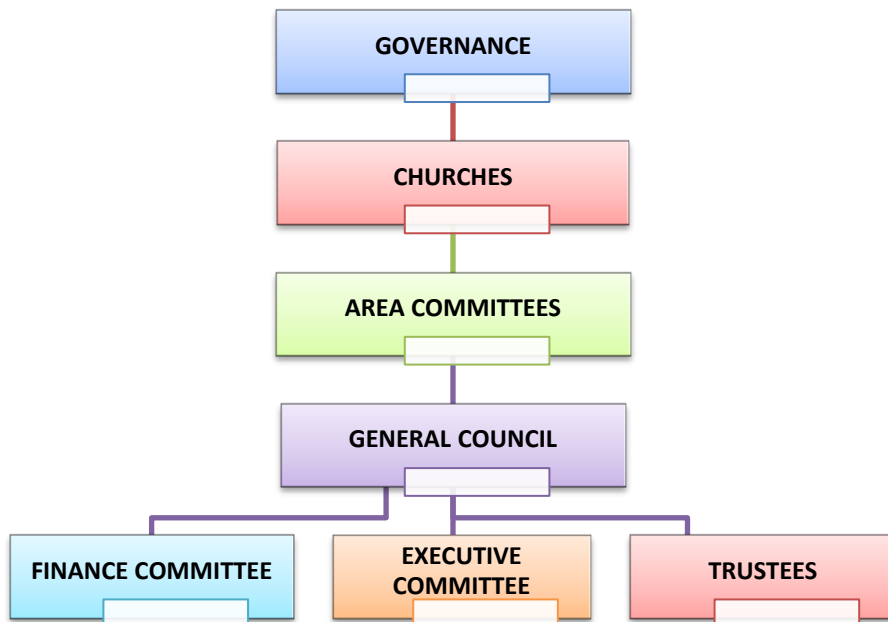
<sup>46</sup>When the need for change arose, an ad hoc committee, which comprised S. Abdo, P. Sai, J. Amnorbah-Sarpei and the general adviser, was inaugurated and given the responsibility to change the name of the project. They proposed seven names: Islam in Africa Project for the African Churches; Council for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa; Council for Christian-Muslim Understanding; Council for Christian Reconciliation; Council of African Churches for Christian Relations with Muslims; Council for the Study of Christian and Muslim Relations; and All-Africa Churches Council for Christian Relations with Muslims. Eventually, “Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa” (PROCMURA) was adopted (Adamu, 2014:30).

Perhaps this is why Bijlefeld (2005), in his personal correspondence, said that the need for education about the religions of others was recognised in the organisation’s early years by its committee of advisers, who encouraged churches and Christians to understand the concept of “Christian witness” more broadly than it would normally have been viewed.

Haakens (1994:2) affirmed that, from its establishment and throughout its history, PROCMURA has sought to fulfil its educational and research aims by organising conferences, seminars and courses, publishing relevant literature and sponsoring the pursuit of Master’s and doctoral programmes by selected individuals, who, in turn, have done research on behalf of PROCMURA/IAP. According to Ellingwood (2008a:74), the on-going initiatives have enabled the organisation to provide information and educational opportunities to churches. It also have aid them in learning more about Islam and how they might live in the spirit of “good neighbourliness” with their Muslim neighbours.

#### 4.3.2 The structure of PROCMURA

Like any other institution, PROCMURA has a structure in which it operates. The two figures below explain PROCMURA’s structure.



**Figure 5: Governance**

Source: [www.procmura-prica.org/en/?page\\_id=39](http://www.procmura-prica.org/en/?page_id=39)

At this point, the question of who does what, where and how things should be done became appropriate for the organisation. In view of this a structure was set up to help PROCMURA make decisions (see Figure 5 above). The policy-making body of PROCMURA is the General Council, which meets once every four years. They meet to take overall responsibility for the life and work of the programme. The Council makes policies, receives reports from the various constituencies of PROCMURA, assesses the progress of the work, deliberates on emerging challenges in Christian-Muslim relations and makes recommendations for facing up to such challenges.

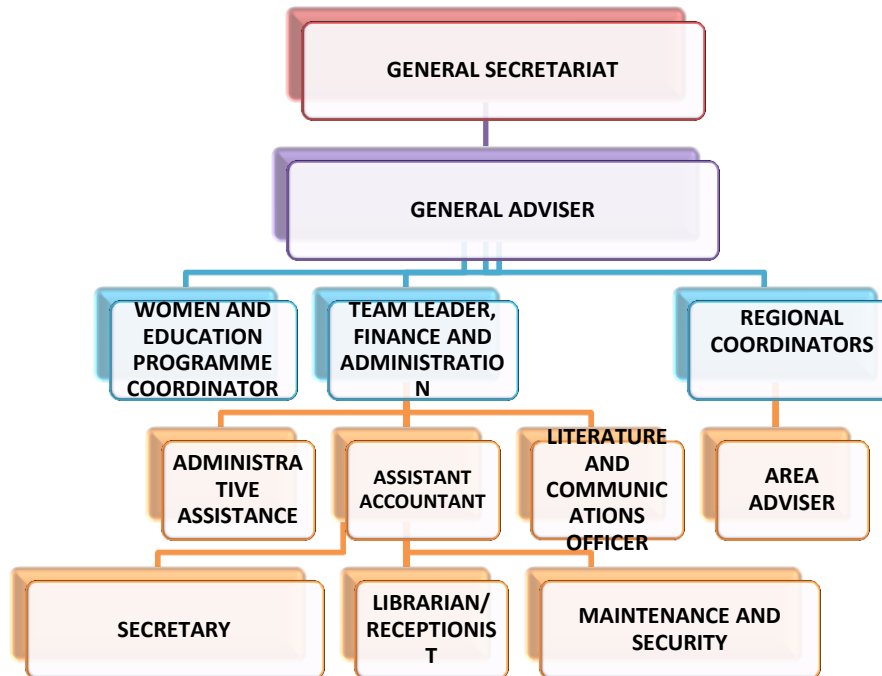
The Executive Committee perform the functions of the General Council in between the ordinary meetings of the Council. It meets once a year to receive reports from the central office staff and regional coordinators and assesses whether decisions taken at the General Council are implemented on schedule. The Committee provides guidance to the General Adviser and his team on the performance of their duties (PROCMURA's Constitution and By-Laws, 2003:3-7).

PROCMURA's Constitution and By-Laws (2003:3-7) further state that, apart from the General Council and Executive Committee, there also are a number of honorary committees that meet occasionally to perform special functions or take decisions on specific issues and recommend such decisions to the Executive Committee or the General Adviser.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the second structure is the general or administrative structure:

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<sup>47</sup>The following are the people who served as general advisers from the founding of IAP/PROCMURA until the present: W. Bijlefeld served as the general adviser of the IAP until 1966, when John Crossley took over. In 1972, P. Ipema became the general adviser as Crossley left for Africa. J. P. Dretke succeeded in 1979. J.H. Haafkeens served from 1979 to 1996 and was succeeded by S. Brown, who served for four years. Johnson Mbillah, a Ghanaian, took over from S. Brown at the beginning of January 2000 to date (Adamu, 2014:29).





**Figure 6: General Secretariat**

**Source:** [www.procmura-prica.org/en/?page\\_id=39](http://www.procmura-prica.org/en/?page_id=39)

PROCMURA operates with a general secretariat based at its central office in Nairobi, Kenya. The general adviser heads the general secretariat. Working with him are the two executive officers: the finance and administration and also the team leader; and the women's programme coordinator, who is also in charge of education. Other members of staff include an administrative assistant, an assistant accountant, a literature and communications officer, a secretary, a receptionist/librarian and a team of auxiliary staff. The general adviser is the overall overseer for the implementation of PROCMURA's activities. He is supported by a team of three regional coordinators for Francophone West Africa, Anglophone West Africa, and East and Southern Africa. The three regional coordinators support the grassroots programmes of PROCMURA, which are carried out by area advisers in twenty countries (Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA Constitution and By-Laws, 2003:8-10).

#### **4.4. Aims of PROCMURA**

The aims and objectives of PROCMURA are to assist churches and missions in Africa in the following ways:

- To keep before the churches of Africa their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the church's task of interpreting the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully in the Muslim world and promoting Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace in society and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims;
- To effect and facilitate the research and education necessary for fulfilling the point above;
- To assist the churches in a given country or region within a country to create area committees to serve as representatives of churches cooperating with the programme in their respective areas;
- To maintain contact with area committees set up for this purpose in the various countries of the continent;
- To subscribe to assist, subsidise and cooperate with any organisation or institution whose objectives are in whole or in part similar to those of PROCMURA;

To serve as a regional point of contact and reference to the churches and para-church communities, and without prejudices to promote collaboration and cooperation on matters relating to Christian-Muslim constructive engagements(cf. the constitution, 2003:1 & 2).This suggests that the project was started with the aim of providing knowledge of Islam to church workers in the field of Islamic studies, to stimulate churches to undertake mission and evangelism among Muslims as their basic responsibility as they join hands with other organisations with a similar vision so as to provide services to everyone.

As the journey progressed, the constitution of the organisation was amended in 1973,<sup>48</sup> 1995,<sup>49</sup> and 2003. The amendments affected the aims and objectives for the better.

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<sup>48</sup>Firstly, to secure more adequate and thorough knowledge of Islam in Africa, of its beliefs and practices, the facts about expansion, the extent to which Christians are in effective 'encounter' with it, and the ways in which churches and missions should fulfil their Christian obedience in that 'encounter'; secondly, to provide training for Christian workers of all types, whose work offers possibilities for contact with Muslims, in the understanding of Islam in Africa and in their Christian responsibility towards Muslims, and finally, to stimulate amongst churches and missions in the areas a deeper sense of their responsibility towards Muslims (Aims and objectives, 1973;Benignus, 1959:1).

<sup>49</sup> To keep before the churches of Africa [South of the Sahara] their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the church's task to faithfully interpret, in the Muslim world, the Gospel of Jesus Christ; secondly, to effect research and education for (a) above??; thirdly, to help in the creation of area committees to serve as representatives of churches cooperating in the project in their respective areas; and fourthly, to maintain contact with area committees set up for this purpose in various countries of Africa [South of the Sahara]; fifthly, to exercise general responsibility for the study centre for Islam and Christianity; and finally, to subscribe to assist, subsidise and cooperate with any organization or institution whose objectives are in whole or in part similar to those

The vision and philosophy of PROCMURA is to achieve a “continent where Christian and Muslim communities in spite of their differences, work together for justice, peace and reconciliation, towards the holistic development of the human family and the environment” (Constitution of the Organisation, 2003). The Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations (Ibid. 2003)) is dedicated to promote the following mission within the churches in Africa:

- Faithful Christian witness to the Gospel in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respects the spirit of good neighbourliness.
- Constructive engagement with Muslims for peace in society and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims for holistic development of the human family.

Theologically and missiologically speaking, PROCMURA produce believes that the Christian witness is an integral part of Christian identity and is therefore obligatory. It emphasises that the church, in its calling to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the world, should take the context seriously as an indispensable requirement for Christian presence in an interfaith environment. For this reason, the church in a Muslim environment should seek to come to a deeper understanding of her Muslim neighbours and their religion, Islam. This understanding implies not only a fair and objective knowledge of what Muslims believe and practise, but also a respectful and empathetic attitude towards Muslims (and others) with whom they share God’s world.

In addition, PROCMURA also believes that, because of the common humanity Christians share with other(s), especially Muslims, the Gospel has to be communicated and interpreted to them faithfully and peaceably, lest it be obscured by the negative historical and contemporary encounters between adherents of the two faiths in Northern Nigeria. To this effect, the interpretation must be faithful in obedience to God. It should neither be compromised under the pretext of promoting peace and peaceful coexistence, nor be aggressive and polemical under the guise of Jesus’ mandate for Christians to proclaim the Gospel in season and out of season. To do this ministry effectively, there is a need for quality of life.

Helen Reid (2004:1) observed: The twofold objective of constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence, and faithful and responsible Christian Witness, are seen as

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of the organization and to subscribe in any funds or objects, charitable or otherwise, which may be deemed likely to promote the interest of the organization (Amended Constitution, 1995:1).

linked because to share the good News of Christ, Christians need to live according to Kingdom values, making peace and hungering after justice. As Christians share the gospel with Muslims, its message must not be obscured by the quality of life of the Christian community.

Hence, the church must rely on God for the enabling power for this kind of witness. As to Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace, PROCMURA advocates that the church should work towards the promotion of the spirit of good neighbourliness, mutual respect and tolerance. It also has to constructively engage with the Muslim communities to ensure that conflicts between Christians and Muslims are addressed in a non-violent manner. Furthermore, the church, in its search for peace and peaceful co-existence with others, might look to Christ, who is Himself the “Prince of Peace”. Therefore, PROCMURA’s concept of ‘Christian constructive engagement’ with Muslims for peaceful co-existence and the holistic development of the human family are centred on two critical aspects of its work, namely peace and reconciliation.

The organisational constitution (Constitution and Bye-Law, 2003:1) describes these aims well: PROCMURA aims to keep before the churches of Africa their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the churches task of interpreting the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully in the Muslim world and to promote Christian constructive engagements with Muslims for peace in society and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

In view of the above provision, Mbillah (2004) says that understanding Islam implies not only a fair and objective knowledge of what Muslims believe and practise, but a respectful and empathetic attitude towards Muslim as fellow creatures and seeker after God. Therefore, to avoid an understanding that leads to an offensive or hostile attitude and potential for conflict on the one hand, and to a disinterest or indifference on the other, the task of understanding Islam in its regional and contextual appearance was included in the constitution. In other words, this overall guideline includes the scientific and religious understanding of Islam in its broadest sense. The churches at the institutional and local levels are responsible for promoting such an understanding by all means possible.

The second part of PROCMURA’s aims indicate “interpreting the Gospel faithfully”. Mbillah (2003) explains that the gospel should be communicated to Muslims primarily by the quality of life of the Christian community and especially by its behaviour towards Muslims. It may also mean to clarify words that need to be understood by Muslims for effective witness. Millar added that, in spite of the common humanity Christians share with Muslims, the Gospel is to be communicated to them, lest it be obscured by the quality of life of the Christian community, especially by its behaviour towards Muslims in history, as at present. Incidentally, the witness I am referring here becomes a holistic dimension.

This is to say, a living Christian community with a living faith is crucial for witness. Therefore, it is the task of education to include the various themes, such as rising awareness for effective witness through form of evangelisation outreach, Church service, contextualisation and indigenisation of Muslim converts. The task of education also includes; theological interpretation in communal life, for the improvement of living conditions in its widest sense. This argument will be elaborated on in the next chapter in the discussion on Kritzinger's praxis of mission as encounterology.

Crossley (1959:2) asserts that the understanding of Muslims and the interpretation of the Gospel are appropriate and reasonable. When the learning is carried out faithfully, in obedience to God, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ... [Neither] compromise for the sake of peaceful coexistence, nor is aggressiveness under the guise of proclamation intended. Similarly, Mbillah (2008) maintains that the profile and form of the Christian faith should not be clouded or kept in passive silence, and that extreme form of aggressive evangelisation like "Crusade" methods should be avoided for the sake of respect.

Therefore, in view of the above submissions, one may suggest the middle ground of witnessing to Christ in love and loving, which becomes the truest witness. In respect of the *missio Dei*, God's own mission work in the example of Jesus Christ, and God as the ultimate subject of Christian-Muslim relations (CMR) and encounters, also becomes an overall ruling aspect. This implies that informed knowledge is believed to promote responsible Christian witness that does not violate the spirit of good neighbourliness. Hence, from this discussion, understanding God within Islam and Christianity becomes a crucial and decisive key. Again, Mbillah repeats that tendencies towards an understanding of a dichotomy between the Islamic Allah and the Christian God, and towards an understanding of having one (and the same) God, prevail and are debated in present discussions. However, faithful understanding and interpreting are not described in detail in PROCMURA's constitution, thus leaving an open field for research for contextual religious, theological and missiological studies which should enhance and promote Christian-Muslim relations in order to prevent misunderstandings and obstacles.

Mbillah (2004b) further points out that it is worth stressing that conversion-oriented as a possible means to witnessing have been put in constructive and creative tension. In other words, in a framework of understanding, a precondition of offensive outreach approaches that is understood as being harmful. The question is whether the foremost intention of the CMR should be seen in witnessing and conversion, or in understanding Islam and interpreting the Gospel to Muslims, without necessarily expecting conversion. In other words, how could one expect conversion or the condition of non-conversion in CMR? At this point,

it can be argued that the driving force of conversion-oriented approaches may be an obstacle to a faithful understanding and interpretation of the Gospel.

In response to the above questions, PROCMURA has created a theological and missiological mechanism. For PROCMURA, peace is generally understood as not only being the absence of war or strife, and not just something humans can wish for, but also something that has to be worked at. For this reason, PROCMURA's programme seeks to build peace where it has been broken, and to bring about reconciliation where strife exists and persists. This programme targets Christian and Muslim leaders, women and youth, government and civil society. The focus of peace here may reflect the principle of *shalom*<sup>50</sup> and *salaam*<sup>51</sup> in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions respectively, as these two concepts depict the total well-being of the human person. The activities of PROCMURA in Northern Nigeria, as well as in other part of Africa, will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.5. The activities of PROCMURA in Northern and Western Nigeria and in other African countries**

Going by its constitution (Constitution and Bye-laws, 2003:1), PROCMURA's commitment is to provide awareness of Islam to African Christians in their respective regions. With regard to this, Chukwulozie (1986:68-69) says:

The Islam in Africa Project always preoccupied itself with peaceful relations with Muslims and sought above all to prepare missionaries to understand Islam correctly. Hence is emphasis was on a positive and accurate understanding of Islam rather than assuming a theological position concerning Islam

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<sup>50</sup>*Shalom* is widely known to be a Hebrew word that means "peace". However, "peace" is only one small part of the meaning. *Shalom* is used to both greet people and to bid them farewell, and it means much more than "peace", hello, or "goodbye". For example, in Hebrew, *shalom* carries the idea of "wholeness" or "completeness". As to friendship, *shalom* has to do with trust and familiarity. Prophetically, *shalom* is a major part of the Messianic promise of future blessings on Israel, which would also extend to the rest of the world in Christ Jesus.

<sup>51</sup> Ordinarily, the word *salaam* refers to a Muslim form of salutation. According to Hazrat Moulana Yusuf Motala Saheb (2001), *salaam* is God's divine name: "As Salam", the source of peace, safety and perfection. "As-salaam is indeed a name from the names of Allah, which has placed upon the Earth, therefore spread *salaam* amongst yourselves in abundance"(Ibid, 2001)

In view of the above statement, Adamu (2014:42) classifies PROCMURA's activities into two categories: dissemination of the Christian approach to Muslims among Christian groups and, in turn, helping the churches in taking initiatives to intensify the dissemination of the approach amongst their members.

It can also be argued in this modern-day that PROCMURA is one of the Christian organisations in Africa that is dedicated to building bridges of understanding and promoting mutual respect between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, and on the entire African continent. From its vast experience, and its many years of service, apart from being a faithful witness, and involved in constructive engagement and building peace and reconciliation, PROCMURA recognises that, in the Christian-Muslim engagement, the churches have to assume a comprehensive approach that covers five broad areas:

- Christian-Muslim relations in the economic sphere;
- Christian-Muslim relations in the cultural sphere;
- Christian-Muslim relations in the political sphere;
- Christian-Muslim relations in the social sphere; and
- Christian-Muslim relations in the religious sphere.

Johnson Mbillah (2010) claims that these five broad areas constitute the core of any Christian-Muslim interaction, seeing that, in Islam, economic, religious, political, social and cultural issues cannot be isolated from one another. Therefore, the exclusion of any of them would constitute a partial approach to the Christian-Muslim encounter. These approaches to Christian-Muslim relations are set in different national contexts –some with conflict, and some for peaceful co-existence (Reid, 2004:3). The following sub-section provide the activities of the project in detail

#### **4.5.1 Peace and reconciliation programme**

The quest for peace and development is the driving force that provides the ground for PROCMURA's activities in relation to peace and reconciliation. This focus on the African continent is strengthened by the objective of the Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful coexistence for the holistic development of the human family and its environment. In this regard, during a conference in the Sudan, Mbillah (2010) noted that "...as religious people, we owe it to God and humanity to seek peace, wholeness and wellbeing (*Shalom* and *Salaam*) of the land". He added, "As Christians and Muslims we are called to be stewards or *Khalifa* (viceroys) of God's creation". Therefore, religious

leaders are agents of peace, not destruction; they cannot pray for peace and act in the opposite manner (Cf. Section 4.3). The most targeted countries include Togo, Benin, Liberia, Nigeria, Sudan and Madagascar.

Conferences organised in these nations have been focused on peace and reconciliation. Papers are delivered by both Christian and Muslim religious leaders, as well as by government officials and the general adviser of PROCMURA. The target audience for most of these conferences is religious leaders, government officials, women and youth (Sudan Conference on Peace and Development, 2010:20). Each conference issues a communiqué to establish the commitment of the participants toward peace and development. In support of this point, the communiqué from the Togo conference on conflict prevention, peace and reconciliation (2010:16) stated that “The participants at the end of the conference called on the government and all stakeholders to support the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to ensure that their work run on smoothly and that they live up to their name”.

In a like manner, a communiqué from the Benin conference on the theme, ‘Christians and Muslims Together for Peace and Development’ (Adamu, 2010:20) highlighted the pledge of determination of several media houses, Christians and Muslims in Benin to work together to uphold the ideals of justice, peace and development in the country. The quest for peace and development may not be achieve in full if PROCMURA works by itself. This why there is a need to collaborate with other organisations to get better results.

Other important activities of PROCMURA include women’s and education programmes, youth programmes, literature and communication programmes and the development of manpower. With the intent to create opportunities for mutuality, and peaceful and religious coexistence, these will be further addressed below.

#### **4.5.2 Women’s and education programmes**

For decades of carrying out PROCMURA’s activities, it has been established that women’s and education programmes have conducted educative programmes and awareness on HIV/AIDS and related diseases. Another core business of PROCMURA is providing education to Christianity and Islam, and the need for relationships. This aspect of PROCMURA’s ministry has touched many women’s lives at the grassroots, regional and continental levels. Helen Reid (2004:3) says, in relation to the activities of PROCMURA:



The Women's Programme remains one of the most active of the PROCMURA's grassroots programmes. Concerns include issues of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and the HIV/AIDS pandemic; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is practiced by some Christians and Muslims; sharing principles of faithful Christian witness so that everyone can practice it; working for peace and acknowledging that in violent conflicts, it is women who lose their husbands and sons; issues associated with marriages between Christians and Muslims.

Other women's activities in PROCMURA's ministry include the role of women in peace building and peaceful coexistence, mixed marriages, bringing children to Christ and how to witness to Muslims. These programmes are carried out through consultations, workshops and symposiums. It therefore is clear that the purpose of women's programmes in PROCMURA is to disseminate information to diversify its programmes on the continent with the hope that the women's wing will foster dialogue between Christian and Muslim women.

### **4.5.3 Youth programme**

Mbillah (2013:2) comments that, in the world today, where unemployment, desperation and hopelessness are taking their toll on the youth, manipulation is sometimes rife in society. He argues that the youth operate from a group mind-set of collective action that more often than not can be destructive, given that they can easily be used by both political and religious leaders to cause disorder operating on the principle of "catch them young". The youth programme is one of PROCMURA's core programmes and requires a special focus and well-articulated themes. A well-known maxim states that, in any society, the youth are the bedrock of tomorrow and they need to be given the chance today so that they may build on their tomorrow. However, it is widely accepted that the youth have assumed tools of destruction in the hands of the elite for their egotistical advantage in Nigeria and around the globe.

Nahor (2008:199) describes the youth on both sides (Christians and Muslims) as often being flash points in any potential conflict situation. In times of crisis, the youth have been the vanguard. Therefore, it makes sense what Adebayo (2010:213ff) says in relation to the cause of ethno-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria. The Niger-Delta zone in Nigeria, the militant youth had the place difficult for expertise working in oil industries, making the area virtually ungovernable for the government. He contends that the Bakassi Boys and MASSOB took over the Southeast with the aim of liberating the zone from Nigeria and to gain control of the natural resources of their land.

Similarly, when describing the activities of the Boko Haram in Nigeria, Marchal (2012:4) indicated that Boko Haram has a strong constituency in the *Almajiri* (pupils and students learning the Qur'an) by treating all those who attend schools providing Western education with contempt and derision. Another potential recruitment base is made up of school leaders who have been unable to find employment and are drawn by the messages of the charismatic Mohammed Yusuf (Marchal, 2012:4). In other words, the success of Mohammed Yusuf is that he attracts unemployed youth to follow him, as he stands against police and political corruption. Therefore, it is helpful when Innocent and Ibieta (2012:17) point out those violent up-risings in Nigeria are ultimately the result of frustration with corruption and the attendant social malaise of poverty and unemployment.

In view of the brief overview of the nature of the youth, the relevance of the youth programme in PROCMURA cannot be overemphasised. In some of their programmes for the youth, PROCMURA organises seminars for youth leaders of the churches that form the area committee to provide them with training on what PROCMURA means by 'faithful Christian witness' and 'Christian-Muslim relations for peace'. The youth are usually enthusiastic and ask many questions with respect to practical issues concerning the Islamic and Christian faiths, and the person of Christ in the Christian and Muslim teachings.

Moreover, PROCMURA also organises workshops for Christian and Muslim youth on HIV/AIDS. The youth are educated on how to prevent infection, manage the disease if already infected, and how to avoid stigmatisation (Dugbe, 2010:27). Mbillah (2013c:2) confirms that PROCMURA consolidates the principles of peace within religions and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, which is in line with PROCMURA's belief that peace and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims that exist anywhere cannot be taken for granted. At this kind of conference, political and religious leaders are normally invited, as appeals are made to the youth to eschew intolerance and build a society worth emulating. The next question is in what ways PROCMURA uses literature and communication to achieve its desired goal in addressing Christian-Muslims relations in Africa.

#### **4.5.4 The literature and communication programmes**

As PROCMURA aims to educate the church, the needs and effects of the literature towards this commitment cannot be overstressed. Therefore, the literature and communication programmes form another important aspect of PROCMURA's activities. In this regard, PROCMURA is committed to

producing yearly magazines on its work for the area committees and the wider public to read, especially for those who wish to follow what PROCMURA does every year. Mbillah (2010:28) says the magazines also provide on Christian-Muslim relations in Africa information such as reports of PROCMURA's work done in the previous, plans for workshops and paper work on communication. These information's are posted on the organization's website for the Area committees and the wider public who would want to follow what PROCMURA does either on the monthly or yearly basis. Therefore, these mediums of communication replace the printed newsletter, the production of which has in the circumstances become rather expensive. PROCMURA communicates in two languages; English and French. This leads me to a discussion of the training of manpower for PROCMURA's activities.

#### **4.5.5 Higher education programme**

The idea of introducing Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (ICMR) at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya was initiated at the 16<sup>th</sup> General Council meeting of PROCMURA, during which the workload of PROCMURA's central office staff was analysed. The Council admitted that, if PROCMURA was to live up to its commitment and the demands for its expertise<sup>52</sup> in Africa, it needed more hands to support its work at the grassroots as well as high-profile levels (Mbillah, 2012:3). It had to create a pool of experts for PROCMURA for the present and for the future, and also ensure recruitment to the PROCMURA area committee and the central office.

Since the inception of the Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations programme at St. Paul's University in 2004, PROCMURA has built capacities within its constituencies across Africa (Tanzania, Madagascar, Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda, Turkey and Kenya). Efforts are also being intensified to train people from Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Benin and Burkina Faso. Mbillah (2010:4) said in relation to

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<sup>52</sup>Since starting ICMR in St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya, the project has trained many people in the field of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations with the aim to assist the Christian community in Africa to develop a team of competent Christians who would be involved in training programmes in their churches in relation to Islam and Christian-Muslim relations (Adamu, 2014:50, 51). Some Nigerians who have benefited from the training in the past are E. O. Oyelade, who became area adviser and consultant to the Southern Nigeria Area Committee, L. O. Sanneh, the Programme's research adviser and consultant, I. G. Shelly, who became an associate adviser in Northern Nigeria, A Ulea, another associate adviser for the Northern Area Committee; J. Aeneas, who is presently area adviser; S. P. Mutum, A. Mthambala from Malawi, S. B. As Sanni from the Republic of Benin, and J. Mbillah from Ghana, who was later sponsored by the Netherland Reformed Church for a PhD degree and is the current General Adviser. Others include Rev. Fasola and Rev. L. O. Lawal from Nigeria, and Rev. E. R. Kajivora from Sudan; Rev. N. Samwini from Ghana; Rev. S. N. Wanda from Kenya; Rev. E. Daoudou and Rev. J. Loum from Sierra Leone; Rev. F. T. Lateju from Nigeria and many others, including myself.

personnel development in his Annual Report 2010 that many of the ICMR graduates had been assigned to important positions that would enable them to contribute to the services of PROCMURA in particular and to Christian-Muslim relations in general.

From this description of PROCMURA's programme with regard to the ICMR, the organisational analysis indicates that the achievements and strengths of the organisation are hinged on the development of a human resource pool within the churches that understands the Christian and Muslim faiths, and the complex nature of Christian-Muslim relations.

In summary, the research has attempted to discuss the activities of PROCMURA, which include faithful witness, peace and reconciliation, and collaboration with others. Other important initiatives comprise women's and education programmes, youth programmes, and literature and ICMR programmes, of which I am a beneficiary. The next section deals with the process made by PROCMURA in executing these activities.

#### **4.5.6 The processes (conference, seminars, workshops, consultation and education)**

PROCMURA's activities are aimed at providing education to the churches and the Christian community on the importance of Christian-Muslim relations. Ellinwood (2008b:74) indicates that the need to educate the church was recognised in the IAP/PROCMURA's early years by its committee of advisors, which encouraged churches and Christians to understand the concept of "Christian witness" more broadly than it would normally have been viewed (Cf. Section 4.2). Therefore, it makes sense when Mbillah (2010:6) declares that educating the churches provides guidelines on why and how such relations should be carried out. This means that churches and the Christian community need to engage with PROCMURA to convince them and be convinced that Christian-Muslim relations are an important aspect of the church's life.

Similarly, Rissanen (2012), in "The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Annual Report 2012", stated that "Christian witness means taking care of creation, proclaiming the Gospel of the message of atonement and responsibility towards one's neighbours". Therefore, the church's ministry is to faithfully witness in an interfaith environment, in a respectful manner, but also with humility and boldness (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004:348).

As already mentioned, PROCMURA's second core activity has to do with constructive Christian engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful coexistence for the holistic (economic, cultural, political, social and religious) development of the human family (Cf. Section 4.3). In this regard, Mbillah (2010) contends that, as a Christian organisation, PROCMURA stretches out a hand of friendship to the Muslim community because it believes that its most important responsibility is to educate the churches about the complexity of Christian-Muslim relations across the globe and, more especially, in Africa.

PROCMURA recognises that the subject is an existential that has its theoretical and practical theological focus that all church denominations in spite of doctrinal differences must come together to critically examine the issues and find a way of relating with their Muslim neighbours constructively. It is only in doing so that the variety of understanding of what Christian-Muslim relations in the ordinary sense mean, will be synchronised with the more complex nature of the subject to produce a reasoned understanding of what is the norm and what is the exception (Mbillah, 2010:7).

Therefore, the importance of constructive engagement in Christian-Muslim relations can never be overemphasised. It appears to be the key factor that motivates PROCMURA in paying attention to conducting workshops, seminars and conferences, consultations on peace, peace-building, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation, and the *why* and *how* of working relations between Christians and Muslims in 22 African countries. Some of the seminars, consultations and workshops have been presented to church leaders, while others are presented to both Christian and Muslim youths and women.

It is important to note that Nigeria has been very troubled in terms of categorisation and inter-religious conflict. Mbillah (2012:9) rightly argue that Northern Nigeria is a hot spot, and therefore engrossed into several clashes between Christians and Muslims. Consequently, this part of the country has been classified as a "hurly-burly" area. It is this kind of vicinity, he has to travel on numerous occasions to educate Christian and Muslim religious leaders about constructive engagement, seminars, conferences and courses; hence, the relationship is tense. The idea of constructive engagement is to build a community that works towards living together with their differences, in 'peace', and not in 'pieces'. The emphasis is on working to develop positive interfaith relations at the community level that can serve as a basis for dialogue if trouble arises.

The activities of PROCMURA in Northern Nigeria, as well as in other part of Africa, target Christian-Muslim leaders, women and youth, government and civil society (Cf. Section 4.3). In some Northern parts of Nigeria, violence erupts from time to time. Although the causes of violence between Christians

and Muslims are multifaceted [Cf. Section 4.2], religion (Christianity and Islam) is most often portrayed as the singular cause. Reid (2004:3) cites an example of the introduction of the Shari'a in twelve states of Northern Nigeria, which became an emotive issue, as the Muslims felt that its introduction was imperative, as *Allah* (God) requires them to live by its dictates, while the Christian communities, on the other hand, felt that its introduction was a violation of their God-given rights.

The most recent violence that brought controversy in Northern Nigeria is from the *Boko Haram*,<sup>53</sup> extremist Muslims who seek to turn the entire country (Nigeria) into an Islamic nation. It is clear that PROCMURA has to make several trips to Northern Nigeria to address issues of Christian-Muslim relations. At most of these, conference papers that have to do with peace-building, peaceful co-existence and reconciliation are presented by Christian and Muslim religious leaders, civil society members and PROCMURA officials. The conferences or consultations usually draw up a resolution at the end, such as the Christian and Muslim cooperation for conflict prevention/management, peace-building and reconciliation in Kaduna did. The conference PROCMURA organises is attended by Christian-Muslim leaders from five Northern states of Nigeria and attracted religious leaders, who acknowledged their concern with the intermittent violent conflicts that militated against the peace of the states and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

The conference also helps the religious leaders to recognise that Islam and Christianity, being the two major religious faiths in Nigeria, have to work together to address the issues motivating conflicts, ranging from political, economic, social, ethnic, religious and other machinations, such as land ownership and power struggles. Each conference ends with a communiqué. At this particular conference, in Kaduna state, Nigeria the communiqué highlighted the concerns of the Christian and Muslim leaders, and called for justice, peace and reconciliation for the development of the region. The Kaduna communiqué (Mbillah, 2010c: 30) reads:

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<sup>53</sup>Taiye, citing Herskovits reference, explains that the expression 'Boko Haram' has become a popular name for the sect also known unofficially as the 'Yusufiya'. 'Boko' is the Hausa word for the Western system of education, while 'Haram' means 'forbidden'. That is to say, the group opposes Western education for Muslim children. The sects have expressed their resentment over what is perceived as negative elements being propagated through Western education, and Boko Haram began in 2001 as a peaceful Islamic splinter group. They were preaching and going about in the North, propagating their own ideals within the state, wearing palms as their uniforms. The politicians exploited them for electoral purposes. But it was not until 2009 that Boko Haram turned to violence, especially after its leader, a young Muslim cleric named Mohammed Yusuf, was killed while in police custody. The violent activity of Boko Haram is a reaction seeking revenge (Taiye, 2013:63).

Aware that the solution to violent conflicts of any kind in our states and in Nigeria at large cannot appropriately be resolved without the active involvement of the leadership of Church and Mosque...Determine to uphold the principles of justice, peace and reconciliation rooted in our respective scriptures and traditions. Convinced that ethnic, religious, social, cultural and political diversities are part and parcel of our African heritage which if harnessed properly can be more enriching and not divisive as is currently the case. Do hereby commit ourselves to engage with one another to set in motion proactive measures to uphold justice, safeguard peace, foster reconciliation and promote development. Resolve to team up with all stakeholders and all people of good will within our dear country and others who have Nigeria at heart, to ensure that collectively we work towards sustainable peace in our states...

The above discussion suggests a cycle that depicts conflict, moving towards violence, then to threat, before peace; religious leaders are committed to addressing this with earnestness. Another sample from the communiqué, with respect to the Nigerian situation, came up in PROCMURA's Religious Leaders Conference for Peace and Development, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Addis Ababa Report,2012:50), where religious leaders demonstrated their concern for Nigeria by making their opinions known:

We Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders from eight (8) African Countries: Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania...Having closely followed the events and happening in Nigeria (especially some states in the North and South), are alarmed by the spiral of violence and utterances that are bound to further derail any hope for peace in the states, regions, cities and towns concerned, and indeed the entire country. At a conference called to deliberate on the contribution of Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders toward Peace and Development, the sheer mayhem purported to be unleashed against innocent people in the name of religious ideology which finds no credence in our respective religious faiths and practices could not have come at a worse time.

This and many other appeals have been made by Christians and Muslim leaders, nationally and internationally, especially focusing on exploitation by the elites, the media, and government and religious leaders. According to the Christian-Muslim leaders from eight African countries, "religious differences have always been exploited to satisfy political, economic and social agendas, and that ethnic exclusivism has more often than not found allies in religion thus perpetuating negative solidarities with its attendant blind support and determination to undermine ethnic religious plurality of Nations" (Ethiopia, Addis Ababa Report, 2012:50).

Christianity and Muslim are considered missional faiths. This is why both faiths are called to be agents of peace, justice and reconciliation. Christians and Muslims are advised to refrain from making pronouncements and statements that would threaten the unity of any nation and the spirit of togetherness.

These communiqués are a heartfelt cry, most especially considering the strategic position of the Nigerian state economically, politically and otherwise. As one of the leading powers on the continent, a more peaceful Nigeria certainly would create a more peaceful environment in Africa and in the world at large.

In the case of Northern Nigeria, where violent conflicts continue to erupt between Christians and Muslims, the challenge for PROCMURA is that, whenever mutual suspicion surfaces within a given community, it always takes a longer time to restore it. Ellingwood (2008:85) says that “PROCMURA and its constituencies are determined not to give up but to go on as long as it takes to bring about mutual respect and understanding”. It is in the same vein that Mbillah (2010:11; 2012:11) emphasises that PROCMURA’s aim is to harness the common humanity for peace and not explore animosity by pushing and shoving and making worse a dire situation. Consequently, going by the above analysis, the outcomes of PROCMURA’s ministry are obvious, and the challenges and successes also are evident.

#### **4.5.7 PROCMURA’S activities of collaboration with others organisations**

Collaboration carries the idea of an act of working with another person or group of people to create or produce a useful result. One of the cardinal principles of PROCMURA is to “work with all organizations whose ideals and goals are in whole or in part to that of PROCMURA’s” (Mbillah, 2010:11). As such, PROCMURA is associated with many organisations with a similar focus in mission. These include the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) member churches, the Symposium of Episcopal Churches in Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) member churches, the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) member churches, and the Pentecostal Councils on the national level. As for the world ecumenical arena, constituencies of PROCMURA are made up of member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), and it has a strong working relationship with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

The Anglican World Mission based in London, the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Mission 21 Switzerland, the Protestant Churches in Germany, the Dan Mission, the Church of Scotland World Mission Council, the Swiss Protestant Churches, DM Exchange and Mission, the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW), the Christian Organisation Research and Advocacy Trust for Africa (CORAT), the Church



Mission Society Africa, the World Student Christian Federation Africa Region, the All Africa Conference of Churches, Crosslink Mission Agency, and IMCS Pax Romana Africa.

In line with this principle of working with other organisations, PROCMURA has facilitated programmes that bring together Christians and Islamic studies scholars to work towards peace and development in places such as the Central African Republic and Tanzania, where conferences were held on conflict analysis and peace building, as well as Christian and Muslim conferences on inter-religious dialogue for the consolidation of peace (PROCMURA Annual Report, 2010:23-24). Apart from the core business of PROCMURA, the focus on peace and reconciliation and collaboration with others, PROCMURA also runs other initiatives.

#### **4.6 Outcomes of PROCMURA'S activities in Nigeria and Africa**

Despite the challenges faced by PROCMURA, the organisation's achievements are relevant and laudable in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa. This section highlights the successes as well as the challenges of PROCMURA's activities in Africa. In relation to the history of the presence of Islam in Northern Nigeria, it can be argued that it existed long before the coming of the British and their rule of the region. The independence constitution of 1960, which saw Nigeria (North, South, East and West) become one country, included Shari'a law. The Shari'a, however, did not include the criminal aspect, but as far as the North was concerned at that time, Christians generally felt that they were treated as second-class citizens. The Igbo war of secession, known as the Biafra War, in 1966 compounded the religious problems, as the Igbo are mainly Christians. The succession of military coups and rules thereafter did not help unify the people either.

Hence, the efforts to create a situation in which Christians and Muslims could meet and talk about issues that would enable them to live in peace were not readily understood and appreciated by a large segment of the Muslim as well as the Christian community. Fearon (2009:1ff), as the chairperson of PROCMURA in Africa, admitted that:

Some of them who were engaged in Christian-Muslim dialogue were targeted for elimination terming them as traitors of the faith. He added that today, there is inter-religious cooperation but still many challenges abound. The Muslim and Christian communities are beginning to understand the importance of collaboration and cooperation even with the implication of tearing each other apart and getting at each other's throats...He further said organisations such as

PROCMURA... are given the light of peace and understanding to Muslims and Christians community, and this is a view that is also beginning to be embraced by traditional leaders.

It is in this situation that PROCMURA started its mission. It is worth noting that, prior to the coming of PROCMURA in Northern Nigeria, history has it that the Sudan United Mission (SUM) made some attempts to spread the gospel to the pagans in the Sudan (the land of the black man) before they became Mohammadans, but only in 1930 did the SUM began outreach to the Muslims (Bijlefeld, 1989:4). Adamu (2014:57) established that the “SUM had hospitals and leper clinics in the Muslims community but after thirty years; they had a problem of not knowing the local variety of Islam with which they were dealing...”

The second attempt to facilitate Muslim-Christian contact in Nigeria, according to Chukwulozie (1986:68), took place in 1952, when Trimingham, an Islamic scholar, visited Nigeria, which resulted in the writing of a pamphlet. The other attempt, according to Benignus (1959:22), was made in 1957, when Cragg (one-time Assistant Anglican Bishop of Cairo) visited many parts of Nigeria to conduct workshops. In 1959, Benignus’s mission proposal was approved and accepted. According to Adamu (2014:60), Nigeria was the first African country to be visited by Benignus. Benignus entered Nigeria through Maiduguri, and then went to Yola in the North-western part of Nigeria; from there he went to Jos, in the middle of the country, and proceeded to Lagos, in the West. He went to Kano in North Central, and finally to Ibadan, also in the West. During this visit, Benignus was able to meet with both Christian and Muslim leaders.<sup>54</sup>

In view of the above explanation, it can be argued that PROCMURA’s programme has brought about an understanding of the importance of collaboration and peace, and the implications of tearing one another down. On the continental level, the programme has made the following achievements:

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<sup>54</sup>In the North, there was the Northern Missionary Council (NMC); it comprised all missionary bodies except the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). In the South there was the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), which comprised the Anglicans, Church of the Brethren, Methodists, Presbyterians (Scottish and Basel Missions), Qua Iboe Church, Sudan United Mission (SUM), Salvation Army, Boys Brigade and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). Benignus also met with J. Crossley, a Methodist missionary with special responsibility for the study of Islam in Yoruba land. Benignus was able to inaugurate acting Area Committees in some of the countries he visited pending the arrival of the specialists (Adamu, 2014:60-63).

- PROCMURA pioneered the dissemination of information on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations to churches and mission organisations in Africa;
- PROCMURA initiated the grassroots ministry of faithful and responsible Christian witness and Christian collaboration with Muslims to work for peace and peaceful coexistence.
- PROCMURA influenced Christian-Muslim cooperation on matters of mutual interest and concern,
- PROCMURA created a forum for Christian-Muslim discussions (dialogue) where conflict between the two communities arises.
- PROCMURA is providing training for men and women, and research (BA to PhD level),
- PROCMURA initiated programmes for youth in the area of peace and peace-building between Christians and Muslims, HIV/AIDS prevention and control, and also the initiation of academic and practical issues, and papers on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in Africa.

In addition to all of these achievements, PROCMURA is involved in peace initiatives in the Sudan, where political, religious and ethnic issues deeply divide Christians and Muslims (PROCMURA's Brochure, 2010:2-3). Despite the valuable achievements made by PROCMURA, Mbillah (2011) stated in his annual report of 2011 that the organisation still faced many challenges:

The organisation wishes to initiate MA programmes in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in two more theological colleges in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa. To work towards the establishment of a PROCMURA research centre; to support women theologians to take up studies in Islam to promote the women's programme; to work towards the establishment of an investment fund for the programme; and to explore ways and means by which we can expand our work into Southern Africa, Central Africa, and the Sahel region of Africa.

Other challenges PROCMURA faces include the lack of involvement of and participation by some church leaders during some of their seminars and conferences. Some church leaders are sceptical about meetings of such a calibre, as there are so many related projects, associations and agencies in Nigeria. Some church leaders are cynical because the meeting is not organised by their denomination. These suggest that PROCMURA has to be more creative to address this challenge by creating opportunities at the grassroots for churches who are sceptical or cynical. Otherwise all the efforts by PROCMURA's officials to educate church leaders will be unsuccessful (Adamu, 2014:72). A misconception of PROCMURA being anti-evangelistic by church leaders is another challenge facing PROCMURA. In view of this, Adamu (2014:72 & 73) maintains that:

The misconception comes from the emphasis on tolerance, respect, understanding and co-operation by PROCMURA, to Muslims. Whilst most of the churches would employ the traditional preaching at and proclaiming condemnation to any person outside Christ, PROCMURA was viewed as encouraging a compromise, especially in the issue of inter-faith marriage.

These attitudes are found among some of the conservative evangelicals and Pentecostal churches in Northern Nigeria. The funding of PROCMURA's meetings by the local churches is also contested, which appears to be the result of narrowness in understanding ministry opportunity. The researcher is of the opinion that PROCMURA's leadership should intensify awareness in local churches of its mission and vision for the expansion of God's kingdom. This is a common phenomenon, as mentioned earlier, especially where some churches feel they are not actually responsible if it is not their denomination that is directing them towards such participation. The churches' lack of involvement financially can be argued on the basis of poverty.

Another notable challenge facing PROCMURA concerns officers (staff members) who do not offer their services full time. A religious belief has driven many people to love the ministry of PROCMURA, but their primary function has hindered them from being efficient. Adamou (2014:74) argues that "some officials are interested in the project but cannot make time for its activities". The researcher wishes to challenge PROCMURA to place more emphasis on commitment, awareness and motivation in creating loyalty in service. Furthermore, despite the financial constraints, the researcher desires to suggest that full-time area and associate advisers should be appointed in every region and the country at large. So, that the approach to Christian-Muslim relations is set in different national contexts according to their needs. Since the chapter attempted to highlight some of the achievement of PROCMURA, and also observed some challenges, assessing prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA's activities might advance the interest of more church leaders who are cynical and sceptical about PROCMURA's activities.

#### **4.7 OUTCOMES OF PROPHETIC DIALOGUE IN PROCMURA**

This section provides the amalgamation of PROCMURA's activities and prophetic dialogue. Two important phrases summarise prophetic dialogue and what PROCMURA stands for: 'Christian witnesses and 'Christian constructive engagement' with other faiths. Bevans and Schroeder (2012:95ff) state that prophetic dialogue can be described as "speaking and listening, inductive and deductive methods, theory and experience, insiders and outsiders, and confidence and humility." It can also be argued that prophetic dialogue is both Christian witness and constructive engagement.

### 4.7.1 Christian witness in PROCURA and prophetic dialogue

Witness is an aspect of prophetic dialogue. Therefore, prophetically, it is argued that:

A prophet is someone who listens, who is attentive, who sees, who has sensitivity to the world ... Prophet is someone who “speaks forth” and this in two senses: in a first sense, once having heard or discerned the word of God, the prophet faithfully announces a message, either in words ... and prophets speak out in God’s name when people refuse to live lives worthy of their calling. Thus Amos railed against the injustices that Israel commits against the poor (Amos 2:6-7) Hosea and Jeremiah call Israel back from unfaithfulness and idolatry, (Bevan’s, 2010:7).

The illustration above suggests that prophecy is a complex reality. It has numerous characteristics, often interwoven. It is accomplished through words, as well as through deeds. Consequently, witness is “speaking forth”, which suggests that a witness is always listening and always open, always learning from the people among whom he works. In other words, Christian witness carries the idea of proclamation and lifestyle, whereas prophetic dialogue also transmits the idea of proclamation and lifestyle.

Missiologically and theologically speaking, the first meaning of evangelisation is the witness of an authentically Christian life; proclamation is the foundation, summit and centre of evangelisation. Jesus’ own mission was characterised by both words and deeds, and each explained the other. Perhaps the church’s greatest problem today is that its witness does not measure up to its teaching; it does not always practice what it preaches. Witness and proclamation belong together. We must equally assert that there should be no proclamation without presence (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004:352).

At its Sixth General Assembly in Vancouver, British Columbia, the WCC described witness as “those acts and words by which a Christian or community gives testimony to Christ and invites others to make their response to him” (24<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> August, 1989). Thus, according to Bevans and Schroeder (2004:353), witness involves proclamation, for neither can really be separated from the other. For convenience purposes in this reflection, however, I speak of witness more in terms of lifestyle and presence, what is sometimes referred to in Evangelical circles as lifestyle evangelicalism.

Furthermore, Bosch (1991:420) argues that “it is the ‘Word made flesh’ that is the gospel. The deed without the word is dumb: the word without the deed is empty”. Regan (2011:1) contends that, whether we are concerned with “worship and liturgy, prayer and contemplation, justice and peace, the integrity of creation, interreligious dialogue, evangelisation, inculturation, or reconciliation”, prophetic dialogue is a

foundational category for determining the effectiveness and authenticity of the theological task (Cf. Section 3.4).

The expression ‘prophetic dialogue’ carries the idea of dialogue with respect and in an attitude of humility, a desire for justice, peace and integrity of humankind and creation. Perhaps, this is why Langmead (2012) suggests that prophetic dialogue is speaking boldly, yet humbly, which means that Christians can share the Good News of Jesus being prophetic, speaking God’s word to those around them, but it needs to be done in humble conversation with those of other faiths. It may also portray the notion of practical theology, engagement in a sincere dialogue, particularly inter-religious dialogue, and thus shows that its focus is on reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. In the same way, according to the Alumni-consultation Report (2012:11) on what PROCMURA is and what it stands for:

Faithful Christian witness is relational, ensuring that our relations with others reflect our faith and belief. It is teaching the faith; verbal communicating the Gospel in a way that convince and convicts. Faithful Christian witness is also being role models in our daily lives; putting our faith in practice by being mindful that faith without works is dead.

This is to say that witness is an obligation led by Jesus Christ to the Church, and must be taken very seriously, while at the same time holding firm to the faith and identity, meeting the basic needs of both Christians and Muslims without discrimination. Therefore, in PROCMURA, Christian witness is representing Christ, as He would like to be represented by living ‘Christ-like’ lives. This entails respecting, loving and understanding others without compromising our faith. It is representing Christ through non-verbal communication of our faith through praxis (PROCMURA Alumni Report, 2012:11).

It is also collaboration in dealing with common challenges through advocacy, engaging in inter-religious conflict prevention and resolution, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. Consequently, the argument at this point suggests that PROCMURA and prophetic dialogue are intertwined when it comes to the aspect of faithful Christian witness, which is an aspect of dialogue; therefore, each is advocating diligent witness of Christ as a driving force to bring the Gospel to others in love and respect for good neighbourliness. Christians are to witness, but in a constructive manner.

#### 4.7.2 Constructive engagement in PROCMURA and prophetic dialogue

Constructive engagement with Muslims and other(s) for peace carries the idea of approaches based on common ground in Christian-Muslim relations, such as promoting the spirit of good neighbourliness, mutual respect and tolerance. Christians must engage with the Muslim communities to ensure that conflicts between Christians and Muslims are addressed in a non-violent manner and, in their search for peace and peaceful co-existence with Muslims should look to Christ, who is Himself the “Prince of Peace” (PROCMURA Brochure, 2010). This may involve socialisation, economic engagement and/or solidarity with God’s people in times of difficulties and crises, death and natural calamities (see Chapter 6). PROCMURA is the one Christian organisation in Africa that is dedicated to building bridges of understanding and promoting mutual respect between Christians and Muslims on the African continent through its conferences, consultations, seminars and other activities.<sup>55</sup>

As the sole programme of the Churches in Africa that stretches a hand of friendship to the Muslim community for peace and development, and recognising that adherents of these two great missionary religions have the potential to become bad neighbours, PROCMURA, in spite of its Protestant roots, works with all the churches in Africa, despite doctrinal differences, and relates to all the Muslim groups and organisations in Africa, despite doctrinal or sectional differences (Mbillah, 2012:9). PROCMURA works with all Christian and Muslim organisations, but is incorporated by none. Hence, the immersion of PROCMURA in all of these endeavours suggests a dialogue that produces peace, peaceful coexistence, and eventually translates into development.

From the perspective of dialogue that is prophetic, Samartha (1981:2ff) rightly asserts that “dialogue is not just concept; it is a relationship in a community as people share the meaning and mystery of human existence and as they struggle together in suffering, hope and joy”. Dialogue in this case is an adventure and an opportunity for people to challenge and be challenged as they seek to come to a deeper understanding of human life and God. This is constructive engagement. It is not categorisation. For this reason, the previous statement is suggesting dialogue as a special discourse that enables people with

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<sup>55</sup>The programmes or activities of PROCMURA includes capacity building peace and reconciliation, conflict prevention or management and transformation, women’s programme, education, Christian-Muslim marriages, gender based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), HIV/AIDS, human sexuality, youth programme, research and personnel development, literature and communication, archive and library development, general programmes, news and events (viewed 23 March 2014, from <http://www.procmura-prica.org>).

different perspectives and worldviews to work together to dispel mistrust and create a climate of good faith, break through negative stereotypes, and shift the focus from transaction to relationships.

It also allows for creating a community and expanding the number of people committed to decisions on challenging issues.<sup>56</sup> This is to say, dialogue is collaborative, looking for common understanding, combative and listening to understand, and finding the basis for agreement instead of assuming that there is only one right answer, and you have it. In the opinion of Hall (2010:45), dialogue is:

Prophetic dialogue has been suggested as the most appropriate category for describing the task of Christian mission today. Whereas “prophecy” gives priority to the word of God in scripture and tradition, “dialogue” highlights the importance of respectful human, cultural, and religious encounter. Both components are necessary; their relationship is dialectical.

Hence, it is in dialogue that we are called to acknowledge our own sinfulness and to engage in constant conversion, and that we witness to God’s love by sharing our own convictions boldly and honestly, especially where love has been obscured by prejudice and categorisation, violence and hate (Nemer, 2007:31).

PROCMURA’s constructive engagement and prophetic dialogue take care of multiple identity issues, such as inter-religious, cultural, ethnic and social problems. From the previous argument in sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2, it appears that PROCMURA is undertaking mission perfectly as prophetic dialogue through faithful Christian witness to the Gospel in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims; and Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful coexistence.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

This entire chapter was a thematic analysis and evaluation of prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA’s achievements. Among others, the chapter discussed the historical background, which included the formation, vision, mission and aims of PROCMURA. It outlined activities and outcomes of the socio-religious interventions of the well-known and active programmes of PROCMURA in Nigeria, and in other parts of Africa. These activities include peace and reconciliation programmes, women’s and education programmes, youth programmes, and literature and communication programmes, with the aim

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<sup>56</sup>Viewed 24 March 2014, from <http://www.viewpointlearning.com/contact-us/what-is-dialogue/>



of serving not only to educate Christian and Muslim communities, but also to serve as faithful witness, to create peace, reconciliation and collaboration with others. Collaboration with other organisations that have similar focuses in mission, as well as the strengths and shortcomings of PROCMURA, were investigated.

This chapter amalgamated the argument provided in Chapters 1 to 4. The researcher argued that the understanding of the conceptualisation of mission as prophetic dialogue and its implications can address the on-going multiple identity issues and inter-religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. The process followed by PROCMURA to achieve peace, reconciliation and collaboration in the midst of conflicting communities in Nigeria, as well as in Africa, at the same time remains a faithful witness was presented. These processes include conferences, seminars, workshops, consultations and education.

The chapter concluded with the outcome and evaluation of prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA's activities. Analytically, PROCMURA has captured both mission and dialogue in its ministry, but has been more resilient in creating understanding. In other words, the aspect of mission as prophetic dialogue is substantial. However, I have mixed feelings about PROCMURA's involvement with so many international bodies and churches all over the world. In conclusion, it can be accepted that they relate mission and dialogue dialectically and therefore make them intercultural theologians. This is what PROCMURA has championed in Nigeria and Africa. The next chapter is pragmatic and responds to the multiple identity issues and inter-religious conflict situation described in Chapters 1 to 4.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: KRITZINGER'S ENCOUNTEROLOGY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter provided the processes followed by PROCMURA to achieve peace, reconciliation and collaboration in the midst of multiple identity issues and inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria, as well as in other African countries, and at the same time remain faithful to witness. This chapter proposes Kritzinger's seven praxis cycle of missiology as encounterology, which he also calls the "face-to-face" or "faith-to-faith" approach as a framework for addressing multiple identity issues and inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria.

I argue that the use of Kritzinger's praxis cycle, which reveals a community and communal practice approach, will enable prophetic dialogue through PROCMURA's activities from religious leaders to community leaders to address the constant conflict situation described in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. As was indicated in Chapter 2, the factors that influence the inter-religious conflict in Northern Nigeria are numerous and often complex because they involve socio-political, economic, discriminatory policies, ethnic/cultural plurality, religious diversity and pre-colonial and post-colonial legacies. Consequently, the necessity of addressing these issues of peaceful coexistence in the country is important. The questions that will help the researcher achieve the desired goal of this chapter include: has Northern Nigeria ever had a history of peaceful coexistence? Was there a time when Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria were living in peace with one another? If so, what happened to the harmonious and peaceful coexistence? As I attempt to respond to these questions, I first explored the practice of peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria.

### **5.2 The practice of peaceful coexistence in northern Nigeria**

The world in which we live today is characterised by globalisation and consists of a multiplicity of ideologies, cultures, principles and religions. According to Agang (2007:1), over the past two or more decades in Nigeria we have witnessed not only the polarisation of religion, but also "the distortion of religion". This is due to the belief that religion has often been used as an instrument of divide and rule, "resulting in it becoming a weapon of massive social and economic destructions". Tedx (2013:1) expresses, in the words of Gadadhara Pandid Dasa, a lecturer and Hindu chaplain at Columbia University,

New York, the following: “We all want to become free of stress and anxiety and live peaceful and happy lives. We try so hard to avoid anxieties, but somehow they find themselves into our lives. It is very natural for us to hanker for and work towards a perpetually happy existence”. This has always been the yearning of both the Christian and Muslim populace in Northern Nigeria and it is possible for this to be addressed if there can be a shift in consciousness from what Christ and the Prophet Muhammad taught their disciples in the Christian Bible and in the Holy Qur’an, respectively.

Dasa (cited in Tedx, 2013:1) suggests that when we understand what it means to be peaceful and happy, there are certain things we need to accept. Thus, “things won’t always happen the way we want them to happen, happiness and distress come and go in cycles and we should be ready for both and distressing situations come into our lives to help us grow and mature.”

For religious coexistence, mutuality and opportunities for preaching the gospel to be created, Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria must not try to control their environment and the people around them. The irony of it all is that anybody who tries to put stress on others will also stress Himself. Thus, people from all religious groups and nationalities alike can practise mediation and conflict transformation. As human beings, we ought to live together; although we are different from each other, it is nevertheless a natural fact that we ought and must live together.

Therefore, to build peace in Northern Nigeria, what can Christians and Muslims do? How can the churches and mosques in Northern Nigeria become places where people build and maintain constructive relationships in order to overcome their multiple identities and work together with neighbours of other faiths to build communities that are more just? How can Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria work to facilitate the pluralistic vision of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. (Cf. Section 4.2) and other great religious leaders, of the beloved community? How can Christians and Muslims practise spirituality that is based on hope and reconciliation that sustains even when efforts for peaceful coexistence are unpopular? Papademetriou (2002:3) argues that the only precondition for peaceful coexistence “is for all humankind to be friends and have mutual love for one another and respect the rights of others”.

Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria have the responsibility to practise peaceful coexistence because, when people live in a place such as Nigeria, many view the reality of violence as a way of life.

Violence is experienced not only through the destruction of lives and properties (Kajom, 2012:2-5), but also through abuse, economic injustice, sectionalism, ethnicity<sup>57</sup> and other forms of oppression. Therefore, peace-making has become a mandate for Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. It is worth noting that Sampson (2012:113), Salawu (2010:348), Kwaja (2009:107), Danjibo (2009:3), Omotosho (2003) and Achunike (2008:287) all concur on the following point: remote socio-political, economic and governance factors that drive religious violence in Nigeria show that government neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimisation, discrimination, marginalisation, nepotism and bigotry are some of the predisposing factors for inter-religious conflict. Thus, according to these scholars, the wrong perception of other people's religion or faith, the wrong religious orientation, the low literacy level of religious adherents, selfishness on the part of religious personalities, pervasive poverty and government involvement in religious matters all further a need for developing a dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

Other factors include what Shehu Sani (2013), the president of the Civil Right Congress, a human rights organisation, highlights:

Poverty, corruption, non-implementation of previous probe panel reports, impunity of past perpetrators of the violence, proliferation of preachers and worship centres, provocative and inciting utterances, sensational journalism, political manipulation of religion, incitement in the social media and mobile telephony, among others, as key causes of religious violence in northern Nigeria.

In view of the previous complex situations in Nigeria, the teachings of the Christian tradition remind us that people of faith have an obligation to support peace-making practices, and to work for conditions that will foster peaceful coexistence. Similarly, the traditions of the other religions of the world, especially Judaism, Islamism, Buddhism and Hinduism, all stress the importance of building a peaceful world.

Regardless of all of this peaceful doctrine shared by these multiple religions, the management of religion and the organisation of different bodies of believers and worshippers have given rise to conflicts in Nigeria. In particular, adherents of the universalistic religions, Islam and Christianity, together with their sects, have clashed over situational supremacy, access to prestige, power and privilege, most especially in

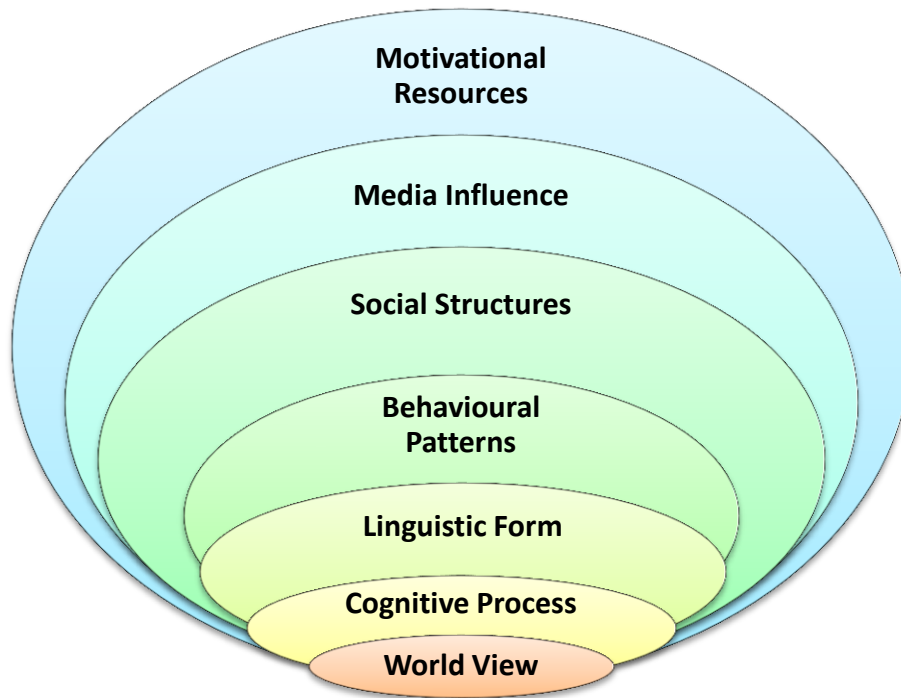
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<sup>57</sup>Suberu (2005:11) says that ethnicity in Nigeria is "the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and differences to gain advantage in situations of competition conflict or cooperation".

relation to the political sphere in Nigeria. Thus, in view of all this conflict, the following question can be raised: how can Kritzinger's seven praxes of missiology as encounterology help us in understanding mission as prophetic dialogue that will transform Christian and Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria towards reconciliation, coexistence and Gospel proclamation?

Kritzinger (2008:778) argues that no religion exists outside of culture – that is one key dimension that can deepen inter-religious encounters. Consequently, if religious partners can articulate for themselves (and for one another) what the boundary markers of their group identity are and what elements are central to their worldview, there is the possibility that deeper understanding of each other can take place. Additionally, Kritzinger (2008:778) and Hofstede (2011:8) present five divergences of cultural theory that help to deepen the self-understanding and interaction of partners in inter-religious encounters. These theories are “Power distance related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality; individualism vs. Collectivism.”

Kritzinger's argument at this point is that, if partners in inter-religious encounters will approach each other's cultures in terms of the degree of inequality, individualism and collectivism, assertiveness, modesty, tolerance of uncertainty and long-term commitments and respect for tradition, this will greatly deepen their self-understanding and interaction. Similarly, Hesselgrave (1991) accentuates this idea of communication using cross-culture approach. His book, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, proposes seven levels of understanding culture. These seven levels are worldview, cognitive process, linguistic form, behavioural patterns, social structures, media influence and motivational resources. The figure below presents these seven levels.



**Figure 7: Cultural comprehension model proposed by Hesselgrave (1991) that shows seven levels of cross-culture**

**Source: Hofstede (1997)**

These seven levels suggest seven ways of perceiving, thinking, expressing ideas, acting, interacting and channelling the message and ways of deciding. This means that, if partners in inter-religious encounters can reflect on cultural dimensions, the seven levels of culture can also take cognisance of micro- (family, upbringing, circle of friends) and macro- (community, society, nation, international, globe) levels of the culture. It can greatly enhance the quality of their interaction. The next section provides an analysis of Kritzinger's (2008) seven-praxis cycle of mission of encounterology.

### **5.3 Kritzinger's missiology as encounterology: a framework for inter-religious and peaceful coexistence in northern Nigeria**

This section deals with agency, contextual analysis and the practice of peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria. It serves as the pragmatic aspect of this research. It is a consolidation of prophetic dialogue in the activities of PROCMURA. The seven praxes (agency, contextual analysis, ecclesial analysis, theological

reflection, spirituality, practical projects and reflexivity) are an approach that suggests a general picture of humankind. The outcome of inter-religious encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria that resulted in killings, maiming and wanton destruction of lives and property, is what motivated this section. The on-going conflict suggests for the creation of a common ground for mutual and complementary co-existence for Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

Kritzinger (2008:764ff), in his article, 'Faith to Faith: Missiology as Encounterology,' explored the encounter, rather than merely what others believe or what the church in Northern Nigeria believes. "Faith to faith" is meant to sound like "face to face", given that this is what the missiological approach wishes to achieve in response to the challenge of other religions. An informed and respectful faith-to-faith encounter that happens to be "un-cushioned" is face to face. Kritzinger (2008:769ff) calls this approach "encounterology", which requires a dialogical approach in which a Christian enters into a journey of mutual witness with a follower of another faith. It is a holistic and reflexive process that considers seven different dimensions of the encounter. The church in Northern Nigeria will have to develop an interactive theological-practical method that focuses not only on the other, but also on who we are as a church.

Additionally, what the context is, and what happens when we as a church meet people of other faiths needs to be understood. Kritzinger (2008:769) advocates that "we need not only religious studies [What do others believe?], and Systematic Theology [What do we believe about others?], but also Missiology [What happens in the encounter between us and others?]. Consequently, missiology needs a praxis approach that integrates all the significant factors shaping the dynamics of inter-religious encounters. Kritzinger (2008:769-770) alludes to Kosuke Koyama when he states that, in doing mission, there is "the need to do neighbourology". The idea of "neighbourology" presented by Koyama (1999:158cf) has to do with the doctrine of man, and is existential, not theoretical. It represents the notion of being sensitive to human feelings, experiences and relationships. These factors create the essential formative ingredient of human understanding in Christian life and mission. Koyama describes neighbourology from three approaches: (1) the general picture of humanity; (2) spirituality, human values and human capacity to choose between good and evil; and (3) the concern for one's neighbours, and Christian life and witness.

In a general sense, human beings have the unique capacity of being self-critical, "freedom and wildness". According to Koyama (1991:158-161), human beings can be understood anthropologically, sociologically and theologically. Understanding these three themes about human being will serve the reader well. Anthropology is the study of humankind. Calcagno and Agustin (2012:195) in their response to the

question, “What makes us human?” He answers; Humans are characterised by a fully developed theory of mind. They are also characterised with the ability for flexible language skills and the concomitant symbolic and global reality of culture. This is a common theme among essays emanating from diverse research perspectives within evolutionary anthology. Human beings are creatures with minds and the ability of portraying a culture. Human beings, according to Calcagno and Agustin (2012:195), are beings that possess the abilities of social interaction, symbolic behaviour and cultural variation. These aspects portray humankind’s desire to understand each other’s minds for the purpose of cooperation and perhaps for selfish reasons as well.

Calcagno and Agustin (2012:195) stress that it is this culture and cognitive reality lived simultaneously through social, linguistic, symbolic and evolutionary contexts that makes humans truly distinct from other creatures on the planet. Therefore, it is important for Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria to conceptualise this aspect to be able to respect each other in spite of their religious diversity and plurality.

Furthermore, Calcagno and Agustin (2012:195) identify another reason that makes us human beings when they say “we are bio-cultural animals”. In other words, no other species here on earth has evolved a human shape. Human evolution is not simply a biological process, but truly a bio-cultural process, as explained by Calcagno and Agustin (2012). Therefore, from the above analysis, it can be suggested that humankind is truly unique. This is especially true considering the position of Hasegawa (2011:229), who explains the historical origin of humankind in her article, *The Uniqueness of Humans and an Anthropological Perspective*:

Human beings are animals that belong to the primate order among mammals. Humans’ closest relatives are chimpanzees, whose ancestors branched from ours and started to follow a different path about 6 million years ago. Chimpanzees and other apes have since remained in tropical rain forests, and are now on the brink of extinction. On the other hand, after the human race experienced the emergence and extinction of several species, *Homo sapiens* that evolved about 200,000 years ago spread all over the earth and prospered to reach today’s population of 6.8 billion. Despite the sharing of a common ancestry until 6 million years ago, chimpanzees remain in an ecological position similar to that of many other mammalian species, while humans have accomplished an “unnatural” success that may even endanger the global environment.

This explanation is scientific. However, I have done a logical analysis. It appears that science lies in the explanation of the present reality and the prediction of the future. Hence, this is why anthropology can explain not only past evolutionary history but also the present reality of human life. Humankind is animals, but with a difference, not only in their personality but also in the way they relate to one another.



The next theme Koyama presents on the uniqueness of humankind that can help create more understanding and better appreciation for humanity is the need to understand human beings sociologically. Conceptually, sociology carries the idea of a systematic study of social behaviour and human groups. Scholarship provides the facts that sociology focuses primarily on the influence of social relationships. In addition, it focuses on people's attitudes and behaviour and how societies are established and change.

Stets and Burke (2008:1) note that, in general, sociologists are interested in understanding the nature of society or social structure. This includes its forms and patterns, the ways in which it develops and is transformed. The traditional symbolic interaction perspective, known as the situational approach to self and society, sees society in the process of being developed through the interpretations and definitions of actors in situations. Stets and Peter (2008) focus on an interactions perspective. Hence, it is a popular view that there are two levels of analysis in sociology, macro-sociology and micro-sociology. Macro-sociology seems to focus on broad features of social structures in society, such as social classes and the relations of groups to one another. However, micro-sociology focuses on processes and patterns of social interaction on a small scale. Consequently, these approaches speak of this research. The last theme is the understanding of human beings theologically. This is the sole focus of this research since both Christianity and Islam have theology in their respective faiths. Therefore, Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria may need to take a closer look at their theology of humankind in their practices.

Franklin (2012:127) attempts to respond to the issue of human persons in his article, titled 'The Human Person in Contemporary Science and Theology'. He provides four analyses of the uniqueness of human beings when compared with other animals. Firstly, "Human beings are unique relative to other animals". The underlying concern here is the argument of how best to account for and motivate human responsibility towards the environment and towards non-human creatures. Franklin (2012:127) suggests "a theological conception, grounded in the narrative of scripture of human beings as steward priests of creation who are accountable to God, does the job better than a vague conception of all creatures being in a universal ethical animal family". This reaction informs that human beings are stewards not only to other creatures, but also to the animal kingdom, in which human beings are included.

Secondly, the argument has to do with the "evolution of human beings". This position raises theological concerns for many Christians, especially conservative Christians. Franklin (2012:127) argues that all of humankind needs to follow an epistemology that does justice to the nature of the truth. In other words, to

those who believe the Bible, it is sacred and has provided evidence of how the animal kingdom came into being. Therefore, this leaves no room for any doubt that God created humankind.

Thirdly, “Should the human self be conceived in terms of identity or of multiplicity?” Franklin (2012:127) suggests the problem to be that “some people rejected essentialism but retains some measure of continuity of the self”. Franklin argues that, theologically, “the Christian tradition has described the human being in terms similar to the Trinity as a person in relationship” (Franklin, 2012:127). This means that humankind is a creature having body, spirit and soul. The body may die while here on earth, but the spirit and soul of human beings may survive eternally. Lastly is “the emergence theory”, which Franklin (2012:127) states helps in taking seriously the biological rootedness of human beings, even while preserving an appropriate emphasis on the mystery of human existence. Humankind did not just start from an insect before becoming human beings over the years. Therefore it can be debated that “emergence theory helps us to accounts for transcendence and the realm of spirit without falling victim to substance dualism (Ibid, 2012:127)”.

Another example of the uniqueness of human beings found to be helpful is the contribution of Cameron (2005:53). He provides a sound theological explanation of the image of God (humankind). Humankind as the image of God is a theological statement that brings to the picture “man and God”. Cameron (2005:53) says “Some would wish to leave ‘God’ in a remote ‘ivory tower’. They want to get on with the business of human life without having to be bothered with a ‘God’ who is, for them, a complete irrelevance. However, “Others pride themselves on their theological orthodoxy while showing little interest in getting to grips with the many-sided complexities of human experience” (Cameron, 2005:54). In other words Cameron’s argument here is that it may not be possible to separate man from God:

The story begins with creation. The Bible teaches us that God is our Creator, and we are his creation. Highlighting the relationship between Creator and creature, the Bible raises both the anthropological question – ‘What is man?’ – And the theological question – ‘Who is God?’ The anthropological question asked in relation to God, and the theological question asked in relation to humanity. When, in Psalm 8:4, the Psalmist asks the question, ‘What is man that you are mindful of him... that you care for him’, he is not asking the anthropological question in the way that the contemporary researcher might ask it. He is not giving the kind of answers that we might be looking for (Cameron, 2005:54).

In view of the above, it appears that the Psalm (8:4) here is bowing to God in honour, his creator, to worship and praise Him for his continuing love. The question is, ‘what is man...?’ within a psalm of praise to the God of constant love, serves to remind us that our deepest significance lies not in ourselves

but in God our Creator” (Psalm 8:4). While wrestling with all the difficulties, perceptions and uncertainties of human experience, Christians and Muslims of Northern Nigeria need to look beyond all their religious diversity and plurality. They also need to look to the God who cares, the God to whom we matter. The question is, “Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives ... transgression...?”

Cameron (2005:55) argues that:

When the two questions ‘What is man?’ and ‘Who is God?’ are asked in close connection with each other, we see that theology and anthropology are not, as some would suggest worlds apart from each other. In fact, they are closely associated to each other. The anthropological question understanding ourselves raises the question of God, ‘Can human experience be adequately understood without reference to God?’ Viewing humanity in relation to God involves seeing everything in a quite different light the light of his love.

The above explanations help in understanding human beings anthropologically, sociologically and theologically. For example, to understand a Buddhist, we must study Buddhism. Hence, between “ism” and “ist”, God/the Christian gospel is more concerned with “ist” than the “ism” (person). In other words, Buddhism as a doctrine does not hunger, sweat, suffer or want, but a Buddhist does. Therefore, only humankind remains essentially a dynamic living creature, sharing in emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual needs. Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria must avoid equating human beings with doctrines about them, as this is contrary to the Christian commitment to love one another. Therefore a proper understanding of humankind begins with the recognition of human freedom.

Koyama (1991:161) says that a proper understanding of human being helps to resist any depersonalisation of humanity to doctrine or abstractions, because it rests on relationships. This is the pattern chosen by God for God’s own participation in the redemption of humanity (Bevan’s & Schroeder, 2004:286,290; Bosch, 1991:399). The next argument has to do with human values and human capacity to choose between good and evil, otherwise human purpose and its potentiality. For Koyama, to be human means to live in relationship with other people. Incidentally, oppression, exploitation, persecution and discrimination are the experiences of sub-human and inhuman relationships. The ability of humans to accept and love their neighbour begins with the knowledge of the act of God in Christ Jesus according to the Christian faith.

The contention is that “loving one’s neighbour as oneself” is the criterion for measuring human relationships. However, it appears to be difficult in Northern Nigeria because of the conflicting situation.

Even the Ten Commandments, which Christians as well as Muslims accept as a standard for human relationships, are not respected and exercised. Therefore, the ability to live in a constructive manner as well as loving one's neighbour as encouraged by the Ten Commandments has to be emulated from Christ supreme 'work' of selfless love toward humankind (Bosch, 1991:71). Similarly, Koyama (1991:161-162) notes that God valued human beings so highly that He gave His son's life for them, despite their inability to live as the commandments instructed. God's own self-denial for the sake of humankind in all its imperfection and failure becomes the root and model for human relationships. Human relationships are nourished and healthy as long as we see the mind of God behind them.

In view of the above argument, Koyama (1991:162) observes that human relationships are unhealthy and corrupt when lacking the perception of the 'mind of God', especially when he argues that, in an affluent society human spirituality is easily paralyzed in an expensive search for identity. This search usually ignores the need for responsible human relationships. It also creates more alienation than it overcomes (Koyama, 1991:162). In other words, Koyama argues that corrupt human relationships are racism, which advocates for human dignity because it attacks the periphery of human social life and injures humanity at its very centre. For Koyama, to be human is to be described as "living peacefully upon the land" (Koyama, 1999:162) with one's neighbour and God, and to injure others is to destroy our own dignity and to ignore God or to ignore the source of all human dignity.

Overall, the significance of neighbourology for Christian witness depicts the idea of concern for one's neighbour. Bosch (1991:139) and Bevan's and Schroeder (2004:352-356) regard witnessing as caring and concern for one's neighbour, and as exceptional conduct that is expected of God's children. "It is lifestyle and presence." Bevan's and Schroeder, 2004:352-356). Perhaps the church's greatest problem today is that its witness does not measure up to its teaching. Koyama (1991:165) suggests that our sense of God's presence would distort if we fail to see the reality of God in our neighbour's reality. In Jesus, God, who created humanity, was personally present as a human; this appears to be the supreme testimony of the importance God has attached to humankind. This suggests that God continues to use humanity as an instrument and communicator of God's presence and purpose.

To create mutuality, trust, reconciliation and coexistence, the Christian, as well as the Muslim in Northern Nigeria, might have to re-evaluate the importance of neighbourology. Koyama argues that, when the faiths of both Christians and Muslims are turned into relationships, rather than doctrine, it is possible to meet people in terms that are meaningful to them. They will then develop an interest in the belief that

motivates the relationship. Koyama (1991:168) concludes that a Christian may not be one apart from his/her relationship to his neighbours. Both the Christ of the Christian faith and the Prophet Mohammad of the Muslim faith suffered because of their involvement in relationships with people.

Therefore, neighboroulogically, theology will be a humble, limited attempt to take the situation seriously, as well as the values and needs of all the different kinds of neighbours. Naturally, this will require a wide flexibility in theological thinking, as various situations will demand various formulations of theology. The reality of one's neighbours, all that they are and all that they do, must become a motivating force for our theological engagement. Such an approach takes us beyond "othering" into an ethos of "one-another" (Kritzinger, 2008:765). Niemandt (2011:65, 69) describes "Other" as:

A person's definition of the other is what constitutes the self and other phenomena and cultural units. The concept has been use in social science to understand the process why societies and groups exclude others who do not fit into their society. The concept of otherness is also integral to the comprehending of a person, as people construct roles for themselves in relation to other as part of a process of reaction that is not necessarily to stigmatization or condemnation. Othering is imperative for national identities, where practices of admission and segregation can form and sustain boundaries and national character. Othering helps distinguish between homes and away, the uncertain or certain. It often involves the demonization and dehumanization of groups, which further justifies attempts to civilize and exploit these inferior others. In this world, we are all the others.

This concept of "other" can help us to move away from an either/or choice between the self over against the other on the one hand, and a denial of differences on the other hand. Niemandt (2011:66) argues that "[h]olding to both extremes reminds us of the truth that, while we are certainly individual selves, these are formed by and exist in no other way than through the other". Therefore, it makes sense that Wilkinson and Kritzinger (1996:1ff) are of the opinion that 'othering' is another form of social representation that is related to stereotypes. Theories on othering have been developed in relation to women and representations of race and ethnicity.

In view of this, Abdallah (2003:13) suggests that othering consists of "objectification of another person or group" or "creating the other", which puts aside and ignores the complexity and subjectivity of the individual. But in intercultural research, culturalism and essentialism, amongst other things, have tended towards othering by imposing cultural elements as explanations for people's behaviours, encounters and opinions (Dervin, 2010). Like stereotyping, othering allows individuals to construct sameness, differentiate and affirm their own identity. Therefore, othering is not just about the others, but also about

the self, which is why Kritzing (2008:769) remarks that it has two major structural implications for the missiological method. Firstly, Christians do not speak alone but in interaction with people of other faiths, thus nurturing mutuality; secondly, Christians do not only speak about doctrinal or “universal” dimensions of the religious traditions, but about all the factors that shape religious identity and inter-religious encounter, thus nurturing reflexivity and conceptuality.

These two approaches therefore suggest that the praxis cycle provides a framework to show which kinds of disciplines might be used to illumine which dimension of praxis. Henceforth, according to Luzbetak (1988:14), it is important for scholarship to appreciate missiology and science of mission as a multidisciplinary endeavour, seeing as it is not a mere conglomeration of disciplines, but a network for disciplines that systematically interact with one another. In other words, missiology is multidisciplinary in character and holistic in its approach.

Kritzing derives the idea of the seven praxes from Kosuke Koyama Morse (1991:165ff.), who coined the mission of neighbourly (‘face to face’ or ‘faith to faith’) in Northern Thailand and Lochhead (1988:14), who introduced the five ideologies for dialogue to happen in his book, *The Dialogue Imperative: A Christian reflection on interfaith encounter*. These include hostility, isolation, competition, partnership and dialogue of actual interfaith encounters on the street, as with the theories of salvation that people articulate in their heads. This praxis cycle is instrumental in exploring the dimensions of Christian mission in Northern Nigeria, which I allege challenge the reality of the Church in Northern Nigeria as well. The practise of this praxis will result in ‘face to face’, ‘faith to faith’ and ‘shoulder to shoulder’ encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. A figure showing the cycle is given below, illustrating the understanding of the worldview. I will deliberate on each one of the cycles as a means of building social and religious trust that will address human dignity, inter-religious coexistence, and mutuality among Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.



**Figure 8: Praxis circle as a research instrument to explore the dimension of church mission in Northern Nigeria**

**Source: Kritzinger (2008)**

Cardinal Joseph Cardijn (1961:1-4) pioneered the seven-praxis cycle as an activist circle. The four-step pastoral circle of Holland and Henriot as well as the seven-step “pastoral hermeneutical circle of Cochrane, De Gruchy and Petersen (2012:203) and Kritzinger’s seven-praxis cycle, etc., are essentially tools to be used by action groups working towards transformation within a particular context. If leaders from PROCMURA, as well as Christian and Muslim leaders and religious scholars in Northern Nigeria can immerse themselves in applying this cycle, the situation in Northern Nigeria might change positively.

### **5.3.1 Agency**

In this section, the following questions are helpful: “Who am I (or we) in relation to the followers of this religion?” “What is my social economic class position in relation to the “others?”“How am I inserted into

the social space that I share with that person or group?"What are the power relations prevailing between us?"How do these personal factors influence our meeting?" This praxis carries the idea of describing the nature of Christian-Muslim relations. It is concerned with the personal relationship of Christians in relation to people of another faith, which is a critically important dimension of missiology, particularly because it is often neglected.

In view of Kritzinger's (2008:773) previous statement, it seems that personal bias and prejudice play such a large role in interfaith relations that this needs to be declared and examined if a mature encounter is to take shape, because inferiority or superiority, fear or anger plays a central role in how people relate. Northern Nigeria was relatively peaceful and relationships between Christians and Muslims were good over the last three decades. Contemporarily, coexistence has taken a different dimension to confirm what Kritzinger (2008:773) says, namely that "attitudes of inferiority or superiority, fear or anger have a history. They originated somewhere in the life of every person's childhood or youthful age, and this impressions last, whether they are negative or positive".

To move forward and to deepen the relationship, there is a need for interpersonal and psychological tools (Kritzinger, 2008:774-775). Therefore, the five types of emotional distance (enemies, opponents, strangers, colleagues and friends) between people proposed by Overdiep (1985:31-35) are helpful. Overdiep (Ibid: 1985:31-35) adds that for "enmity to be overcome, enemies need to become opponents; it is preferable that they then develop further from opponents into colleagues or even friends". Kritzinger concludes his argument in this section by presenting Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham's theory of cognitive psychological tools for deepening self-awareness, which allows partners in social interaction to become more aware of "how they see themselves", "how others see them" and "how they think others see them". Therefore, applying these insights will enhance interpersonal encounters with people of other faiths. Understanding who you are and how you think others see you leads to contextual analysis.

### **5.3.2 Contextual Analysis**

The focus in this section is on the historical and structural factors that have given shape to a society and keep on influencing how people within that society relate to each other. The factors that have an effect on interfaith relations include gender, cultural identity, racism, societal structures, poverty, privilege, nationalism, and so forth. The following questions are helpful to provide a better understanding of a contextual analysis: "What are the social, political, economic, cultural factors that influence the society



within which we encounter each other?” “How do I analyse this context?” “How does the person (community) of another faith analyse it?” “How do these factors influence our encounters?” As stated in section 6.2.1 (agency), an attitude of inferiority or superiority, fear or anger plays a central role in how people relate. These attitudes always have a history.

### ***5.3.2.1 Background to Christian-Muslim Coexistence in Northern Nigeria***

Coexistence is a strategy of living with other people despite fundamental disagreements in their beliefs and practices. It carries the idea of competition between people of different ideologies, but without confrontation. Karpov (1964:858-859), in a journal article titled ‘The Soviet concept of peaceful coexistence and its implications for international Law’, says

Coexistence is a continuation of the struggle between the two social systems, but struggle by peaceful means, without resort to war, without interference by one state in the internal affairs of another. It is a competition in peaceful endeavours. It implies reciprocal concessions and a compromise...Peaceful coexistence is an objective necessity stemming from the contemporary stage of the development of human society.

Therefore, coexistence is a cooperative activity between people of different understandings and can be a challenge. Iruonagbe (2009:2), in his journal article titled, ‘Religion and its Attendant Conflicts in Nigeria: A Paradox’, argues that An attempt to address the paradox of Christian and Muslim relations in Nigeria is indeed overwhelming as a result of the diversity of ethnicity, culture and religious affiliation resulting to some parochial views on social, economic and political issue to the detriment of the national unity and stability In spite of the secular nature of Nigeria, where the constitution prescribes freedom of worship and association, issues are often interpreted from religious angle. This, in most cases, would spark off conflict, disorder and violence in society.

The Nigerian society is a pluralist one with a multiplicity of cultures. The culture of the people in various parts has been largely influenced by the prevailing religion in the area. Ivorgba (2006:4) contends that, to the North, there is a mingling of Islam and local culture; in the East, Christianity and local customs coexist; while in the West there is a close juxtaposition of Christianity and Islam and traditional religions, even within family units, in spite of the secular nature of Nigeria, where the constitution prescribes freedom of worship and association. This, in most cases, would spark conflict, disorder and violence in

society. Coexistence in Nigeria was astonishing prior to this contemporary age, when there was still religious tolerance:

Christians and Muslims live next to each other and mingle freely in all aspects of life. They meet in the market place and on the streets, in schools and other institutions. Both Christians and Muslims are awakened every morning by the strident voice of the muezzin from the minaret of the Mosque, urging faithful believers to pray. Christians receive Christmas and Easter greeting Cards from their Muslim friends, neighbours and relatives. Muslims are present in Churches for the baptism, wedding or burial of relatives, friends, colleagues and business associates. Christians also attend Muslim ceremonies to celebrate with them. Indeed, members of both religions share the same world view and operate within the same economic and political system... (Iruonagbe, 2009:3, 4).

The above quote describes the peaceful coexistence that existed at that particular period. Similarly, the government at that time was operating without any prejudice, until the surfacing of some ambitious individuals who manifested some interest for their selfish benefit. Invariably, this destabilised the civil society and resulted in antagonism between Christians and Muslims, making lives difficult for the populace. Historically, peaceful coexistence<sup>58</sup> between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria was cordial. The relationship between Christians and Muslims was put at risk when the followers of the two major religions: Christianity and Islam, as well as the government of Nigeria<sup>59</sup> promoted their parochial interest above the unity of the Nation. In other words, many reasons such as religious pluralism, colonialism in Nigeria,<sup>60</sup> ethnicity and citizenship, religion and politics, population and economic recession,<sup>61</sup> constituted the reasons for interrupting the benefit of peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria. (Cf. Section 1.1).

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<sup>58</sup>It is observed that Islam and Christianity co-existed in Nigeria before the birth of modern Nigeria in 1914. Taiye (2013:60) says both competed for the conversion of people from traditional religion in a cut-throat competition. The competition between the two religions was slow and peaceful, seeing that both of them could tolerate each other, believing that family solidarity (especially in the South) was much more important than religious solidarity.

<sup>59</sup>The 1963 Republican constitution, section 10, stipulates that: "The government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion". Section 35 of the same constitution declare that: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including freedom to change his/her religion or belief and freedom ... to manifest and belief in worship, teaching, Practice and observation

<sup>60</sup>The sixty years of Britain's colonial rule in Nigeria (1900-1960) were characterised by frequent reclassifying of different regions for administrative purposes. This was the genesis of disuniting the country.

<sup>61</sup> With the global financial meltdown and subsequent drop in crude oil price, Nigerian's economy operators said the crisis would affect the government's spending and project execution (Chibueze, 2010). The issue portends grave consequences, given that the country depends largely on oil for sustenance.

Consequently, mixing religion and politics in a parochial manner, appears to coincide with what Hakeem (2012:42) argues when he said, religion has continued to surface in the political sphere of the country since the inception of a renewed democratic regime in 1999. Moreover, the dramatic and dynamic changes religion has made in the contemporary global political space have also promoted the momentum to the phenomenon of religion and politics in Nigeria, as well as other Nations.

It is also widely recognised that Nigeria's adherence to federalism as a mechanism for coping with problems associated with a deeply divided society has had a boomerang effect in more ways than one (Ojo, 2010:385ff). However, in no other sphere does this come out in bolder relief than in the area of citizenship and associated rights. Millions of Nigerians who find themselves in "effectual" residency in places other than where they can claim "indigenes" are labelled as "strangers," "aliens" and "colonisers". Although there was Islam and Christianity in Nigeria before colonial administration and these religions adopted different methods for conversion, there was no serious friction between Muslims and Christians. They both competed to win converts to their faiths. Adamolekun (2013:60) stated:

In Islam, strategies...“traders as agents of propagating Islam, “the wandering Muslims and itinerant traders combined herbal medicine and fortune telling; they preached peacefully along with trading. Islam expanded fast in urban centres and major trade centres’ became Muslim towns. Organised missionary endeavour was another method used. They used open air preaching and the Mallams interpreted the Qur’an to hearers. They built Mosque and Arabic school...With the introduction of Modern Technology; they used electrical gadgets such as Radio and Television, Loudspeakers...

Islam appealed to Africans, as some of its activities were in line with traditional African culture, for example the use of amulets and polygamous marriage. Adamolekun adds that, on the one hand, Christianity did not appeal so much to Africans, as the missionaries advocated one man, one wife, and condemned some aspects of African culture as fetishist and barbaric. Adamolekun says further:

The Christian missionaries adopted different method...Education and health was a major method used. The missionaries established mission schools and organised adult literacy classes in addition to building hospital and medical centres... Hospital, and medical centres were established and chaplains or preachers appointed as minister to the sick people...Traders propagated the religion alongside their trading activities, so also government workers, civil servants, artisan, and adherents propagate their religion in their places of work using any opportunity available to them for witnessing... (Adamolekun, 2013:60).

Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria therefore were coexisting because of religious tolerance and non-interference. Islam and Christianity co-existed in Nigeria, but not in the last two decades. The Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad (2007), in a paper on 'How to achieve peace in Nigeria' argued:

We do not need to convince anybody that the series of religious crises witnessed in many Nigerian cities in the last two decades, especially in the Northern states, was not only unhelpful to Nigeria's socio-economic development but very injurious to Muslim-Christian relations. These crises significantly undermined the basis of our collective existence that took generations, and in some instances, centuries to build and nurture; and resulted in massive loss in human life and material resources, which no society could ill-afford.

In view of the above contention, therefore, it can be debated that peaceful coexistence is the most important cooperative project of this time. This is the essence of Kritzinger's seven praxis of mission as encounterology – to promote peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. The world has become very small. We all know that tremendous changes have taken place in the world. Indeed, Khrushchev (2012:2) said that;

Gone are the days when it took weeks to cross the ocean from one continent to the other or when a trip from Europe to America, or from Asia to Africa, seemed a very complicated undertaking. The progress of modern technology has reduced our planet to a rather small place; it has even become, in this sense, quite congested.

In other words, mass communications, mass travel, and economic interdependence have created the contemporary world in which we as individuals and groups can no longer live in isolation from other groups as we could have in previous ages.

Nations and groups of people who barely knew of each other now, see each other's lives and worlds in living colour and in real time through television and the internet. Governments who counted on secrecy and submission just a few years ago now find themselves humbled, bewildered, and even overthrown through mass communications that broadcast their tyrannical deeds and the bravery of those who resist them to the entire world (Carroll, 2011:1).

Indeed, the world has become small, as Carroll (2011:1) indicates further:

We are with each other, knowing of, affecting, and interacting with each other more than we ever have in the history of the world. And we are not the same. Yes, we are all human beings. Yes, all of us are subject to the universal conditions of human existence like

uncertainty, change, loss, and death... We do not think the same. We don't pray to the same gods. We don't choose the same cultural values. We don't share specific histories. We interpret the world and ourselves in it, in different ways.

Still, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr. (1967: X): "We may have all come on different ships, but we are on the same boat now." This means that the world is one family:

This is the great new problem of mankind. We have inherited a large house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together – black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, Moslem and Hindu – a family unduly separated in ideas, cultures, and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, we must somehow learn to live with each other in peace (King Jr., 1967: X).

The essence of this conception is the observation that only disreputable minds see dichotomies and divisions. King Jr. added that peace could only be achieved through internal means, by liberating ourselves from the artificial boundaries that separate us all. Therefore, it is clear that the world of globalisation in which we live today consists of an amazing multiplicity of ideologies, cultures, principles and religions. However, it is a natural fact that, as human beings, we ought to and must live together, although we are different from each other. According to Saritoprak (2008:25-37), it can be said without exaggeration that humanity has never before in its history experienced such intense interaction.

There is no doubt that one of the most demanding subjects in our modern-day global communication is the matter of Muslim-Christian relations. The two great religions that have influenced the world for centuries now need each other more than ever before. It is helpful therefore, when on World Peace Day, M. Tahir-ul Qadri (August, 2010) stated in his message that:

We live in a world of unprecedented challenges, posed mainly to global peace and security. After the efforts of generations, humanity has come to a point where peaceful coexistence, culture of dialogue between different religions and communities and processes of cohesion and integration among human societies has become a universally agreed principle.

Therefore, it make sense when Golebiewski (2014:1-3) notes that, in a time in which globalisation has yet to fully complete its process, religions must use the communication easily available through advanced technology and focus more on the humane and pluralistic form of their teachings and values, such as human dignity and human freedom, as a means to manage religious diversity and avoid violence. This means that the religious adherents in Northern Nigeria should be open to other traditions and what they can teach. Bold humility seems to be needed to do this (Bosch, 1991:496-497). Golebiewski (2014:1-3)

further observes that, although having “fixed texts, the major world religions do not have fixed beliefs, only fixed interpretations of those beliefs, meaning their beliefs can be rediscovered, reinvented and reconceptualised”.

In a like manner, one-time Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan (2000), According to onecountry.org (2000:2), addressing religious leaders gathered at the United Nations (UN Millennium Summit, September 2000) to mark the turn of the millennium, said “United Nations is a global common ground not a church, mosque or synagogue, the summit’s encouraged the World’s religious communities to stop fighting and arguing amongst themselves and begin working together for peace, justice and social mutuality...” Annan added, “Whatever you’re past, whatever you’re calling, and whatever the differences among you, your presence here at the United Nations signifies your commitment to our global mission of tolerance, development and peace”. In view of the above, the researcher suggests that Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria should cooperate to address the issue of inter-religious conflicts. Golebiewski (2014:1-3) echoes the global ethic which has three components:

Corporations are prohibited from involving in bribes and corruption; corporations are prohibited from discriminating on the grounds of race, religion, ethnicity or gender in the conduct of business; and lastly, corporations are prohibited from activities that pose a significant threat to human life and health.

Similarly, in the words of Kung (1997:113), to be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means the following:

We must not confuse freedom with arbitrariness or pluralism with indifference to truth; we must cultivate truthfulness in all our relationships instead of dishonesty, dissembling, and opportunism; we must constantly seek truth and incorruptible sincerity instead of spreading ideological or partisan half-truths; and finally, we must courageously serve the truth and we must remain constant and trustworthy instead of yielding to opportunistic accommodation to life.

This entails, therefore, that both Christians and Muslims must have a firm commitment to continue to promote peaceful coexistence in this world. The efforts for global peace must continue and should not be interrupted in order to ensure global peace, as well as prosperity. Therefore, given all of these differences from the global view point and from Northern Nigeria’s point of view, how can we all live together? Is peaceful coexistence possible globally, country wise, state wise and/or provincially or locally? Carroll says, “If it is possible for the Christian and others to coexist together, what are the necessary components

that create it?” In other words, “What are the preconditions, philosophically, socially, politically, culturally, religiously or otherwise, for peaceful coexistence among different people?” These are indeed powerful and complex questions that require asking even more questions in order to respond to the theological prose of Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria, which has been challenged with ongoing religious conflicts for decades.

Makoul (2011) argues, “We are at the end of isolated Christianity, isolated Islam, and isolated Judaism, the end of any kind of religion that poses as the ‘broker of the sacred,’ to the rest of us ...It’s really not about any one religion or belief system. It’s really all about God, who is about all of us and cannot be owned by any of us”. This is why, according Lewis (1992), coexistence is used at the present time to imply willingness to live at peace and perhaps even in mutual respect with others. Therefore, the need for coexistence can never be overemphasised in Northern Nigeria, or the world at large.

As I attempt to approach peaceful coexistence by Christians and Muslims globally, I refer to Ikegbu, Sunday and Kingsley (2013), who argue that “It is indeed disappointing that God (Allah) whom the defenders of the two religions are worshipping is not an author of violence, and has not seen conflict as a better or one of the accepted approaches to reaching him”. He is God the Saviour and the only master of every human life. With this remark, we may ask, “What is the Christian-Muslim understanding of peaceful coexistence as we respond to the challenges of religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria?”

### ***5.3.2.2 Christian-Muslim Perception of Peaceful Coexistence***

“Does peaceful coexistence in a particular place look the same in other place?” “Is the knowledge of the specifics of each conflict necessary to negotiate peace between people of diverse culture, religion, and ethnicity?” Achieving peaceful coexistence requires a vision of what it looks like. The way Christians and Muslims of Northern Nigeria imagine peace and peaceful coexistence affects the steps they are likely to take, and the ability to implement these in their diversity. In this section, I provide the implications of understanding peace and peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria. It is established that a conceptual understanding of peace and peaceful coexistence will assist the people of Northern Nigeria to value, desire and work together to create an opportunity for this to happen.

According to Gulen (2009), Christianity is the largest religion, while Islam is the second largest religion in the world and in history. Christians and Muslims reportedly make up over a third and over a fifth of humanity, respectively. Gulen adds that Christians and Muslims make up more than 55% of the world's population, making the relationship between these two religious communities one of the most important factors in contributing to meaningful peace around the world. This means that, if Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace. In other words, Christianity,<sup>62</sup> as the world's largest religion, has approximately two billion followers. Practised in nearly every nation on earth, it is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ (4 B.C. to A.D. 30?).

Christianity, according to Queen (2013), started out of Judaism in the first century C.E. It is founded on the life; teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and those who follow him are called "Christians". Christianity has many different branches and forms, accompanying a variety of beliefs and practices. Queen (2013) says the "three major branches of Christianity are Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism, with numerous sub-categories within each of these branches". Christianity arguably is the most widespread and universally accepted religion in the world today, having spread from the West to every continent (Ikegbu et al., 2013). According to the Jones (2005):

The basic Christian teaching, which is centred on God and heaven, also projects Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. The existence of Angels and devils, the existence of Heaven and Hell, the Redemption of man from sin, Rapture, and judgment are also embedded in Christian doctrine. Foundationally, Christianity ventures the redemption of man from sin and its consequences through Jesus Christ, who came in the likeness of man, to die for the remission of sin.

In view of the understanding of redemption of humankind from sin, according to the Christian Bible (Galatians, 5:22-23), "Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance forms the outcome and fruits of salvation and deliverance from sin". In his earthly, ethical teachings, Jesus emphasised love as an indispensable element of Christian virtues. In Luke 6:2-29, Jesus states:

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<sup>62</sup>Christianity is a monotheistic system of beliefs and practices based on the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus as embodied in the New Testament, emphasising the role of Jesus as saviour (British & World English dictionary).



But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for who mistreat you. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you (Holy Bible, NIV).

Love encompasses Christianity as a crucial element of peaceful coexistence and progress. Jesus completed his sermon on the mount by emphasising the ‘Golden Rule’: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31). According to the Oxford Handbook of Global Religions (2006:6, 76), The Encyclopaedia of Religion (2005:73) and the Cambridge Illustrated History of Religion (2002:74), Islam is a monotheistic religion that was developed in the Middle East in the 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

Literally, Islam means “surrender” or “submission”, and it was founded on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>63</sup> as an expression of surrender to the will of *Allah* (God), the creator and sustainer of the world. The Qur’an, the sacred text of Islam, contains the teachings of the Prophet that were revealed to him from Allah. Essential to Islam is the belief that Allah is the one and true God, with no partner or equal. Islam has several branches and much variety is found within those branches. In the case of Northern Nigeria, there were two Islamic orders by the mid-twentieth century. These Islamic orders were the Qariyya and Tijaniyya. The Qariyya came into West Africa during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, having been founded by Abd’al Qadir (1077-1166 AD) in Bagdad (Alao, 2009:7):

In Nigeria as indeed as in most West African countries during the mid-twentieth century, there were two main Islamic orders, the Qariyya and Tijaniyya. The Qadiyya got into West Africa during the 15<sup>th</sup> century having been founded by Abd’al Qadir (1077-1166 AD) in Baghdad. Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, who as noted earlier, led the major reformist agenda in the country, belonged to this sect. On its part, the Tijaniyya sect was found by Ahmad al-Tijani (1737-1815) in Fez, Morocco and reached Nigeria in the 1820s, coming into the country through Kano.

Alao (2009:7) adds, “Even at these early stages the development of Islam in Nigeria, ethnicity and politics had already become a factor in the relationship between the two religious orders”. From an early stage,

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<sup>63</sup>Muhammad is the prophet of Islam. He was born in Makkah in the year 570. He was raised illiterate, unable to read or write, and remained so until his death. His people, before his mission as a prophet, were ignorant of science and most of them were illiterate. As he grew up, he became known to be truthful, honest, trustworthy, generous and sincere. He was so trustworthy that they called him the Trustworthy. Muhammad was very religious, and he had long detested the decadence and idolatry of his society. At the age of forty, Muhammad received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. The revelations continued for twenty-three years, and they are collectively known as the Qur’an.

Qariyya seems to have been firmly linked to the Fulani leadership in Sokoto, even though it was to spread to other places as well. Qariyya had five legitimate independent branches and several semi-independent branches. One of these branches is the Shaziliyya, often considered a separate brotherhood entirely.

The Tijaniyya according to Alao, (2009:7) was mainly rooted in Kano, and it was said that the doctrine symbolised the independence of Kano from Sokoto where the Qariyya held its sway. Historically, it appears Tijaniyya and Qariyya's did not have good relationship, especially when, in 1937, the Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero, openly identified Himself as Tijaniyya. Like the Qariyya, the Tijaniyya also had different sub-sects. Currently, Islam in Nigeria is mostly of the Sunni Maliki sect, with the minority Shia in Sokoto and some parts of North-Western Nigeria. Alao (2009:7) says the traditional sects under the Sunni Islam in Nigeria are the Qariyya, the Tijaniyya, the Tariqa, the Malikiya, the Ahmadiya and Islamiyya. Of all these, the Qariyya and Tijaniyya are the most prominent. It appears that the majority of the Muslims in Northern Nigeria, especially the common people, embrace Tijaniyya, while the Qariyya has more elitist and ruling class people as its adherents.

According to Ostein (2012:10), Sunni Muslims are far more in number, and follow the Maliki School of law. They are probably up to 90 to 95%. He also notes that there are differences amongst the Sunni themselves. There are four classes of Sunni: Sufis; anti-Sufis; neither Sufi nor anti-Sufi; and the special class. The Sufis are categorised into two classes, namely the Qariyya and Tijaniyya. The anti-Sufis are the Izala, and the majority of them are Hausas from the Northern part of Nigeria, which is my home. But the special class includes Boko Haram and the Durul Islam.

Shias in Nigeria, according to Ostein (2012:14, 15), are few orthodox Muslims. For instance, the Twelver School that prevails in Iran and elsewhere in the world is sometimes called "The Islamic Movement," or "The Muslim Brothers Movement." Historically, this movement started in Nigeria in the early 1980s, and many young Nigerian Muslims, especially students in Northern Nigerian universities, were inspired by the Iranian revolution in 1979 and by its ideological purity such as that Western impositions must be cast off, pious Muslims must rule and Shari'a must be the law of the land. There are two main divisions in

Islam: within the tradition there are the Shi'a<sup>64</sup> and Sunni,<sup>65</sup> each of which claims different means of maintaining religious authority.

One of the unifying characteristics of Islam is the five pillars, the fundamental practices of Islam. The five practices are a ritual prayer (salt),<sup>66</sup> fasting (Sawm),<sup>67</sup> the zakat (charity),<sup>68</sup> Hajj (Pilgrimage),<sup>69</sup> Shahada,<sup>70</sup> and Jihad (holy war). It appears that, that there are differences in understanding of the concept of jihad, even among Muslims. Some Muslims refer to Jihad as the duty of Muslims to defend their faith and the welfare of the Muslim community when threatened, but to some it is the opposite. Some Muslims believe that the Qur'an does not permit aggression against anyone, and that the Prophet Muhammad asked people to proselytise in a peaceful manner. Warfare is permitted only in self-defence. However, it must be noted that people only resort to violence when their basic human rights are violated and when all attempts at peaceful settlement have been thwarted.

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<sup>64</sup> "Shi'ism" means "shi'at", which literally means the partisans or party of 'Ali (d. 661). It is a branch of Islam that is believed to be the second largest branch of Islam. Those who belong to this branch of Islam believe that Ali was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was the rightful successor of the Prophet and had been chosen by the Prophet to succeed him in his role as the political and spiritual leader of the Muslims.

<sup>65</sup> Sunni is another branch of Islam and is believed to be the largest branch in Islam. Sunna in Arabic means tradition, the people of the custom of the Prophet and community. The Sunni branch of Islam acknowledges the legitimacy of the order of succession of the first four caliphs, in contrast to the Shiite rejection of the first three as usurpers. With no centralised clerical institution, Sunni Islam should be understood as an umbrella identity, grouping close to 90% of the world's Muslims, viewed 6 December 2013, from <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/society/sunni.html>

<sup>66</sup> Salat or prayers: Islam demands from Muslims to pray five times a day. According to Liyakatali (1995), prayers are offered in Arabic. Personal supplication may be recited in any language in the pursuit of closeness to the Lord. Muslims pray towards the Ka'ba, which is situated in Mecca. It was built by Abraham and Ishmael over four thousand years ago.

<sup>67</sup> Sawm or fasting in Islam means a discipline in a believer that is further inculcated by fasting. Every year in the month of Ramadhan, Muslims must fast by refraining from food and drink during the day. Liyakatali (1995) says that fasting in Islam is regarded as an essential component in the growth of spirituality within a person. It also makes a person more aware of the plight of the poor and helps him/her develop willpower so as to discipline his/her desires. Drugs, alcohol and substance abuse are strictly prohibited in Islam.

<sup>68</sup> Zakat (Alms): Muslims see wealth to be a trust from God, to be dispensed in His way. Liyakatali (1995) says giving the zakat is seen as one of the most meritorious deeds, especially as it helps fulfil the Islamic vision of creating a just and equitable society. It is also seen as helping the needy and it is highly encouraged in Islam.

<sup>69</sup> Hajj (pilgrimage): every Muslim is expected to go to Mecca once in his lifetime, provided there are no financial or physical constraints. According to Liyakatali (1995), about two million Muslims from different parts of the world go to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage every year. This provides a unique opportunity for Muslims of different nations and diverse backgrounds to meet one another. These rituals are meant to purify the faithful inwardly

<sup>70</sup> Shahada in Islam is bearing witness that there is nothing worthy of worship but God and that Muhammad is God's messenger is the first pillar in Islam.

For some scholars, Jihad is included as one of the pillars of Islam, but to others, it is not. Many Muslims are characterised by their commitment of praying to Allah five times a day. One of the defining characteristics of Islam is the primacy of sacred places, including Mecca,<sup>71</sup> Medina and Jerusalem. Muslims gather at mosques to worship Allah, pray and study scripture. There is not a sharp distinction between the religious and secular aspects of life in Islam; all aspects of a Muslim's life are to be oriented to serving Allah. Islam expanded almost immediately beyond its birthplace in the Arabian Peninsula, and now has a significant influence in Africa, throughout Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

In the light of the preceding background, it is evident that two thousand years after Jesus' birth, our world experiences more pluralisation than ever before. In fact, the world is multicultural. Therefore, from the biblical point of view, as well as from the Islamic perspective, to create a peaceful Northern Nigeria and world at large, both Christians and Muslims need to promote a culture of tolerance and coexistence. It is an assumption (Cf. Section 1.1) that differences are sometimes celebrated, but often they threaten people. In the case of Northern Nigeria, these differences have resulted in verbal or physical conflict. The question now is, "How should Christians re-join pluralising influences to foreign people, cultures and religions, and especially to inter-religious conflict?" Some Christians advocate ghettoization; others fight back (Servetus, 2008:4); and for others the answer is capitulation or compromise. It is true that the worldwide Christian church and Muslim Umma<sup>72</sup> exhibit great diversity in theology and practice, and this is the reason why, in tackling religious pluralism, the church must engage with Christian theological pluralism<sup>73</sup> as one singular effort in addressing the issues of peaceful coexistence among adherents of the Islamic and Christian faiths in Northern Nigeria.

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<sup>71</sup>Mecca is the Islamic religion's holiest city. It is also known as Makkah. It is located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Its importance as a holy city for Muslims goes back to it being the birthplace of the founder of Islam, Mohammed. Muslims face Mecca during their daily prayers and one of the key tenets of Islam is a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a Muslim's life; this activity is known as Hajj.

<sup>72</sup> Islam does not prescribe a particular form of cultural identity. According to Ibrahim (2012) there are both doctrinal and historical reasons for this. The absence of a central religious authority or clergy in the Islamic tradition pre-empts authoritarianism as a model of negotiating religious affairs in the public sphere. This is attested to by the multiplicity of schools of law, as well as the notorious differences of opinion among them. This fact is often stated by Muslims as a sense of pride; however, it does not negate the presence of established and commonly accepted views in the Islamic tradition.

<sup>73</sup> Pluralism is basically the belief that all the world religions are true and equally valid in their communication of the truth about God, the world and salvation. In other words, religious pluralism generally refers to the belief that two or more religious worldviews are equally valid or acceptable. More than mere tolerance, religious pluralism accepts multiple paths to God or gods as a possibility and is usually used in contrast with "exclusivism," the idea that there is only one true religion or way to know God (cf. Chapter 2.4.1 and 2.6.1).

Christianity was instituted upon the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, whom Christians believed to be Jesus, “the Son of God”, and this is amply confirmed in the New Testament (NT) (Servetus, 2008:136). The traditional church dogma also view Jesus as the Son of God by means of an ontological, eternal generation that requires personal pre-existence, and means that Jesus is eternally God. The Church Fathers label this “divine Son-ship”, and this expression continues today among traditionalists. But we also learned that the Church Fathers derived this understanding by comparing this “Son of God” title to physical generation (Servetus, 2008:136). Thus, it is clear that Christians are fully expected to live their lives characterised by peace, love, forgiveness and mercy, to mention a few qualities of Jesus Christ.

In a similar manner, Islam believes in peace and peaceful coexistence. Sanni and Dawood (1987) argue that “Perhaps the best way to note Islam’s attitude towards peace and peaceful coexistence is the way it dealt with the unbelievers in the Makkkan period and also with the people of the book later in the Medinah. Sanni further contends that, in the Makkkan period, there was no any time anybody could be harassed or molested simply because he or she was not a Muslim or if they refused to become Muslims. “Furthermore, “Islam has made it clear to the Makkkan pagans that if they refused to change over from their idols worshipping; they were entitled to continue with their religion”

Ye that reject faith, I worship not that which ye worship. Nor will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which worship. Nor will ye worship that which I worship. To you be your way and to me mine (Qur’an, 109:1-6).

Takim (1995) exclaims that Islam teaches that human beings have a moral obligation to live in harmony with one another. Islam also recognises and accords rights to all human beings, regardless of race, colour or creed. Therefore, Islam requires its followers to show respect and tolerance, even to those who do not share their faith. Takim further notes that the Prophet Muhammad declared that: “God has no mercy on one who shows no mercy to others”. Freedom of conscience is guaranteed by the Qur'an itself. It states: “There is no compulsion in religion” (Qur’an, 2:256).

According to Shakir (2008:1)

Among many reforms, which the Holy Prophet of Islam, gave to the world, he taught, that all human beings whether brown, black, red, white or yellow, are sons of Adam, and no man has any superiority over another man, because of his colour, rank or riches”. He also taught that: “Islamic law stipulates that Muslims should protect the status of minorities. Therefore the life and property of all citizens in an Islamic state are considered sacred, whether a

person is a Muslim or not. Because of his, non-Muslim places of worship have survived and flourished all over the Muslim world.

In view of the above analysis, it is established that, throughout the history of Christianity, the followers of Jesus were earnestly taught about what it means to become peacemakers. The rich concept of *Shalom*, deeply embedded in Judaism, means living according to God's commandments and loving one's neighbour as oneself. Jesus, an observant Jew, practised nonviolence and preached the need for his followers to love their enemies (Shakir, 2008:136). In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus emphasised, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God," and "if anyone strike's you on the right cheek turn the other also" (Cf. Section 1.1). Stassen (2003) puts it appropriately when he exclaims that Paul addressed the kind of peace that comes with confidence in God's love and compassion: "and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus". Within the Christian biblical tradition, peacemakers are considered "children of God" because they participate in God's plan for the reconciliation of humanity and all creation.

Therefore, the Christian's call to peace-making "encompasses all of life; personal, familial, interpersonal, communal, national, and global". The real challenge is the form in which a Christian is called to oppose violence, and at the same time seek justice and peace (Stassen, 2003). Sadly enough, the once practised peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria has deteriorated, and has given rise to division and sharp hatred because of some basic assumptions that have shaped people's perspectives regarding the value of humanity.

### **5.3.2.3 Worsening of Inter-Religious Coexistence in Northern Nigerian**

This section seeks to analyse some of the explanations of what led to the deterioration of Christian-Muslim coexistence in Northern Nigeria, with the intent of proposing Kritzinger's mission as encounterology to address the on-going inter-religious conflict. The researcher suggested (Cf. Section 1.2) that the interreligious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria seems to be motivated by power struggles, politics, ethnocentrism and injustice between Christians and Muslims. Sampson (2011:126) presents a list of six major measures taken by the government of Nigeria in its effort to address the inter-religious conflicts:

Since the early '80's to date, the Nigerian state has taken a number of constitutional, legislative and policy measures to manage the incidence of religious conflict and violence.

These measures include: the exclusion of religion as an index in the design, conduct and reporting of national population census; the promotion of inter-faith cooperation and dialogue through the establishment of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) in 2000; the constitutional establishment of the Federal Character Commission (FCC) to prevent the predominance of one religious group in all government institutions...

Notwithstanding, the above description illustrating the efforts that the government of Nigeria has put in place, the inter-religious conflict prevails. This section argues the dwindling of inter-religious coexistence and mutuality in Northern Nigeria. Thus, it appears to be motivated by intolerance; obstructive and disruptive modes of worship; the negative influence of religious leaders; the use of religious symbols; and government policies, marginalisation and patronage.

### ***5.3.2.3.1 Intolerance between Christians and Muslims***

Sampson (2012:114) argues that religious intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism are the fundamental factors that led to the absence of inter-religious coexistence in Northern Nigeria. Sampson views religious intolerance as “hostility towards other religions as well as the inability of religious adherents to harmonise between the theories and practical aspect of religion”. With regard to theory and the practical aspects of religion, Ojonemi and his co-authors (2014:1) say:

Deficit in religious practice in Nigeria: Implications for national development” that “religion is a fundamental agent, perhaps one of the most important factors that tend to create influence in the life of most Nigerians and yet the reconciliation between its essential principles and practice are too often unclear considering the behavioural out put on the administration of public affairs vis-à-vis the level of corruption and immoral practices in its scene.

They continue:

Religion fanaticism has crept into all facets of life of the Nigeria’s and it cannot be relegated to the back ground. Even though the level of religiosity is high in Nigeria, poverty of leadership, corruption and immorality are more than other things, the greatest hydra-headed cogs in the wheel of personal, communal and national development.

Although religion and faith in Nigeria are considered critical aspects of everyday life, the analysis of Ojonemi et al. suggests that the religious claims of the average Nigerian appear to be on the surface; hence it has not sunk into the inner-most part of the heart. Perhaps this is why the country is faced with several socio-economic and socio-religious challenges. In a religious country such as Nigeria, as in other

nations, even their laws, thoughts and attitudes are influenced by religion. Similarly, religion plays a major role in the formulation of policies and major public programmes because of the importance attached to it. From their daily activities, most Nigerians seem to be religious, but sadly enough, some appear to be godless.

Gurin (2000:6,7) makes a helpful contribution: “ours has become a Pharisee society of self-righteousness and self-interest, in which the rich are getting richer and much more powerful while the poor become humiliatingly poorer, helpless and hopeless”. The church may be increasing in number and miracles are taking place, and in like manner, the mosque may be growing in number and dutifully blare its mine rates every day at 5:00, calling the faithful for prayers, but without any positive effect. Ojonemi et al. (2014:2) add that the stark reality on the ground is that Nigeria is unarguably barren of genuinely unselfish, patriotic, deeply committed and upright nationals; a disruptive moral crisis has regrettably overtaken its society through the importation and wholesale acceptance of alien values, tastes and lifestyles.

Religious intolerance includes bigotry, which for Baird and Rosenbaum (1999) is the obstinate and intolerant devotion to one’s opinions and prejudices, especially the exhibition of intolerance and animosity towards persons of differing beliefs. When extremism and fundamentalism are the manifestation of intolerance, Sampson (2012:115) contends that religious intolerance is the principal motivation for the conflict in Northern Nigeria. The present movement of the religious group in Northern Nigeria known as “Boko Haram” is a typical example. Mohammed et al. (2012:2114) reiterate that the increasing emphasis on religious fundamentalism in Northern Nigeria has posed a serious threat to the peaceful coexistence of various ethno-religious groups; therefore, in view of this worrisome development, religious leaders are being challenged to rise against religious fundamentalism, which has already affected peaceful coexistence among the people.

Intolerance carries the idea of not being willing to accept another person’s ideas or ways of behaviour and practices that are different from one’s own. Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria are hostile towards each other as a result of the religious intolerance that is consuming their hearts. Adamolekun (1999:68) emphasises that Nigeria is a pluralistic society, diverse in culture, language and ethnic background; it therefore is a pluralistic and multi-religious state, with most Nigerians being Muslims, Christians and adherents of other religions who need to tolerate mutual religious understanding, dialogue, practising tenets of religious beliefs, that is orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy in our relations together. Taiye (2013:65) says the “need to respect and uphold the secular status of Nigerian constitution and the



provision of Fundamental Human Rights and Religious Freedom in the spirit of true Federalism in each state of the Federation” is paramount.

### ***5.3.2.3.2 Modes of Obstructive and Disruptive Worship***

Another factor that hinders the peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims is their mode of worship. The Daily Champion (27<sup>th</sup> April, 2006) indicates that there is a notorious Christian tradition of organising mass crusades and revivals on public highways or properties adjacent to highways. Most of these crusades and revivals have the reputation of obstructing vehicular and human movement. Similarly, it has become a convention for all public roads in Muslim-dominated areas to be blocked during *Jumma’at* (Friday) prayers. This kind of tradition has triggered religious conflict in places where Christians and Muslims are even in number, although less so in Northern Nigeria, where Christians in many cases are the minority. In view of this, Sampson (2012:119) contends that the religious crisis of 2001 in Jos in Plateau State, one of the states within the Northern Central area, “erupted as a result of blocking the road for Muslim worship”.

Sampson (2012:119) further states that:

Both Churches and Mosques have a tradition of erecting large and extremely noisy loudspeakers within and outside their worship places. This sound-magnifying equipment generates serious noise pollution to the annoyance of neighbours. In most cases, the worshippers engage the use of these instruments throughout the nights, in religious rituals commonly known as ‘night vigils’ in the Christendom and *Tafsir* among Muslims during the period of Ramadan. Muslim worshippers also engage the use of these instruments every morning between the hours of 4 and 5 am, thereby constituting nuisance to neighbours. With the indiscriminate location of Churches and Mosques in residential areas, the annoyance inherent in this tradition has triggered religious conflicts in the country, and would indeed remain a potential trigger of religious violence in the future. The erection of worship places in public offices has also served the purpose of politicising religion in work places, as both religious groups often compete for public spaces for worship purposes.

It is commonly argued that it is in meetings such as these that messages of hatred and blackmail are voiced. Both Christians and Muslims are actively involved in this kind of coexistence. Apart from blackmail, there also is an attitude of misinterpretation or falsification of each other’s sacred texts. The Christian religion teaches that humanity was made in the image and likeness of God. The Christian education curriculum needs to go beyond this; to clearly state that all human beings, irrespective of their

race, tribe, creed or colour, they are made in God's likeness and are entitled to dignity and rights. The Christian religious education curriculum should begin to focus on the elimination of ignorance about other faiths from a basic primary level. The level of ignorance that exists in Christian denominations is also striking; not even to speak of the Muslim or Buddhist religions. Ignorance breeds fear, and the 'antidote' is knowledge, which is acquired through prophetic dialogue.

### ***5.3.2.3.3 Negative Influence of Some Religious Leaders***

Some religious leaders who have a militant attitude tend to influence their followers in a similar manner. These kinds of religious leaders tend to be narrow-minded, intolerant and advocate social exclusion for their followers. Omotunde (1991) states that any "religious leaders who have these personality traits are more often than not pre-disposed to use their followers to achieve narrow religious objectives or inordinate personal ambition". On many occasions, this has led to conflict. Apart from the internal factors that have to do with socio-economic, political and religious influence, Anyadike (2013:13) argues that there are two beams for the security challenge faced in Northern Nigeria, and that:

One characterizes the problem as part of the global Islamic jihad and focuses on the sect's links with international terror groups such as al Qaeda or its affiliates as al Shabaab or the al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, (AQIM); the other view it as conspiratorial, a grand strategy to achieve the predicted disintegration of Nigeria by 2015. Within the conspiratorial thesis is the sub-theme that Nigeria is being targeted by envious and troubled neighbours. This aspect also links it to the now 'unemployed' war-hardened returnees from the Libyan crisis and the assorted arms streaming out from that tumult.

In other words, is Nigeria simply convulsing from her many internal contradictions that successive leadership has been unable to resolve, or are external forces actually at work to undermine Nigeria? Alozieuwa (2012) contends that, while each of the competing perspectives may indeed offer some valid ballpark figure of the real causes of Nigeria's security challenge, the multiplicity has tended to frustrate a clear understanding of the dilemma and an enunciation of an appropriate response to it, leading to the adoption of the idea of a "conspiracy theory". This multiplicity of theories includes relational theory, which attempts to provide an explanation for violent conflicts between groups by exploring sociological, political, economic, religious and historical relationships between such groups; hence the belief that cultural and value differences, as well as group interests, influence relationships between individuals and groups in different ways. The next section provides an argument on government religious policies and marginalisation and patronage.

#### **5.3.2.3.4 Government Policies, Marginalisation and Patronage**

Sampson (2012:122) argues that, in spite of the constitutional prohibition on any person/persons not to take side on any religion when it comes to public service, yet, for some because of their religious leanings, religious patronage, they still do not comply with the national constitution. However, patronage has been entrenched in the public realm especially, where the predominance of a particular faith adherents are in positions of authority. Example, at the “federal and state government levels, public officials manifestly patronise particular religions at the expense of others”. According to Sampson (2012:112), “Government will use public funds to sponsor religious activities or even buy food for particular religious groups in many states of Northern Nigeria”. For example, millions of Muslims are sponsored to go to Mecca; by contrast, only a few Christians are sponsored to go to Israel to visit the Holy Land. The Muslims are provided with food and valuables for their Ramadan fast. When it comes to use of public media, Christians are marginalised. Jolly Tanko (2012:123) argues:

Christians have been denied access to electronic media in 16 Northern states, while Islam monopolizes 24 hours for its broadcast in the same area ... Every hour the Muslims broadcast provocative statements about Christianity. It means nothing, they proclaim, that people attend church on Sunday only to dance and to listen to songs. Authorities merely wink ...

Similarly, when it comes to both national and international media reportage, the exaggeration of details concerning religion, particularly favouring Islam, has always precipitated religious sentiments instead of promoting peaceful coexistence.

#### **5.3.2.3.5 The Use of Religious Symbols**

Religious symbols in the form of head coverings and general outfits have become another reason for the encounter between Christians and Muslims of Northern Nigeria. The use of *Hijab* has become a serious matter, where women are expected to cover their heads irrespective of their faith. With the introduction of shari'a in the Northern states, Hijab has become a norm for the public. The inscription of Arabic symbols on the Nigerian currency has often caused tension between Christians and Muslims. The Christians have the feeling that this action is a strategy with conversion on the agenda to turn the country into an Islamic nation. With the amount of intra- and inter-religious violence over the last two decades, Christians have not felt at ease with the attitude of Muslims.

Muslims have continuously opposed the use of the cross as a symbol on public hospital billboards and other hospital accessories (Sampson, 2012:119), and are involved in a struggle to introduce a work-free day on Fridays for the sake of Muslim Jumma'at prayers. These situations remain potential triggers for encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. Other factors that have created some suspicion, anxiety and violent clashes between Muslims and Christians are the persistence of some Islamic fundamentalists, like Boko Haram, Hisba in Kano and other form of Islamic marginalisation. By no means are the factors listed above exhaustive when it comes to the inter-religious coexistence and mutuality between Muslims and Christian in Northern Nigeria as a result of these behaviours and misconceptions of one another.

### **5.3.3 Ecclesial analysis**

This praxis cycle relates to the need to analyse the reality of the church, both in itself and as part of the wider social structure. It deals with questions such as: “How do the agents of mission fundamentally approach, interpret the past, present with the hope to project into the future of such given community?” “What is their understanding and relationships with other groupings in the society, people groups, religion, ethical persuasions, and so forth? “In essence, what makes the church attractive? “What makes the church move from being enemies or opponents to colleagues?” These questions confirm that religious communities have long memories, and it is amazing how events that happened a thousand years ago, like the Crusades, are part of the living memory of Muslims and Christians, shaping their present-day interaction in negative ways.

With this praxis cycle, Kritzinger is not advocating that historical analysis entails accusation or rejection, but precisely that it is an attempt to move from enemies and opponents to colleagues, by working honestly at “where we came from” as religious communities. However, Kritzinger (2008:779-780) argues that ecclesial analysis involves more than history. It is also helpful to look at the leadership structures and organisational patterns of the two religious communities, as well as their ethos and basic orientation towards the society in which they find themselves. Understanding history, leadership structure, organisational structure, and tenants of partners in inter-religious encounters will help in relating to and interacting well with each other. Therefore, the need for an awareness of these aspects, for both Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, cannot be overemphasised. The next praxis is theological reflection.

### 5.3.4 Theological Reflection

The focus of this praxis is on how each religious community views other religious traditions, especially the “other” (Cf. Section 6.6). Questions such as: “How does the agency of mission interpret the Bible and Christian tradition in their particular context?” “How does their discovery influence the interpretation of the Bible and its application in the community?” “How do my partners of another faith reflect theologically on their situation (and our encounter) in the light of their own religious sources and authority structures?” These questions are helpful for understanding theological reflection when the agenda is the theology of religions (Cf. Chapter 3). In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, I deliberated on theology of religions and analysed exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism.

Kritzinger (2008:782) and Kateregga and Shenk (1997) argue for the importance of mutual witness, which does not necessarily threaten the identity of either religious partner or community, but does lead to new discoveries of the riches of one’s own faith. More so as each partner attempts to articulate its faith in the worldview of the “other” in response to the challenge presented by that other religious tradition. Therefore, understanding theology of religions and mutual witness (dialogue) in Northern Nigeria will enhance the quality of the interaction and deepen self-understanding between the religious partners, which is also part of spirituality. However, this is what PROCMURA is committed and resilient in creating this opportunity for interaction and deepening understanding between Christians and Muslims of Northern Nigeria.

### 5.3.5 Spirituality

Kritzinger (2008:782) considers spirituality to be one of the most significant factors influencing inter-religious encounters, because it is the way the partners experience the reality of their faith that provides the depth dimension of the inter-religious encounter. The following questions are significant for understanding spirituality better: “What type of spirituality do I practise?” “What is the dominant spirituality of my faith community?” “How can I mobilise the new theological insights I have gained by renewing my own practice of spirituality?” Other questions that may be helpful include: “How can this renew and deepen the communal practice of worship in my faith community?” “How does this influence my relationship with people of this other faith?” “What type of spirituality does my dialogue partner practise?”

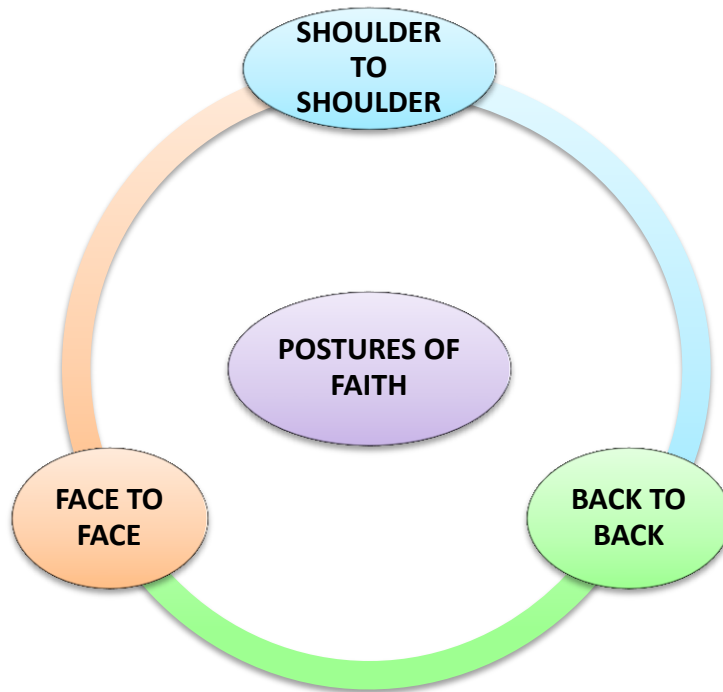
These questions indicate that the way the partners experience the reality of their faith in typology is characterised by sacramental liturgy, faith-seeking understanding, meditative contemplation, spiritual empowerment, devotional surrender and deeds of justice (Kritzinger, 2008:782). It also characterises their worship, which carries the idea of showing respect for God or a god, by saying prayers or singing with others. Kritzinger (2008:283) argues that “the unique nature of a religious tradition is expressed in the way it sings, prays or meditates”. It is therefore a natural development for partners in an inter-religious encounter to be interested in understanding and experiencing the heart of their partners’ worship, and it provides the depth dimension of their inter-religious encounter. Therefore, in inter-religious encounters, partners will understand and relate well to each other when they have knowledge of each other’s spirituality and nature of worship as these relate to practical projects.

### **5.3.6 Practical Projects**

This praxis cycle focuses on a community sense of mission in society and its involvement in community engagement. Questions such as: “What kind of concrete faith projects am I involved in, particularly in relation to people of other faiths and cultures?” “What kind of plans are the members of this other religious community making to strengthen their position or to relate to other religious communities?” “How do these projects influence our encounters?” Other useful questions include: “Are our projects parallel, working for the common good or are they opposed, attempting to ‘convert’ one another or competing for new converts?” “What aims and objectives do they pursue to transform the people and the community at large?” Kritzinger (2008:783) says:

Another important factor that determines the shape of interreligious encounters is the concrete projects the partners are involved in within their respective faith communities, particularly as they relate to other faith communities...there is a danger that Christian concepts could be imposed on other religious communities at this point, but descriptive categories need to be developed for the missions of different religious communities so that they could do justice to all the different groups.

Therefore, if partners consider each other as colleagues or friends working together for justice and peace in society, development could be achieved. In bringing the total message of practical projects among inter-religious groups into focus, Kritzinger argues for three postures involved in inter-religious encounters. The figure below illustrates the postures more clearly:



**Figure 9: Postures of faith**

**Source: Kritzinger (2008)**

Kritzinger's (2008:785) idea with this circle is that postures of faith in inter-religious encounters, namely 'shoulder to shoulder', 'face-to-face', and 'back-to-back', are simply about Christians being willing to collaborate, 'shoulder to shoulder' with people of other faiths in community projects for the common good, without giving up the 'face-to-face' posture of witnessing to others, and also being witnessed to. The acid test for all partners in dialogue is probably what we can argue about other religions when they are not present; in other words, 'back-to-back'. Similarly, the circle is carrying the idea of collaboration and witnessing. What follows next is the final section of the seven praxes of Kritzinger, which is reflexivity.

### **5.3.7 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is the seventh and final dimension of the praxis cycle or field. This praxis cycle is not only helpful to Christian denominations in Northern Nigeria, but also to the Muslims as well as "others".

However it is helpful for both religions as long as it is applied to the seven-praxis cycle. It helps both Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria to see where we have come from to where we are now.

Hence, if Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria can ask themselves the following questions, thus: “How consistently and honestly do we integrate the foregoing six dimensions in our life of faith?” “How well does our faith community do this?” “Are we learning and growing through this interfaith encounter?” “Are we learning from our mistakes?” “Are we really listening to people of another community?” Other helpful questions include: “Does this reflection lead us as Christians or Muslims to renewed, purified, or deepened agency, contextual analysis, theological reflection, spirituality and planning?” “Do we as Muslims or Christians or others live with integrity, wholeness in this sense of the word by consciously integrating these seven dimensions in our inter-religious praxis?” These questions, the research concluded to be a critical evaluation for both Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria which might result to a transformation of mindset.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter has been on Kritzinger’s seven praxes of mission as encounterology, a framework for addressing the on-going Christian-Muslim inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria. The chapter serves as the pragmatic aspect of this dissertation. It consolidated the conceptual understanding of mission as prophetic dialogue in the activities of PROCMURA in an attempt to transform Christian and Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria so as to create an opportunity for reconciliation and religious coexistence. The chapter suggests using Kritzinger’s seven-praxis approach in addressing Christian-Muslim religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Therefore, in view of the background provided in relation to the challenges to inter-religious and mutual coexistence in Northern Nigeria, I argue that there are several explanations for these. Thus, intolerance from both Christians and Muslims, obstructive and disruptive modes of worship, negative influences from some religious leaders on their followers, as well as international influences are some of the reasons that have influenced the deterioration of peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria. Other factors include government discriminatory policies and marginalisation.

Martin Luther King (1958) suggested that “Hate begets hate, anger begets anger, and killing only begets more killing. The only thing that can turn an enemy into a friend is the power of love”. Peaceful



coexistence between Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria might be possible if the seven praxes of Kritzinger's mission as encounterology are applied in practice.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The previous chapters have elaborated on the understanding of mission as prophetic dialogue in Christian-Muslim encounters in Northern Nigeria. They explained the use of Kritzinger's (2008) seven-praxis cycle of mission as encounterology in the documents of PROCMURA, as well as the use of Osmer's four tasks of practical theology. The researcher found both theories relevant and useful as a plan of action in addressing the inter-religious encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

This study is qualitative and makes use of an interpretive paradigm. Therefore, the researcher proposes that the use of Kritzinger's (2008) seven-praxis cycle and Osmer's four tasks of practical theology will be helpful. Similarly, PROCMURA's activities, which include women's programmes, youth programmes, seminars, conferences, workshops, etc., will help build the encounter between Christian and Muslim in Northern Nigeria. Using this approach will lead to the creation of opportunities for reconciliation and inter-religious coexistence in the context of religious diversity and plurality. This chapter is a summary of the entire research, including the research question, the objectives of the study and the findings drawn from the data available. After drawing some conclusions on the relevance and practise of inter-religious dialogue, the chapter identifies some gaps and makes some recommendations.

### **6.2 The research question revisited**

The aim of this research was to understand the importance of conceptualising mission as prophetic dialogue and its implications for the coexistence of Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria. It hoped to create opportunities for understanding, reconciliation and inter-religious and peaceful coexistence. Further, mutuality and development would be the end result for the adherents of the two religions, and they would be enabled to propagate the gospel. The assumption is that understanding mission as prophetic dialogue will transform Christian and Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria towards harmony and human and physical development, in return allow the preaching of the Gospel. This research is a contribution to the theology of dialogue and inter-faith practise in the context of inter-religious encounters.

Kritzinger's (2008) seven praxes of mission as encounterology as a framework for addressing the ongoing Christian-Muslim inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria form part of the pragmatic aspect

in this study. The seven praxis cycles were used to merge the conceptual understanding of mission as prophetic dialogue in the activities of PROCMURA in an attempt to transform Christian and Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria so as to create an opportunity for reconciliation, religious co-existence, mutuality and the proclamation of the Gospel in Northern Nigeria. Therefore, the research question that guided this study was:

How can the praxis cycle enable mission as prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA to contribute to inter-religious encounters and co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria that can lead to peace and reconciliation in the context of religious diversity and religious plurality?

I used the existing data available from the relevant literature, and documented evidence-based and experiential findings from inter-religious encounters and other related fields. Subsequently, I established that the hypothesis that “face to face,” or “faith to faith,” “shoulder to shoulder,” or “back to back” postures (missiology as encounterology) when handling inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria were of proven worth and could contribute to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence that will enhance human rights and dignity and also build social and religious trust between Christians and Muslims.

### **6.3 Summary of the dissertation**

Whilst Chapter 1 served as the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 analysed the religious and contextual factors influencing Christian-Muslim dialogue. The chapter provided a description, analysis and interpretation of some of the religious and contextual factors from that influence the ongoing encounters between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, and highlighted the negative impacts as well. The questions that assisted the researcher in providing a conceptual understanding of the religious and contextual factors that motivate Christian-Muslim dialogue in Northern Nigeria were: “What are the contextual and religious factors influencing Christian-Muslim encounters?” “What is the relationship between different religious factors?” “How have the religious factors intermingled to influence the dialogue positively or negatively?”

The goal of the chapter was to understand the religious and contextual factors influencing Christian-Muslim encounters and the effects on humanity so as to create an opportunity for religious coexistence, mutuality and gospel proclamation. The chapter analysed the literature on the religious and contextual factors influencing Christian and Muslim dialogue. Its emphasis was on the factors that resulted in the encounter between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, the consequence of which was the

dehumanising of human persons. These factors are complex, especially when considering the persevering nature of the encounter that has lasted for over three decades.

I argued that Nigeria represents one the best African states because of its vast wealth of manpower and natural resources; it holds productive agricultural land and immense deposits of oil and natural gases, rated as the 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> largest respectively of the world's reserves; it also possesses political influence through its strong military forces and active role in peace operations, as well as its recognised diplomatic leadership in international organisations (Cf. Section 4.1). Nigeria is also one of the countries in the world that contains a clear constitutional provision for religious freedom, yet the success of the nation of Nigeria has been undermined in recent decades by a number of societal issues, primarily as a result of a history of many situations of instability.

Subsequently, after analysing the five major factors, namely colonial legacy, divergent perceptions of the Nigerian State, intra-elite power struggles, economy, government discriminatory policies and politicisation of religion, I discussed the consequences of the abovementioned factors, which were categorised into five sections, thus: political instability; economic instability; social/cultural instability; national security challenges; and loss of social and religious trust (Cf. Section 4.5). Subsequent to the analysis of these factors, I argued that dialogue and its relevance are crucial in a situation such as this one of on-going inter-religious conflict that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and properties worth millions of Naira.

Chapter 3, titled 'Identity and encounter in theology of religions and churches', responded to the following questions: "What is theology of religion?" "How can conceptual understanding of theology of religion help in addressing the on-going religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria?" In a careful analysis of the concept of theology of religions, a brief foundational dimension – theological and biblical, as well as sociological and missiological dimensions for inclusivism, exclusivism and pluralism were provided.

The religious conflict in Northern Nigeria is characterised by sharp divisions, and dichotomies of 'good' and 'bad', 'us' and 'them', 'saved' and 'lost', 'sacred' and 'profane', 'brethren' and 'the rest'. The religious conflict, which seems to be motivated by power struggles, politics and ethnocentrism between Christians and Muslims, suggests the need for understanding mission as prophetic dialogue (Cf. Section

1.2). This has been the argument of this research – to create an opportunity for reconciliation, coexistence and gospel propagation.

I established that some conflicts develop from objective factors and subjective factors, and some from trigger factors (Cf. Section 1.1). As part of human existence, conflict is often avoided for the fear of defeat; hence, it also brings about different kinds of outcomes. Religious conflict affects coexistence and causes poverty and hunger. The chapter also established that religious conflict brings about a lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, fear and violent confrontation that leads to the destruction of human lives and property. Therefore, religious conflict is a hindrance to such an opportunity for dialogue. In the case of Northern Nigeria, the causes of inter-religious encounters are complex. Nigeria is rich in manpower and resources, but when diversity calls for celebration, it has led to big problems. When it is argued that religion can promote peaceful coexistence in the case of Nigeria, it has become a motivation for categorisation and division. The chapter concluded with prophetic dialogue as an alternative that may lead to reconciliation, mutual, and religious and peaceful coexistence, as well as an opportunity for the propagation of the gospel among Christians and Muslims of Northern Nigeria.

The theme of Chapter 4 was mission as prophetic dialogue in the documents of PROCMURA. The chapter merged the arguments furnished in Chapters 1 to 3 and argued that the understanding of the conceptualisation of mission as prophetic dialogue and its implications can address the on-going religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

I argued that the promotion of a considerable relationship on the globe between Christianity and Islam for the sake of reconciliation, justice and peace is the thrust of PROCMURA's activities in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. This is why understanding PROCMURA's activities were vital for this research. The mention of Christianity and Islam does not in any way suggest that other religious traditions are unimportant.

Thematic analysis was used to identify and describe the issues and themes in the documents of PROCMURA. I used triangulation to establish validity and also to capture the different dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. By no means was the research exhaustive; I provided a brief analysis. The questions that assisted me in identifying and describing the PROCMURA documents include: "What is the vision and mission of PROCMURA?" "What are the activities of PROCMURA?" "What are the

processes of its activities?” “And how are service, dialogue, witness and transformation in the activities of PROCMUCA addressed?”

The programme was established by the churches in post-colonial Africa, with the support of partner churches in Europe and North America, to be a self-supporting, self-governing organisation. It was also instituted with the aim of creating awareness and positive engagement amongst Christians and Muslims as co-citizens of Africa (Cf. Section 5.2). An overview of the historical background of PROCMURA, comprising peace, reconciliation and collaboration with other organisations, was provided. Other activities of PROCMURA include women’s and education programmes, youth programmes, literature and communication programmes. These activities and mission are provided not only to educate the Christian and Muslim communities, but also to serve as faithful witnesses, and to create peace, reconciliation and collaboration with others. The chapter also looked at how PROCMURA achieves peace, reconciliation and collaboration in the midst of conflicting communities in Northern Nigeria and Africa. The processes include conferences, seminars, workshops, consultations and education.

The chapter concluded with the outcome and evaluation of prophetic dialogue in PROCMURA’s activities. I established that both prophetic dialogue and PROCMURA are dialectical, therefore making them intercultural theologians. It therefore can be argued that prophetic dialogue and PROCMURA stand for Christian witness and Christian constructive engagement with other faiths. Analytically, PROCMURA has syndicated both mission and dialogue in its ministry, but has been more resilient in creating understanding. In other words, it can be suggested that mission is a substantial part of prophetic dialogue. Although I have mixed feelings about PROCMURA’s involvement with so many international bodies and churches all over the world, it can be accepted that they relate mission and dialogue dialectically, therefore making them intercultural theologians. This is what has made PROCMURA successful in Nigeria and Africa.

Chapter 5 proposes Kritzinger’s mission as encounterology: a framework for religious and peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria. The chapter explained the constant conflicts described in Chapter 2 as being multiple and often complex because they involve socio-political, economic and discriminatory policies, ethnic/cultural plurality, and pre-colonialism and post-colonialism legacies. Therefore, the necessity of addressing the issues in the region, and in the country at large, becomes important. Subsequent to this, the formulation of common ground for mutual and complementary coexistence for

both Christians and Muslims necessitated me to adopt Kritzinger's approach of mission as encounterology.

## **6.4 Recommendations and suggestions**

All research has a duty to contribute to an existing body of knowledge, either by supporting the findings of previous research or by producing a new idea that challenges the existing paradigms. As long as the government of Nigeria would like to be involved in religious matters, instead of keeping to its role in protecting human rights and dignity, interreligious conflict will continue to occur in a cycle. The following are recommendations that will help to address Christian and Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria. They will also help address the need for reconciliation and inter-religious and mutual coexistence, and create an opportunity for the proclamation of the gospel.

### **6.4.1 Education**

It is popularly argued that a lack of education usually results in many societal delinquencies. It makes sense when institutions like PROCMURA argue that most inter-religious conflicts are rooted in ignorance and prejudices, misunderstandings and contradictions. Therefore the need to educate the public to understand other religions and cultures can never be overemphasised. Responsible leadership requires not just personal and collective discipline, but also commitment to honesty, transparency, accountability and social justice. I therefore suggest that people have to be educated about what it means to respect other people's opinions, religions and cultures. This might address evil minds, and the lack of tolerance and respect.

The importance of peace and peaceful coexistence, the value of human life and human rights should be integrated into school curricula at all levels, as well as incorporating Western education and religious education. The dangers of religious fanaticism, religious prejudices and religious bigotry should also be included in our curricula, from the elementary to university level. As such, I recommend that the government of Nigeria should expand the role of Nigerian universities and non-governmental organisations like PROCMURA to train communities in conflict prevention and resolution.

Unity within diversity is a necessary criterion for inter-religious and mutual coexistence, peace and the development of people, societies, nations and the world at large. Therefore, Nigeria's education policies

and programmes should be such that children are made to understand and from which they can learn the value of cultural differences. The development of the educational curriculum towards an effective means of national integration should take place across all tiers of our educational systems. The tiers of the educational system in Nigeria have to do with the ladder of learning – the 6-3-3-4 Nigerian system of education. This means six years of foundational education, which is called primary school, followed by three years of junior secondary school and another three years of senior secondary school. The highest level is the college level, which takes four years before a child can go for higher education.

Additionally, the school syllabus, instructional materials such as textbooks, and teaching methods should also be made effective and efficient to meet the challenges of national unity, integration, and economic, political and socio-cultural development. Lastly, enlightenment programmes are needed on national integration in our institutions of learning, homes, churches, mosques, communities, local, state and national assembly's to educate and sensitise Nigerians to the need for national unity.

#### **6.4.2 Good governance/policies**

Good governance carries the idea of governing systems that are capable, responsible, inclusive and transparent. This is the only kind of government that promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and rule of law in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring. Having said this, diversity calls for better and corporate development, but in Nigeria it is the opposite. Violence, poverty and corruption reserve the ability to undermine the country's transparency, security, participation and fundamental freedom.

No nation can prosper in an atmosphere of insecurity, as it usually ends with mutual rancour, bitterness and hate. Henceforth, the researcher recommends that public accountability and transparency in government must be part and parcel of the political process.

Secondly, local, state and national resources should be shared on the principle of equity, fairness and justice. The question of how public funds are generated, expended and distributed must be made known to the public, and answers should be provided when there is interrogation from the public. In view of the injustices with regard to unemployment, poor development and the level of poverty in Nigeria, it appears that corruption has consumed a good number of Nigerians who are in leadership positions and are trapped in providing sub-standard delivery of leadership, as also occurs in other nations of the world today.



Thirdly, responsible leadership goes beyond and above tribal, sectional and religious sentiments; therefore I recommend the separation of politics from religion, since the involvement of the Nigerian government in the religious activities of both Christians and Muslims has not help in addressing problem(s) of this nature in the past. It is my opinion that the assumption that the government is being prejudiced is related to its direct or indirect involvement in religious matters. When the government is expected to be neutral in a situation, such as the one in Northern Nigeria has indicated the level of government involvement in religious matters.

I understand the popular claims that Islam and politics are inseparable, but if other advanced nations are able to handle this kind of situation it can be assumed that the same could happen in Nigeria. As mentioned previously, responsible leadership is above and beyond tribal or religious boundaries, and it appears that the level of understanding in religious and social life is lacking in a good number of the Nigerian populace. Otherwise, none from both the ruler ship and its followers will fall victim to inter-religious prejudice in any form. This is why I argue for the need for responsible leadership.

Fourthly, as for breaking the cycles of violence and de-politicising religion, the local government, state government and federal government have to become truly democratic, respectful of and engage with the diverse population in order to meet their needs and build a nation on the basis of unity in diversity. Therefore, as mentioned above, the government should not favour any religion at the expense of another. Government should be fair to all religions when they have to be involved.

Finally, unwillingness on the part of the government to consistently acknowledge all incidents of violence and to assist all victims, or to follow up on and carry out recommendations made by its appointed commissions that have investigated communal/religious conflicts, breeds vengeance, retaliation, bitterness, hatred and malice. This gives birth to an almost endless cycle of senseless violence. Security therefore also is a big challenge. It seems to be an irony that the government of Nigeria spends a lot of money sponsoring a committee or a panel of inquiry, but in the end does not use the report, based on the assumption that the report involves untouchable persons –people who are above the law. All of these, and many more reasons, inform the kind of leadership on the ground.

Therefore, Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria must turn away from violence and militant action, and instead embrace non-violence, reconciliation and the advocacy of inter-religious and mutual coexistence. There is further need to respect and uphold the rule of law, ensure the provision of

fundamental human rights and religious freedom in the spirit of a true multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-social federation. Kofi Annan (2002), as Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), said in relation to good governance that it is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development

The line of argument in this research has advocated that violence and militant action have caused the country the loss of countless lives and the destruction of property worth millions of Naira. Perhaps this is why poverty is rapidly on the increase. The insensitivity of the government to this kind of occurrence usually leaves the common people asking who will be there to stand for the truth. Or a question may be asked, “Why do take the law in their hands?” Perhaps it is because of the kind of leadership that is on the ground. The next concern has to do with patriotism.

### **6.4.3 Patriotism/change of attitude**

Patriotism, according to Reed (2003:14-15), is not blind trust in anything our leaders tell us to do, nor it is simply showing up to vote, because there is a need to know a lot more about what motivates a voter before his/her patriotism can be judged. Patriotism is not waving the flag as an outward sign of patriotism; it is much more than a sign. Li and Brewer (2004:727-739) and Druckman (1994:46) argue that it is possible that “love of nation” can be associated with patriotic attitudes under some circumstances or with more malign nationalistic attitudes in other circumstances, within the same individual.

In view of this, therefore, the researcher suggests that honesty; conscientiousness and patriotism must be infused with political practice, while insincerity, deceit, and hooliganism decline. The use of ethnic, sectional and religion for political contests should be totally discouraged. It is time for Nigerians to reject the political elite who exploit the fact of ethnicity, sectionalism or religious diversity. Elites using ethnic, sectionalism or religious sentiments are not patriotic; therefore, they should be rejected. Nigerians need leaders who will put national interests above sectional, religion, ethnic and other parochial considerations. In like manner, any citizen who is not vigilant of being manipulated by the elite to satisfy their selfish ambitious desires, the respective citizen is not considered patriotic. Therefore, the issue of patriotism is a two-way traffic, either party is equally important in the display.

#### **6.4.4. Rule of law**

The conceptualisation of the rule of law is highly contested with various interest groups using the phrase to promote different and often competing agendas. Roos (2008:2) argues that whatever the agenda, the rule of law idea almost always includes a normative commitment to the “supremacy of law” over the arbitrary exercise of power “rule of man.” Roos further said the term “rule of law” includes a commitment by public officials and citizens to conform their behaviour to legal rules and processes rather than individualised or momentary notions.

Generally speaking, the “rule of law” can be understood as a legal political regime under which the law restrains the state and its authorities (legislative, executive and judicial) by promoting certain liberties and creating order and predictability of how a country functions. Therefore, in the most basic sense, the “rule of law” is a system that attempts to protect the rights of citizens from arbitrary and abusive use of governmental power.

In view of the above conceptualisation, the widespread injustice by the judiciary, the executive, the police, military, and other powerful personalities in the society, as well as policy makers in Nigeria from the local government, state government and federal government levels, has suggested the need for government awakening before they can be bold to punish the perpetrators of religious violence. This is why it was argued that many defaulters might have been caught but set free for killing and looting because the rule of law is not respected in lieu of religious, ethnic or sectional loyalty. Henceforth, the researcher recommends that policy makers in Nigeria must act responsibly and stop playing games with the lives of her citizens.

The three most powerful service providers in any country like Nigeria are the judiciary, the executive and the policy makers. These groups of people are essential for the development or under-development of any nation. If the policy maker comes up with a one-sided policy, the policy implementers may have a problem and the service of the judiciaries will not go well.

#### **6.5. Suggestions for further research**

Taking the limitations of this research into account, certain issues could not be addressed at length. However, the findings of this research open up collaborative opportunities for Christians and Muslims in

Northern Nigeria for religious and mutual coexistence and proclamation of the gospel. The following suggestions are offered for further research: Firstly, given that this research is purely theoretical, all the discussions were conceptual and the analysis was primarily done through the use of existing literature because there is sufficient data on the subject matter. Literature and other documents found in Stellenbosch University library and online accessed through the internet are used. Other materials used include published books, articles, journals, and academic papers on PROCMURA and my personal experiences. Therefore, more research opportunities should be made available for empirical investigations to be conducted in order to test the theories and acceptability of the theoretical claims and recommendations made in this study on Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

Secondly, although this research is concentrated in the Northern Nigerian context, it could also be relevant to other parts of Nigeria and Africa. Hence, this investigation opens opportunities for research in the field of inter-religious encounters and other socio-economic engagements as an emerging field of interest, globally and most importantly, in Northern Nigeria; where the inconspicuousness of religious coexistence has caused unimaginable losses and setbacks. Thirdly, collaboration is a promising practice in Northern Nigeria, especially concerning issues of disagreement or intolerance; therefore, more research is required on collaboration, which could open doors for a better understanding between Christians and Muslims, as well as contributes toward a more conducive environment that will allow for the realisation of religious coexistence in Northern Nigeria. Fourthly, to conduct a comparison between PROCMURA and other grass root organisations in the country that is involved in peace-building and inter-faith dialogue. Fifthly, more research could be done on the complex nature of inter-religious encounters and inquiry made into why people are ready to die for their faith.

## **6.6 Final remarks**

As the title suggests, the theme of this study is, “Mission as Prophetic Dialogue in Christian-Muslim Encounters, Northern Nigeria.” This research contributes towards an understanding of the importance of missiology as encounterology), a consolidation of mission as prophetic dialogue and PROCMURA. The inter-religious encounters in Northern Nigeria, as the study has established, is a complex one and seems to be motivated by power struggles, politics, ethnocentrism and injustice between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

It was established in this research that understanding mission as a prophetic dialogue will transform Christian and Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria by fostering reconciliation, coexistence and proclamation of the gospel. Faith to faith is dialogical approach such as mission as prophetic dialogue. Similarly, PROCMURA's aim is speaking and acting together. It was argued that if Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria do not have a common ground, they may not be able to act together, and in turn, may not listen to each other unless they accept each other's humanity. This acceptance requires forgiveness, which leads to reconciliation.

The researcher suggested understanding mission as prophetic dialogue, mission as encounterology and PROCMURA to be relevant to the contemporary Northern Nigerian society; hence, plurality within the human family, including religious plurality, should not be allowed to be the source of conflict and crisis. Therefore, if Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria believe in God, and desire to address issues of inter-religious conflict as well create opportunities for reconciliation, justice and peace; they will need to work together to banish every form of discrimination, intolerance and religious fundamentalism. The researcher is optimistic that it is possible for people from different religious persuasions to coexist in a society, just as it is possible for people with different names to coexist in a family. Christian-Muslim relations should be practiced with mutual trust, understanding, tolerance and dialogue. The voice of this dissertation is one of peace, love and mutuality that seek to promote respect for all of human life. The reality in Northern Nigeria is that all the ethnic and religious groups will have to live together. Therefore, through this study, the researcher has sought to lay the groundwork for living together in harmony, despite religious and cultural differences.

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