

***DYSFUNCTIONAL EXCLUSION WITHIN
CHRISTIAN/MUSLIM RELATIONSHIPS IN GOMBE
STATE, NIGERIA: A CO-PATHIC APPROACH***

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis 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.

Signature.....

Date.....

ABSTRACT

Dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria in general, and Gombe State in particular, is understood to be a trigger of religious crises in Northern Nigeria. History has shown that Northern Nigeria has been experiencing religious crises from 1980 to the present. The crises have grossly affected the relationship between these two religious groups, despite the fact that they all live in the same community and in some cases in the same family. The reoccurrence of religious crises has created fear and suspicion of one another between the adherents of the two religions, thus giving more ground to the practice of dysfunctional exclusion.

In 1999, the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) formed a forum, called the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), for the purpose of tackling the problems of dysfunctional exclusion and religious crises between Christians and Muslims. Dialogue is one of the most relied approaches adopted by NIREC in addressing the challenges. Unfortunately the application of dialogue among the Christians and Muslims in Gombe state has not been effective as the problem of dysfunctional exclusion persist. This calls for reconsideration of the application of dialogue or to consider an alternative approach which will effectively deal with the dysfunctional exclusion among the two religious adherents in Gombe state.

As a contribution to the fight against dysfunctional exclusion, I suggests a co-pathic approach. The research question is *can co-pathy effectively contribute in addressing the challenge of dysfunctional exclusion within Christian/Muslim relationships?* This will be answered with a focus on the outlined goals of the research following the methodology of Richard Osmer (2008) – the four tasks of practical theology. First, *the descriptive-empirical task*; this task answers the question *what is going on?* It examines the practice of dysfunctional exclusion among the Christians and Muslims. Second, *the interpretive task*, which answers the question *why is this going on?* This will discuss the concept of co-pathy, and its relevant application to the Christian/Muslim relationship. Third, *the normative task*; this task answers the question *what ought to be going on?* It explores a co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious understanding. And lastly, *the pragmatic task* answers the question *how*

might we respond? This presents, in the concluding chapter, the contribution of the research to the fight against dysfunctional exclusion.

The research will create an awareness of a pluralistic religious society and the need for interreligious understanding and consciousness. Co-pathy will be used as a point of convergence between Muslims and Christians and will stand at the centre of their relationships, as both religions recognise and value the virtue of co-pathy. This will motivate the life of togetherness in passion, thus paving the way for the recognition of each other's religion with regard, tolerating religious practices, and considering one another as members of the same community without religious segregation. The research is significant, as the issue of dysfunctional exclusion dehumanises and triggers religious crises, which have claimed many lives in the northern states of Nigeria.

OPSOMMING

Wanfunksionele uitsluiting onder Christene en Moslems in Noord-Nigerië in die algemeen, en in Gombe Staat spesifiek, gee aanleiding tot godsdienstige krisis in Noord-Nigerië. Die geskiedenis toon dat Noord-Nigerië sedert 1980 godsdienstige krisis ervaar. Hierdie krisis het 'n groot effek op die verhouding tussen hierdie twee godsdienstige groepe, ten spyte daarvan dat hulle almal in dieselfde gemeenskap, en soms in dieselfde gesin, woon. Die herhaling van godsdienstige krisis het gelei tot vrees en agterdog tussen die navolgers van die twee godsdienste, wat nog meer gronde gee vir die praktyk van wanfunksionele uitsluiting.

In 1999 het die *Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs* (NSCIA) en die *Christian Association of Nigeria* (CAN) 'n forum gevorm met die naam *Nigeria Inter-Religious Council* (NIREC) om probleme met betrekking tot wanfunksionele uitsluiting en godsdienstige krisis tussen Christene en Moslems te hanteer. Dialoog is die benadering wat die meeste deur NIREC gebruik word om die uitdagings aan te spreek. Ongelukkig was die toepassing van dialoog tussen Christene en Moslems in Gombe Staat nie effektief nie, aangesien die probleem van wanfunksionele uitsluiting voortduur. Dit vereis dus 'n heroorweging van die toepassing van dialoog, of om 'n alternatiewe benadering te oorweeg wat doeltreffend met die wanfunksionele uitsluiting onder die twee godsdienstige groeperinge in Gombe Staat sal kan handel.

As 'n bydrae tot die stryd teen wanfunksionele uitsluiting, stel ek 'n ko-patiese (*co-pathic*) benadering voor. My navorsingsvraag is *kan ko-patie doeltreffend bydra tot die aanspreek van die uitdaging van wanfunksionele uitsluiting in Christen/Moslem-verhoudings*. Dit sal beantwoord word deur te fokus op die doelwitte van die navorsing volgens die metodologie van Richard Osmer (2008) – die vier take van praktiese teologie. Eerstens, *die beskrywende-empiriese taak*, dit antwoord die vraag, *wat gaan aan?* Dit ondersoek die praktyk van wanfunksionele uitsluiting onder Christene en Moslems. Tweede, *die verklarende taak*, wat die vraag beantwoord – *hoekom gaan dit aan?* Hier sal ek die konsep van ko-patie en die relevante toepassing daarvan op die Christen/Moslem-verhouding bespreek. Derdens, *die normatiewe taak*; hierdie taak antwoord die vraag, *wat behoort aan te gaan?* Dit verken 'n ko-patiese teologiese fondament vir intergodsdienstige verstandhouding. En laastens, *die pragmatiese taak*, wat die vraag, *hoe kan ons reageer?* beantwoord.

In die finale hoofstuk stel ek die bydrae van hierdie navorsing voor in die stryd teen wanfunksionele uitsluiting.

Hierdie navorsing sal bewussyn skep van 'n pluralistiese godsdienstige samelewing en die behoefte aan intergodsdienstige begrip en bewussyn. Ko-patie sal gebruik word as 'n punt van konvergensie tussen Moslems en Christene en sentraal in hulle verhoudings staan, aangesien beide godsdienste die deug van ko-patie erken en waarde daaraan heg. Dit sal die lewe van samesyn in passie motiveer en dus die weg berei vir die erkenning van mekaar se godsdienste met agting, die verdra van godsdienstige praktyke en 'n beskouing van mekaar as lede van dieselfde gemeenskap sonder godsdienstige afsondering. Die navorsing is betekenisvol omdat die kwessie van wanfunksionele uitsluiting mense ontrens en godsdienstige krisisse veroorsaak, wat al baie lewens in die noordelike state van Nigerië geëis het.

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to all the Christians and Muslims in Gombe State in Northern Nigeria.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- ADP – Agricultural Development Programme
- ANPP – All Nigeria Peoples Party
- BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
- BH – Boko Haram
- CAN – Christian Association of Nigeria
- CPSS – Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies
- CRK – Christian Religious Knowledge
- CRS – Christian Religious Studies
- CSW – Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- ECWA – Evangelical Church Winning All (formally Evangelical Church of West Africa)
- FCS – Fellowship of Christian Students
- FGN – Federal Government of Nigeria
- GSS – Government Secondary School
- GSU – Gombe State University
- GTS – Government Technical School
- ICPC – International Council for Pastoral Care and Counselling
- IJDWCC&RAIT – International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought
- JP – Jerusalem Pilgrim
- LGA – Local Government Area
- MSS – Muslim Students Society
- NIREC – Nigeria Inter-Religious Council
- NIV – New International Version
- NPC – Northern People’s Congress
- NSCIA – Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
- OIC – Organisation of the Islamic Conference
- OON – Officer of the Order of the Niger
- PBUH – Peace Be Upon Him
- PDP – Peoples Democratic Party
- RAIT – Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought

- RTD – Retired
- SDP – Social Democratic Party
- SIM – Serving In Mission (formally Sudan Interior Mission)
- TET – Tertiary Education Trust
- TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- UK – United Kingdom
- UMBC – United Middle Belt Congress
- VOA – Voice of America
- WCC – World Council of Churches

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Dysfunctional exclusion – Exclusion that causes an impaired relationship, thus creating more emotional turmoil than satisfaction (Urell, 2013:1).
2. Co-pathy – The term co-pathy is a word formulated from “co” and “pathy”, with the prefix indicating partnership or togetherness, while the suffix is derived from the Greek “pathos”, meaning suffering or passion (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:608). Therefore, co-pathy could mean togetherness in passion, or it simply means compassion. The usage of co-pathy in this thesis will mean compassion.
3. Encapsulated mind-set – This refers to the natural tendency among people to see the world as having a boundary with them, therefore they do not know or recognise anybody except themselves and those within familiar boundaries (Augsburger, 1986:22).
4. Religious malpractice – Living a religious life through a non-prescribed religious injunction in the assumed name of religion purposely to achieve personal or the religion’s ambition.
5. Religious manipulation – To extort a religion through influential scheming for personal or group gain.
6. Dehumanisation – The use of dehumanisation in this research refers to the deprivation of humanity of its natural qualities and legal rights and treating people inhumanly.
7. *Boko Haram* – This is a radical Islamic sect which is known as “*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*”. The name “Boko Haram” seems not to have been given explicitly by the group to themselves; but rather is the name that possibly originated from the external view of the group’s basic beliefs that see western education as evil. The figurative meaning of *Boko Haram* is “Western education is prohibited” (Usman, 2013:45).
8. *Maitatsine* – This was a radical Muslim movement who revolted against orthodox Muslims in Northern Nigeria, but their insurgent operation was focused more on Christians (Sodiq, 2009:669).
9. *Sharia* – The Islamic religious law that is based on the teaching of the Quran.
10. Northern Nigeria – This refers to the 19 northern states of Nigeria, namely Yobe, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba, Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa,

Zamfara, Kano, Kaduna, Niger, Plateau, Nasarawa, Kwara, Kogi, Benue and Abuja. A region that is known for its periodic occurrence of religious crises affecting the relationship between Christians and Muslims.

11. *Hadith* – This is the record of the traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, revered and received as a major source of religious law and moral guidance, second only to the authority of the Quran, the holy book of Islam (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251132/Hadith>).
12. People of the Book – The term "People of the Book" in the Qur'an refers to followers of monotheistic Abrahamic religions that are older than Islam. This includes all Christians, all Jews, and Sabians (<http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/PeopleoftheBook.html>).
13. Sokoto Caliphate – The Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria was one of the largest empires in Africa during the 19th century. The empire developed as a result of the Fulani jihads that took place in the first decade of the 19th century across what is now Northern Nigeria. The Sokoto Caliphate was the centre of politics and economics in the region until it fell to British colonial armies in the early 20th century. The Sokoto Caliphate was founded by Uthman dan Fodio, who became the first Sultan of Sokoto (BlackPast.org, 2011).
14. Ubuntu – This term has its background in the Nguni group of languages in South Africa in the formulation "*umuntu unguntu ngabanye abantu*", which literally means "one person is a person through other persons" (Koopman, 2005:195).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Motivation for the Study

Christians and Muslims are the dominant religious adherents in Nigeria. While the former are found more in the southwest and southeast, Muslims form the majority in the north. Northern Nigeria covers 19 states¹ out of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria². The region is described as a religious crisis zone because of its regular reoccurrences of religious tension between the Christians and the Muslims.

Gombe State is one of the northern states where this research is concentrated. It was created on 1 October 1996 by the late general Sani Abacha's military administration. The state has eleven local government areas (LGA)³ with about 20 ethnic groups. Christians and Muslims in the state live together in the same communities, with some of them living in mixed families through intermarriages and proselytization. Similarly, Christians and Muslims are not separated in public and private institutions, except on the ground of religious obligations. However, it is very unfortunate that conflict has and is threatening this mutual co-existence.

As religious beliefs are considered exclusive in nature, their practice often leads to religious malpractices, where religions are being practised for selfish or group desires without being conscious of those of other beliefs. Such practices introduced what I call *dysfunctional exclusion*⁴ among Christians and Muslims. The practice of *dysfunctional exclusion* often triggers religious tension, and in the recent past this has led to outbreaks of religious violence, destruction of property, displacement of people and loss of lives⁵. Despite this tension, Muslims and Christians still remain together as neighbours.

¹ The nineteen states of Northern Nigeria are the following: Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara.

² See appendix IV for a map of Nigeria with 36 states.

³ See appendix III for a Map of Gombe State with 11 LGAs.

⁴ According to Bill Urell (2013:1), this refers to exclusion that causes an impaired relationship, thus creating more emotional turmoil than satisfaction.

⁵ This has happened in many states of northern Nigeria, such as Kwara (20 Dec. 1999), Kaduna (21 to 22 Feb. 2000), Gombe (8 Sept. 2000, 28 Nov. 2008, & 5 to 6 Jan. 2012), Kano (12 Oct. 2001), Jos

Against this background, the challenge therefore is how to address the problem of *dysfunctional exclusion* that threatens the mutual co-existence of Christians and Muslims. In this regard, a co-pathic approach was used. The term co-pathy is a word formulated from “co” and “pathy”, with the prefix indicating partnership or togetherness, while the suffix is derived from the Greek “pathos”, meaning suffering or passion (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:608). Therefore, co-pathy could mean togetherness in passion, or it simply means compassion (ibid). It is hoped that Co-pathy will effectively fight against the *dysfunctional exclusion* between the two religious adherents.

1.2. Problem Statement

In view of the background to and motivation for the study, the relationship between Christians and Muslims is a dysfunctional one. The practice of dysfunctional exclusion has become a way of life within the two religious groups, with the minority as the victim of marginalisation. The effect is often a religious tension that triggers violence between the adherents of the two religions. Today, as a result of the reoccurrence of religious crises, Christians and Muslims lack trust and live in fear of one another. Therefore the research was focused on the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Gombe State, using a co-pathic approach in addressing the problem of dysfunctional exclusion between the two groups of religious believers.

1.3. Preliminary Literature Review

Much research has been conducted in the area of religious crisis in Northern Nigeria, with causes and effects identified, for example, in the works of Dopamu (1989); Omoyajowo (1989); Osia (1993); Turaki (1993); Sodiq (1994); Turaki (1999); Best (2001); Omotosho (2003); Ukiwo (2003); Kwashi (2004); Sodiq (2009); Gwamna (2010); Griswold (2010); Abdu (2010); Sampson (2012); Joseph and Rothfuss (2012); Usman (2013) and Adamolekun (2013). Mohammed Usman notes that, from 1980 to the present, Northern Nigeria has been known for its religiously-motivated violence. In these periods, even when the tension arose from politically or ethnically-motivated causes, it often turned into a religious crisis (Usman, 2013:41). Earlier, Yusufu Turaki (1993:189) argued that the religious conflicts between Muslims and

(16 Nov. 2002), Adamawa (8 June 2004), Borno (18 Feb. 2006), , Yobe (26 to 30 July 2009), Bauchi (29 Dec. 2009), Niger (25 Dec. 2011) etc. (Sampson, 2012:112).

Christians that are experienced in Northern Nigeria today have a colonial administrative influence. He blames the colonial administration for setting up a religious policy that recognised and respected only one religion at the expense of others (ibid). In support of Turaki's argument, Shadrack Gaya Best (2001:67) affirms that religious crises are not a recent occurrence in Northern Nigeria, pointing out that, during the colonial period and into the politics of decolonisation, religion was the determining factor in the definition of regional and political identities in Northern Nigeria.

During the colonial period, religious communities were developed and cared for under the "spirit" of discrimination and intolerance (Turaki, 1993:188). The disparities created by the colonial administration led to the claim of some geographical locations in Northern Nigeria by only one religious group (Kwashi, 2004:62). A report by the International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches and the Royal Aal-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2012:9) on the inter-religious tensions and crisis in Nigeria indicates the state of the geographical polarisation of Muslims and Christians, where Christian residential areas, and in some cases local markets, are segregated from those of Muslims.

The history of religious crises in Northern Nigeria started with the *Maitatsine*⁶ riots in the 1980s in many parts of Northern Nigeria, such as Kano (1980), Maiduguri, Gombe and Kaduna (1982), and Jimeta-Yola, (1984) resulting in the loss of lives and properties (Best, 2001:67; Gwamna, 2010:5; Omotosho, 2003:16; Osia, 1993:42; Sodiq, 1994:304; Sodiq, 2009:669;). These were followed by a series of other crises in 1991, called the "Reinhard Bonke crisis" because it was flamed by the preaching ministry of Reinhard Bonke in Kano, as the Muslims abhor and refuted it (Best, 2001:69). In 1992, the religious crisis engulfed the city of Jalingo (ibid). Others include the *Sharia*⁷ crisis in 2000, affecting almost all of the northern territories; Osama Bin Laden's riots in 2001; the Miss World Pageant crisis in 2002; and the prophet Mohammad Cartoon Riots in 2006 (Gwamna, 2010:54-62). The details of the religious crises in Northern Nigeria are shown in Appendix I.

⁶ *Maitatsine* was a radical Muslim movement that revolted against the orthodox Muslims in Northern Nigeria, but their insurgent operation was focused more on Christians than on non-Christians (Sodiq, 2009:669).

⁷ *Sharia* – The Islamic religious law that is based on the teaching of the Qur'an and the *Hadith*.

According to the reports of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) (2008:4-5), Christians in the northern states of Nigeria complain of being made second-class citizens, adding that they often are discriminated against in the granting of jobs in the state sector, and that if they are employed, getting promotion becomes very difficult. Another area that could also be described as dysfunctional exclusion is the denial of the teaching of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in some northern states in both primary and secondary schools (Kwashi, 2004:67).

There is a dominant view that traces religion itself as the main source of religious crisis, while at the same time being the source of conflict resolution (Adamolekun, 2013:64; Maregere, 2011:18; Sampson, 2012:104). In stressing the point of the possibility for religious engagement in both peace-making and violence inspiring, Tendaiwo Peter Maregere (2011:17) points to the strange phenomenon noted by Scott Appleby (2000), who admitted that both the terrorists and peacemakers may be from the same community and adhere to the same religious tradition, but whereas the former are interested in killing, the peacemakers engage in reconciliation. This is an unfortunate situation. Taiye Adamolekun indicates that the manner of preaching, teaching and religious practice of some religious leaders betrays the intolerance of the adherents of the various religions. Such religious leaders find it difficult to accommodate other religious views in the name of devotion to religious founders, and their zealousness makes them become fanatically uncompromising in their religious practices (Adamolekun, 2013:64). Religious intolerance as a form of dysfunctional exclusion introduces an *encapsulated mind-set*⁸ against each other.

Realising the dysfunctional relationship between the adherents of the two religions, the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), formed by the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) with the support of the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1999, was saddled with the responsibility of addressing the problem of the religious crisis in Nigeria. Despite the efforts of NIREC in organising dialogue, discussions, workshops, seminars, conferences, pamphleteering, etc., the relationship between Christians and Muslims keeps growing in the area of *dysfunctional exclusion* and the reoccurrence of

⁸ According to David Augsburg (1986:22), this is the natural tendency among people to see the world as having a boundary with them, therefore they do not know or recognise anybody except themselves and those within familiar boundaries.

religious crisis in Northern Nigeria. While dialogue has been identified as the common means of addressing the challenges of the Christian/Muslim relationship (Barnes, 2002; Dopamu, 1989; Gwamna, 2010; Lee, 2005; Michel, 2010; Swidler, 1983), its application has been challenged as being ineffective (Joseph & Rothfuss, 2012:83; Kerry, 2010:195). With such ineffectiveness there is a need for more tools in addressing the challenges under consideration. That is why I have chosen the concept of “co-pathy” as a framework to contribute to addressing the challenges of the Christian/Muslim relationship.

“Co-pathy”, translated as compassion, is a virtue that gives active attention to an individual or group of persons who are suffering from loneliness, isolation, exclusion, marginalisation and disempowerment and who are in need of liberation (Baffes, 2011:19). Considering co-pathy from the Christian theological point of view, God is seen as the compassionate creator who has acted in the lives of his creatures, his people (Tiemeyer, 2006:191). Because of God’s love for human beings, he sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who came and lived an earthly life of compassion through his ministry, with both Jews and non-Jews benefiting from the compassionate heart of Jesus Christ (Voorwinde, 2011:57, 119, 151). Christians are challenged to be “Christ” among their neighbours as a means of complementing and continuing with the compassionate ministry of Jesus Christ (Karkkainen, 2004a:101). And, from the Islamic theological point of view, compassion is an attribute of God, whom the Qur’an describes as the most merciful and compassionate, demanding every Muslim to be compassionate to others (Engineer, 2009:86). This means compassion has a special place in the theologies of Christianity and Islam, as both accept compassion as a divine concept and demand of all members to be compassionate towards others.

To encourage interreligious understanding, the adherents of the two religions need to accept the reality of the religious plurality in society, which calls for tolerance and mutual co-existence. Therefore, living a religious life interreligiously will promote cordial relationships between the two groups of adherents.

1.4. Research Question

The practice of dysfunctional exclusion and religious crisis complement each other, as each is capable of triggering the other. The research question therefore is: Can

co-pathy address the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships in the area of dysfunctional exclusion, which often triggers religious crisis among the two religious groups?

1.5. The Goals of the Study

The research hopes to:

1. Examine the practice of dysfunctional exclusion among Christians and Muslims in Gombe State, Nigeria.
2. Discuss the concept of co-pathy, and its relevant application to the Christian/Muslim relationship in Gombe State Nigeria.
3. Explore the co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious understanding in dealing with dysfunctional exclusion.

1.6. The Meaning of the Study in the Field of Practical Theology

Practical theology, according to Swinton and Mowat (2006:6), is a critical and theological reflection on the activities of the church in their interaction with the practices of the world, with the aim to ensure and enable faithful participation in the redemptive practices of God to and for the world. This definition points out key issues in practical theology – practical theological enquiry is *critical*, it is theological reflection, it is not simply the practice of the church and Christian life, but also involves the practices of the world, and it is an enablement and ensuring of faithful practices (Swinton & Mowat, 2006:6-9). The fundamental aim of practical theology is to enable the church to faithfully discharge its responsibility as it participates in the mission of God in, to and for the world (Swinton & Mowat, 2006:25). The point of departure for a practical theology is in the domain of human beings, in the church and in society (Heitink, 1999:2-7). Russell and Lyon (2011:22) note that practical theology participates in a community with interest and without judgement, and the participation helps in having a distinctive and concrete direction in relation to the actual situation of the community life of the people.

Daniel J. Louw (1998:95), based on the view of theology as a hermeneutic event that involves human reflection and interpretation, understands practical theology as the hermeneutics of the encounter of God with human beings and their environment. In his explanation of practical theology as a hermeneutical science, Louw (1998:90-91) notes the shift in practical theology by citing Browning (1983):

1. Shift away from the clerical or official paradigm to a certain type of phenomenological ecclesiology. This is to say, practical theology is no longer about the internal life of the church, but about the public image of the church in the world.
2. Practical theology is less about faith content. It involves critical work that tests faith in interaction with other religions and secular beliefs in a pluralistic society. Practical theology therefore engages a critical dialogue with the aim to transform society.
3. It becomes the task of practical theology to develop ethical norms for social and individual transformation. The focus is not so much on dispositional ethics, which concerns virtue and personal character, but rather on principle ethics engaged in social and individual transformation.
4. A shift from theoretical principles to a practice-oriented theory. The practice/theory integration is called “a praxis-oriented approach”. Practical theology now focuses on its theory through its critical reflection on the events in practice.
5. The greater role of social sciences. Although a greater role is given to the normative function of practical theology, it still needs methods and instruments. Social sciences help because they indicate which approaches to use for active intervention in practice.
6. Practical theology as liberation theology. Its functional activities should focus on liberation.

Practical theology therefore is interested in designing praxis theories and strategies for action for social and personal transformation (Louw, 1998:91). In differentiating praxis from practice, Louw (2008:18) stresses praxis as an action that involves the intention and motivation, including the significance, of the behaviour, meaning that practical theology works in praxis rather than just practice.

The meaning of the study in the field of practical theology identifies the practical theological methodology that I used and further explains the study in the field of pastoral care, which is my discipline.

1.6.1. Practical theological methodology

According to Louw (1998:98), to apply a hermeneutic approach in practical theology, the following phases can be used as research methodology:

1. The phase of description or observation.
2. The phase of critical analysis.
3. The phase of critical reflection and systematising, where the question of the theological meaning and impact of data should be posed.
4. The phase of design – strategic planning.

This research methodology is supported by Richard Osmer (2008), who presents the core tasks of practical theological interpretation as asking four questions that are aimed towards guiding the interpretation and responding to a critical situation. These questions are: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? and How might we respond? (Osmer, 2008:4). The answers to these questions reflect on the following four tasks of practical theology for research methodology (Osmer, 2008:4):

1. The descriptive-empirical task.
2. The interpretive task.
3. The normative task.
4. The pragmatic task.

The practical theological methodology of Louw (1998) and Osmer (2008) have the same approach, and they have a close bearing on my research study. But, for the sake of consistency, I will use only one of them, namely Osmer (2008), as being the most recent publication. I therefore will use his methodology strictly. The choice of this methodology will enhance the conversation between my research study and practical theology, as a mutual critical correlation understands the task of practical theology as the interaction of situations with Christian traditional insights (Swinton & Mowat 2006:77).

Research on the dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Gombe state in Northern Nigeria, using the approach of co-pathology, is a practical theological concern. As Swinton and Mowat (2006:5) assert, practical theology considers human experience seriously. They explain human experience as a 'place' where the gospel

is grounded, embodied, interpreted and lived out (ibid). The research is on the experience of Christians and Muslims in their relationship with one another and their environment. Therefore the research will contribute to the field of practical theology by providing more of an approach to the critical situations of people in their relationship with one another and their environment, which is a major concern of practical theology.

1.6.2. The study in the field of pastoral care

Pastoral care has been described as an expression of human concern through activities (Lartey, 2003:5). It is concerned with the complete well-being of the whole person, having its essential goal focused on a more holistic approach to the discipline of pastoral care in the global context (Lartey, 2003:13). The practice of pastoral care expresses deep concern for all human beings without discrimination (Lartey, 2003:26). The role of pastoral care has been described in two main perspectives in the theology of pastoral care, namely *cura animarum*, which refers to *faith care*, and *cura vitae*, referring to *life care* (Louw, 2008: 217). Pastoral care engages in the affairs of human suffering, creating an environment that makes people live in hope with human dignity in the face of their sufferings (Louw, 2008:15). When a patient lives in hope it strengthens self-coping skills, which give positive meaning to his or her suffering, thus trusting that, while things seem futile and the patient lives in the face of death, these lead the patient to viewing suffering as an opportunity for growing (ibid:9). Caregivers are responsible for providing the necessary equipment and preparation so that patients experience suffering as burdens that they can bear.

The uniqueness of the discipline of pastoral care is its distinction from all other disciplines in the field of health and care, as pastoral care has implications far beyond empathy (Louw, 2008:75). Pastoral care embodies the identification of the suffering of Christ with our human predicament (ibid). Louw explains that, in the discipline of pastoral care, pastors do not sit in their offices waiting for people to come for appointments. Rather, it is the shepherd who seeks for the sheep to be cared for. Pastoral care therefore reaches out to where people are, and this entails meeting them in their living situations, which calls for a deep concern and sincere empathy (ibid). In explaining pastoral care, Lartey (2003:55-59) discussed it in terms

of five major models that manifest the shape and form of pastoral care. First, pastoral care is understood as therapy responsible for healing and care giving. Secondly, pastoral care is seen as a ministry with responsibilities of proclamation (*kerygma*), teaching (*didache*), prophecy (forth telling), service (*diakonia*), fellowship (*koinonia*), administration (*oikonomia*) and worship (*eucharistia*). Thirdly, pastoral care is understood as social action, which it serves through liberation. Fourthly, pastoral care serves to empower through conscientisation and awareness. And fifthly, pastoral care is discharged as a responsibility in personal interaction through relationship.

Lartey (2003:60-68) identifies the following functions of pastoral care:

1. *Healing* – this refers to restoring what is lost and the demand for integration and identity. It also means regaining the lost or attaining new coping skills, or even reframing existing concepts or ideas.
2. *Sustaining* – this has to do with the situation that one cannot change it, but that it requires a support system that will bring about survival so that there will be courage to continue with life.
3. *Guiding* – to be able to take good decisions there is need for a moral framework, a certain philosophy of life or someone who would be a guide in difficult decision making.
4. *Reconciling* – the purpose is to bring people together and to bridge the gap created by the lack of forgiveness.
5. *Nurturing* – this is a responsibility that leads to growth in maturity.
6. *Liberating* – this is necessary for the emancipation of people who have been enslaved, addicted or victimised.
7. *Empowering* – in this regard, pastoral care focuses on issues in relation to power and its abuse. It equips people with skills and knowledge that will help them respond to crises faced in life.

In addition to the functions of pastoral care as presented by Lartey above, Louw (2008:75-77) adds *interpreting*, which refers to the hermeneutic responsibility of pastoral care, where the lived situations of people are brought together and linked with the biblical story or narrative. It is also concerned with the interpretation of God images in relation to people's perceptions. The functions of pastoral care are aimed

at improving both spiritual and physical maturity (ibid). In explaining the resources of pastoral care, Lartey (2003:69-78) outlined the following: Self-in-relationship – the ministry of presence; word – the expression in words of thoughts, action and feelings is powerful; emotion – in both sympathising and empathising; action – especially in the silence of care; and symbol and imagination – having the psychological process of repression of thoughts, behaviours and feelings associated with symbolised ideas.

Pastoral care in hospital care requires the consciousness of a pastor to understand himself as part of a team of care givers to the patient. But the role of being a part of the team of care givers in the hospital should not be regarded by the pastoral care giver as an obvious right; he must be aware that he is operating in the territory of medical practitioners (Louw, 2008:217). Therefore his own ministerial role is the ministry of presence, the ministry of compassion and hope, the pastoral caregiver as interpreter, and caregiver co-partner in terms of taking a moral decision (Louw, 2008:241-242). The ministry of presence is indeed central in pastoral care, therefore for a counsellor to be pastoral he or she must truly and fully be there for others (Augsburger, 1986: 37). Speaking from the African perspective, Taylor (1963:196-197) affirms that what an African person believes he owes as debt to his fellow human being, in terms of relationship, is presence, meeting face to face. The importance of meeting face-to-face has been depicted in the Hausa⁹ proverb: *Da suya da dafuwa duk labarin wuta su ke ji, amma gasshi shi ya ga wuta kirikiri...*, meaning “frying and boiling hear news of fire, but roasting sees fire face to face”. Frying, boiling and roasting all felt the fire, but the one who can best describe the fire is roasting, because it has not only felt it but has also seen it face to face (ibid). In emphasising the aspect of this presence, Taylor (1963:197) explains that the offering of a Christian in such a presence-oriented community is for him or her to be present, to be really and totally present, and to be really and totally in the present; this point reveals the fact that some presence may not be present in the presence. Lartey (2003:69) adds that the most crucial resource that the caregiver offers is his or her physical presence. And this presence requires the integration of the self-awareness with the awareness of the other, and the consciousness of togetherness in the presence should not be superficial association; instead, it should be an openness

⁹ Hausa is a language and also refers to the people that owns the language. It is the largest ethnic group in northern Nigeria.

from within one's existence (Augsburger, 1986:37). While in the presence of the patient, effort should be made by the pastoral carer to direct the patient into the presence of God so that the patient will trust in the faithfulness of God amidst the suffering, and believe the presence of God in the suffering is counting on his faithfulness (Louw, 2008:221). Promissiotherapy as a means of making known the promises of God's faithfulness is a pastoral care tool used in assisting patients to understand that the presence of God is with them in their situation, thus stimulating greater hope (Louw, 2008:236). Pastoral care gives hope that will create a positive environment, allowing peace and love in the life of patients that will help them expect the future positively.

1.7. Research Design, Methods and Theoretical Framework

This was non-empirical research on *documentary materials*¹⁰ that focused on secondary textual data. The reason for the choice of non-empirical research is because much research has been conducted in the area of discrimination, marginalisation and the religious crisis in Northern Nigeria (see 1.3). Non-empirical research is a qualitative research method using techniques of investigation, comparison and assessment of a variety of arguments presented by researchers. In view of the fact that there are various methods in the field of research whose choice depends on the goals of the study, this research took a qualitative approach.

As qualitative research, its method is focused on the discovery of the extent of human experience, which often is not likely to be reduced to numbers (Lincoln, 2011). In such research a research question is asked, unlike in the case of quantitative research, where the test hypotheses are required (ibid). This is why Durrheim (2006:9) understands research design as a framework that connects the research question with the research progression. For Mouton (2001:55), the research design is a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct one's research. He notes that a research design and research methodology are not one and the same, as the latter is a research process and the procedures to be used in achieving the desired research goal (ibid:56). It is with this understanding that the qualitative research

¹⁰ The term "documentary materials" means any materials on which information is recorded. It includes, but is not limited to, written or printed materials, photographs, films or negatives, audio or video tapes, and materials upon which information is electronically or magnetically recorded, such as computer disks (http://www.justice.gov/usao/eousa/foia_reading_room/usam/title9/crm00660.htm).

design requires a research methodology to set the research into process that will result in achieving the research goal of this study. Therefore, with the research question, “Can co-pathy contribute to addressing the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships in the area of dysfunctional exclusion, which often triggers religious crisis among the two religious groups?” the qualitative research engaged in the set goals of the study.

The set goals were organised into a research methodology proposed by Richard Osmer (2008). The first procedure examined the existence of the practice of dysfunctional exclusion, which was the descriptive-empirical task (what is going on?). In examining the practice of dysfunctional exclusion, the interpretive task was also applied, which answers the question *why is this going on?* The second discussed the concept of co-pathy and its relevant applications to the Christian/Muslim relationship – the normative task (what ought to be going on). The third procedure explored the co-pathic theological foundation of interreligious understanding for dealing with the dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims, the normative task was applied also. The fourth procedure was the conclusion, which was the pragmatic task (how might we respond?).

As part of the research design, the research followed the Stellenbosch University policy on thesis research.

1.8. Limitation of the Study

Dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is a common phenomenon, especially in the country’s northern states. However, for the purpose of making a realistic contribution, this study is limited to Gombe State as the territorial focus. Nonetheless, for the sake of the historical background of dysfunctional exclusion and its effect on the religious crises, the research alluded to northern Nigeria.

Christians and Muslims are not the only religious groups in Gombe State, but my focus was limited to the relationship between Christians and Muslims only. The choice of Christians and Muslims as the target groups was based on the fact that the adherents of the two religions constitute the majority in the state compared to other religious groups. The frequent religious challenges that often create tension are

common only among these two religious groups. The research did not explore the causes of the religious crises, and also did not engage directly with the *Boko Haram*¹¹ insurgency, except through allusion.

There may be different ways of addressing the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships in the area of dysfunctional exclusion, for example the use of dialogue and awareness campaigns. My approach was the use of co-pathology as a framework to fight the dysfunctional exclusion between the adherents of the two religions in Gombe State. Nonetheless, dialogue, as used in the past, was critiqued.

The limitations to this research arose because of the research challenges relating to resources, time constraints and achieving the desired goal of the research.

1.9. The Overview of the Research

The research was planned based on the goals of the study as directed by its research methodology. This grants coherence between chapters and leads toward the achievement of the set goals.

Chapter 2 examines the background and reality of the practice of dysfunctional exclusion among Christians and Muslims in Gombe State of Northern Nigeria. The study explores the historical background to the dysfunctional exclusion and its effect on the two groups of religious adherents. The chapter also critiques the practice of religious dialogue between the two religious groups.

Chapter 3 discusses the concept of co-pathology, which is my research approach to the problem of dysfunctional exclusion. It is believed that the approach will address the dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Gombe State and Northern Nigeria in general. The relevance of co-pathology is discussed and found to be an accepted virtue among the two religious groups. In discussing the cross-disciplinary approach to the concept of co-pathology, it was discovered that Christianity is not the only religious discipline that teaches compassion, but that it also occurs in other disciplines, such as African anthropology, Psychology, and Islamic religious studies.

¹¹ A radical Islamic sect known as "*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*". The figurative meaning of *Boko Haram* is "western education is prohibited, thus sin".

Chapter 4 explores the co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious understanding in dealing with the dysfunctional exclusion between the adherents of the two religions in Gombe State. The theology of compassion was considered with God as a compassionate creator, Jesus Christ as the compassion of God, and Christians as the work of Christ among their neighbours. The chapter also considered the co-pathic earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, with a focus on the Jews and non-Jews, as the non-Jews were among the beneficiaries of his compassion. The theology of interreligious understanding was discussed by considering the need for Christian understanding of religious pluralism, and then the Trinity and religious pluralism. The chapter emphasises the need for the adherents of the two religions to accept the reality of the religious pluralistic society and to live their religious lives interreligiously.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion with the presentation of the research contribution and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

THE PRACTICE OF DYSFUNCTIONAL EXCLUSION AMONG CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN GOMBE STATE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

2.1. Introduction

Geographically, Northern Nigeria was known as Central Sudan during the pre-colonial period. The area was also referred to as a Hausa¹²-dominated region (Turaki, 1993:6). Because it was an area predominantly occupied by Muslims, with an Islamised culture, the Muslims saw themselves as owners of the region (Kwashi, 2004:62). Politically, this area was called the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria during the period of colonisation, and later as the Northern Provinces of Nigeria (Turaki, 1993:6). In the 1950s it was known as the Northern Region of Nigeria, and during the post-colonial period the political entity was broken up into six states in 1967, then ten states in 1975 and seventeen states in 1991 (Turaki, 1993:6). Today there are nineteen northern states of Nigeria that were created out of the former Northern Region.

Gombe State, as described above (page 1) has eleven local government areas divided into three Senatorial Districts: Gombe North Senatorial District, with Kwami, Nafada, Dukku and Funakaye as local government areas. Gombe Central Senatorial District includes Akko, Gombe and Yamalu Deba local government areas, and Gombe South Senatorial District comprises Billiri, Kaltungo, Shongom and Balanga local government areas. According to Ludwig, Gombe North and Gombe Central are predominantly Muslims, while Christians predominate the Gombe South Senatorial District (Ludwig, 2008: 628). This assertion is supported by the Premium Times as it declares that “The local governments, predominantly populated by Christians, are Balanga, Billiri, Kaltungo, and Shongom. The areas make up Gombe South Senatorial District” (Premium Times, 2013:1).

¹² The largest ethnic group of northern Nigeria, who became assimilated with the Fulani ethnic group and are responsible for the propagation of Islam in post-colonial northern Nigeria.

In this chapter, the study is concentrated on the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims with a focus on Gombe State. Using the methodology adopted from Richard Osmer (2008), the descriptive-empirical task and interpretive task both applies to this chapter, as the problem, some of “causes” and effects of dysfunctional exclusion shall be described and explained against a brief historical and contemporary background of Christian/Muslim relations in Gombe state of Northern Nigeria. The chapter examines the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims, thus answering the questions of the descriptive-empirical task and interpretive task of *what is going on? And why is this going on?*

The examination of the practice of dysfunctional exclusion will confirm whether or not there is dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria in general, and in Gombe State in particular. In examining the practice of dysfunctional exclusion among Christians and Muslims, the assertion of Yusuf Turaki, a Professor of Theology and Social Ethics and an indigene of Northern Nigeria, needs to be evaluated. In his book *The British colonial legacy in Northern Nigeria: A social ethical analysis of the colonial and post-colonial society and politics in Nigeria*, Turaki asserts that the colonial administration institutionalised religious conflict between the Muslim and the non-Muslim groups, which has had long-term consequences for post-colonial Nigeria (Turaki, 1993:188). This explains that the long-term consequences are the religious conflict between the two societies, which were developed and nurtured separately and in isolation of each other in the colonial system (Ibid, 189). Turaki blames the colonial administration for developing Muslims and non-Muslims communities differently and under religious and cultural intolerance (Turaki, 1993:189). This assertion reveals that the challenge of the Muslim/Christian relationship today, which is not unique to Gombe State but common to all the states of Northern Nigeria, has a colonial administrative history.

The activities of the chapter are categorised into five main sections: Section 1 (2.1) introduces the chapter. Section 2 (2.2) indicates the historical background to Christian/Muslim relationships in Gombe State. The section also studies the relationship between Muslims and Christians in the colonial and post-colonial eras, and the Islamic history of the Christian/Muslim relationship. Section 3 (2.3) focuses

on the post-colonial history of religious violence in Northern Nigeria. It will indicate the record of inter-religious crises, and the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims. Section 4 (2.4) focuses on the critique of the practice of religious dialogue. The section provides a historical background to the religious dialogue, and the analysis of the practice of religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Section 5 (2.5) concludes the chapter.

2.2. Historical Background to Christian/Muslim Relationships in Gombe State, Northern Nigeria

For many centuries, the Hausa land was under the profound influence of the Islamic and Arab civilizations (Turaki, 1999:40). Ancient empires in Western Sudan, such as Mali and Songhai, introduced Islam, education, commerce and political institutions, which contributed a lot to stimulating socio-political development in the Hausa land (ibid). Another ethnic group, known as the *Fulani*, later settled among the Hausa people and consequently became assimilated to such an extent that they are referred to as the *Hausa/Fulani* ethnic group. As to the possible origin of the Fulani people, Azarya (1978, cited by Turaki, 1999:43) says it was in the Northern and Eastern parts of Senegal, from where they later began their eastward movement across the Sudan and spread across West Africa. There are two categories of Fulani: the first category are the *cattle Fulani*, known as “*Fulbe Na’r*”, who are less affected by Hausa culture and Islam. The second category are the *town Fulani*, known as “*Fulbe Sire*”; this group do not keep cattle in any number and many of them prefer speaking Hausa rather than their language (*Fulfulde*), except in the Adamawa and Gombe States (Turaki, 1999:44). The “*Fulani Sire*,” who were gradually assimilated into the Hausa culture, were mostly Muslim scholars, teachers, court judges, diplomats and advisors to Hausa rulers (ibid). According to Sodiq (2009:649), it was the socio-political oppression of the Hausa rulers, coupled with their lack of commitment to the religion of Islam that motivated the Jihad led by a Fulani scholar, Uthman Dan Fodio, at the end of eighteenth century, leading to the establishment of the *Sokoto Caliphate*¹³. During the Jihad, the Fulani Muslim clerics

¹³ The Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria was one of the largest empires in Africa during the 19th century. The empire developed as a result of the Fulani jihads, which took place in the first decade of the 19th century across what is now Northern Nigeria. The Sokoto Caliphate was the centre of politics and economics in the region until it fell to British colonial armies in the early 20th century. The Sokoto Caliphate was founded by Uthman Dan Fodio, who became the first Sultan of Sokoto (BlackPast.org, 2011).

and their Hausa followers overthrew the Hausa rulers and became the new rulers; subsequently, there was intermarriage and intermingling between the Fulani and the Hausa, resulting in the assimilation (Turaki, 1999:44-45). The Hausa/Fulani, after the Fulani Jihad, became the largest and most dominant of all Muslim groups (Turaki, 1993:4). This section (2.2) discusses the relationship of the Muslims with the non-Muslim communities, especially the Christians, and the Islamic history of the Christian/Muslim relationship.

2.2.1. Relationship between Muslims and Christians in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Era

Islam came to Northern Nigeria in the seventh and eighth centuries through the Arab traders along the Sahara and had its first influence in Kanem, the present Bornu State, which shares the same geopolitical zone as Gombe State; from there it spread to other neighbouring states of Northern Nigeria (Sodiq, 2009:648). Before the British colonial administrators occupied the whole of Northern Nigeria from 1900 to 1903, the Muslim rule in the emirates of Sokoto, Zaria, Kano and Borno had already been established and consolidated among the Muslims (Ubah, 1991:133). Islam integrated the various ethnic groups in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria who had been adherents of traditional African religions before the arrival of Islam, and the non-Muslim group who remained outside Islamic influence (Turaki, 1993:4). Turaki asserts that, before British colonisation there were two broad religious communities in Northern Nigeria; these were the Muslim communities and the traditional religious communities (1993:187). According to Ubah (1991:133), when Northern Nigeria was conquered and brought under British authority, the problem faced by Lord Lugard (the conqueror) was that of devising appropriate forms of administration for the Muslim, as well as the non-Muslim community. In opting for "indirect rule", Lord Lugard allowed for the basic institutions of the emirates to be retained¹⁴ in order to facilitate and consolidate imperial rule (Ibid).

The British colonial government put Muslims in charge of all territories and declared its interest against the protection of Christian missionaries from Muslim fanatics because the British colonial government had vowed not to interfere in the religious affairs of the Muslims in the emirates (Barnes, 2004:63). Turaki (1993:187) asserts

¹⁴ This refers to the territory controlled by an emir, an Islamic traditional ruler. It also speaks of the administrative system of the Islamic traditional ruler.

that the colonial religious policies deliberately excluded Christian missions from operating in the Muslim areas. Ubah (1991:135) added that the interest of Lord Lugard, who was the High Commissioner in charge of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, was devoted to the Muslim areas; for the non-Muslims, his interest was to appoint Muslims as judges of courts in the areas dominated by the non-Muslims. Therefore, colonial educational, judicial and social policies were all based on the policy of separate development and the isolation of ethnic groups (Turaki, 1993:188).

Islam gained a stronghold in Northern Nigeria and became the state religion, and its adherents dominated the colonial hierarchical structure (Sodiq, 2009:649). Sodiq further affirms that the adherents of traditional religions were forced to convert to Islam, because it was made clear that if one did not become a Muslim, one would not enjoy the security and free trade enjoyed by the adherents of Islam (ibid). For the tribes in the Middle Belt¹⁵, conversion to Christianity was a way of protesting against Islam, with which they had experienced war and desolation. Conversion to Christianity for them was the assertion of their freedom and access to Western education (Kukah, 1999:100). Turaki (1993:188) asserts that the Muslims (Hausa/Fulani) were placed over non-Muslim groups or other lesser groups as “native” rulers, and within the colonial hierarchical structure the Muslim groups were generally placed higher than the “pagans” or the “primitive” tribes – the non-Muslim group.

Before the advent of Christianity in Northern Nigeria, Islam had already been present and the culture of the indigenous people had already been influenced by Islam (Kwashi, 2004:62). In the early colonial era, when Christianity and Islam were considered new religions compared to the indigenous traditional religion, Christians and Muslims were performing their social and religious activities together among the adherents of the indigenous traditional religions as their mission field (Omoyajowo 1989:50). According to Sodiq (2009:650), the first conflict encountered between Christians (missionaries) and Muslims was the conquest of Sokoto¹⁶. It was very difficult for Christianity to be planted in Northern Nigeria because Muslims were

¹⁵ This is a region that is also called north-central, comprising Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Kogi, Kwara, Niger and Abuja. It is a region of multi-ethnic groups, with a high number of Christians compared to other parts of northern Nigeria (Kukah, 1999:100).

¹⁶ Sokoto is considered an Islamic spiritual community in Northern Nigeria and was founded by Usman dan Fodio during his successful Jihad in the pre-colonial era.

hostile to Christianity (ibid:653). Christian missionaries were rather offered the option of going into non-Muslim territories in the Northern Nigerian province to set up their mission stations (Barnes, 2004:63).

Kwashi (2004:62) complains that Muslims saw themselves as owners of the major areas in Northern Nigeria; and therefore considered the attempts of Christians to penetrate into the area as encroachment. The rejection of Christian mission activities in Northern Nigeria by the leaders of the Islamic faith was done with the support of the colonial administration, which earlier had promised Muslim rulers that they would not interfere in the Islamic religion (Turaki, 1993:188). The promise of religious non-interference made the colonial administration become cautious about introducing European education or allowing the activities of Christian missions in the Muslim areas (Turaki, 1999:244). The leaders of the Islamic faith discouraged their people from identifying with Christians and prevented them from attending Christian schools, which they believed were a means of conversion, despite the fact that were the only school providing Western education at that time (Sodiq, 1994:283).

The Christian missionaries accused the colonial government of taking action through a covert policy that favoured the expansion of Islam at the expense of Christianity (Barnes, 2004:63). In the late 1920s, Christian missions had decided to enter the Muslim areas, led by the General Director of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM)¹⁷, Rowland V. Bingham, along with the leaders of other missions, to oppose the colonial prohibition policy. They even reported on the issue back home at a meeting in London in 1927 (Turaki, 1999:260). It was at this meeting that the Christian missions expressed their opposition to the prohibition policy and the anti-Christian attitude of the British colonial administrators of Northern Nigeria. As a result, the colonial administrators promised to change their policies towards Christian missions and to educate the Muslim rulers on principles of religious tolerance (ibid). Similarly, Barnes (2004:63) presented another ill relationship between Muslims and Christians in the colonial era, which he tagged 'religious insults', as found in the arguments of Ethel Miller and Gideon Urhobo, who both argued a position that was an insult to Muslims, as it distorted the person of the Prophet Muhammad. The colonial

¹⁷ The acronym for SIM has passed through considerable changes, and it is now known for "Serving in Mission".

government intervened by inviting the Christian missions into the emirates to heal the ill relationship; the retirement of the first generations of both administrators and Christian missionaries serving in the province of Northern Nigeria was one of the actions taken (Barnes, 2004:78).

In a stratified Northern System, the non-Muslim group was prescribed an inferior status. The colonial mode of administration of the non-Muslim group was referred to as the “Pagan Administration” (Turaki, 1993:189). The colonially stratified inequality between the Muslim and non-Muslim groups can be observed in the following ways (ibid): (1) the subordination of the non-Muslim group to Hausa-Fulani rule and political control; (2) the institutionalisation of Hausa-Fulani dominance through the development of their ruling families and socio-political values and institutions; (3) colonial maintenance and defence of the privileged ruling families and the maintenance of the socio-political status quo; (4) the creation and development of the Muslim political elites to succeed the colonial administration; and (5) the unjust colonial political and economic institutions that reflected class or religious or ethnic biases.

The effect of the colonial administration has been cited as one of the causes of the present inter-religious tensions and crises in Nigeria, as reported by the International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2012:9). The report argues the following points: (1) the geographical polarisation of Muslims and Christians in the northern states, where Christian residential areas, and in some cases local markets, are segregated from those of Muslims; (2) the long-term and residual effect of the different ways that different parts of the country were administered during the colonial period, particularly between the North and the South.

Between 1950 and 1960, the northern leaders, particularly the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) government, tried on several occasions to let the Christians and other non-Muslim groups of the Middle Belt know that there would be religious tolerance in their northern administrative system, emphasising the theme “religious freedom” (Turaki, 1993:169-170). The Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, explained that the policy of his government was firmly rooted in religious

tolerance, and that no religion will be favoured at the expense of the other (Turaki, 1993:171). The Premier appreciated the work of Christian missions and pledged a continued partnership with them. He stated that Islam and Christianity are two different religions, but that Muslims and Christians can and do live together peacefully all over the world (ibid). The Premier went to the extent of visiting the Northern Mission Council in Jos in 1958. At the conference, he reiterated his views on religious tolerance, emphasising that the government was a government of Northerners, both Muslims and Christians, and that all people should practise their religions as they wish (Turaki, 1993:171). The Northern People's Congress (NPC) government developed a policy of religious tolerance and freedom of worship in the 1950s. The policy served to alleviate the fears of the non-Muslim group regarding their religious status. The policy showed that social and religious tolerance was possible within the Northern System. The assurances of the NPC government weakened the demand for the Middle Belt region (Turaki, 1993:171). However, it was clear that during the colonial period and into the politics of decolonisation, religion was seen as a main factor in the definition of regional and political identities in Northern Nigeria (Best, 2001:67). From its inception, party politics in the First Republic (1960 to 1966) was defined by religion and religious culture; viewed from the fact that the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was inclined to Islam in orientation, and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) was Christian, or rather non-Muslim, in its orientation (ibid).

2.2.2. The Islamic History of the Christian/Muslim Relationship

Christians and Muslims have experienced moments of both mutual interactive benefit, as well as of misunderstanding (Sodiq, 2009:647). Speaking about the subject of the relationship between Christians and Muslims, Sodiq (ibid) asserts that it is as old as the Islamic religion itself – the first relationship between Christians and Muslims started with the Prophet Mohammad himself in his interaction with a Christian monk, Waraqa Ibn Nawfal (Acar, 2005:1). Prophet Muhammad had meetings and dealings with several Christians and Christian groups (ibid). It is recorded that, when Prophet Mohammad and his followers were rejected by almost every tribe and clan, he sought and found refuge for his followers with a Christian King in Abyssinia (Ethiopia), where the King welcomed and took care of them (Sodiq, 2009:647). Christians and Jews are considered by the Muslims as people of the

Book, who are to be respected as long as they are in good relationship together (ibid). According to Omotosho (2003:20-21), in the Maccan period there were no cases of harassment or molestation of non-Muslims, specifically the pagans, because they were not or refused to become Muslims. The Maccan pagans were rather told that if they did not change their ways of idol worshipping, they were entitled to continue with their choice (Qur'an 109:1-6).

In the early period in Medina, the inhabitants were largely Christians and Jews, who were known as "people of the Book" and with whom the Muslims had cordial relationship and invited them for dialogue (Omotosho, 2003:21). This interest in dialogue is inscribed in the Qur'an: "Say O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between you and us that we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves Lords and patrons other than God..." (3:64). The cordial relationship between Christians and Muslims led to the delegation of the Najran Christians, numbering about sixty educated Christians – a bishop, his forty-five scholars and fifteen men – to visit the Prophet Mohammad and learn the nature of the Prophet's revelations that he was receiving (Acar, 2005:3). The investigatory dialogue took them two to three days in the Mosque of Medina, and when it was time for the Christians to pray, Prophet Mohammad allowed them to use the Mosque. This was the first time that Christians were said to have prayed in a mosque (ibid). Muslims are admonished not to engage in a senseless argument with the people of the Book¹⁸, as this would be capable of spurring a crisis, for the Christians have the same source of revelation, and the same God whom they all worship (Qur'an 29:46). In another development, Christians who are identified as people of the Book are singled out for special respect to Muslims as their affection (Qur'an 5:82). This perspective is a motivation to Muslims' relationship with Christians today.

2.3. The Post-colonial History of Religious Violence in Northern Nigeria

The history of religious tension and crisis in Northern Nigeria has been perceived differently by different scholars. Some have clearly categorised the religious crises

¹⁸ The term "People of the Book" in the Qur'an refers to followers of monotheistic Abrahamic religions that are older than Islam. This includes all Christians, all Jews, and Sabians (http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/People_of_the_Book.html).

into intra- and inter-religious crises, while others have addressed all religious crises as inter-religious crises. I will discuss the two categories together as inter-religious crises in Northern Nigeria, because the intra-religious crisis will not make any difference, as they often metamorphose into inter-religious crises. This section discusses the Christian/Muslim inter-religious crises that saturated the Northern Nigeria region, and the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between the two religious groups.

2.3.1. Christian/Muslim Inter-Religious Crisis

Shadrack Gaya Best (2001:65), in his article “Religion and Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria”, has done well by describing religious conflicts as those conflicts that have religious content and whose boundaries could be defined by either party or both parties in religious terms. Best (2001:65-66) states that:

Where one party either defines the conflict as religious, or employs religious slogan and symbols to execute the conflict, the other reacts to the situation by also using similar slogans and symbols of religion. In a religious conflict, the identity groups in the conflict organize and pursue their interests and needs under religious groups and organizations. Where the conflict is violent, the violent interaction manifested in negative output, physical assaults on parties in the conflicts by opposing groups, killings, destruction of properties etc., all occur along religiously defined lines. In religious conflicts, it is common to find that religion, due to its value, plays a more primary role than ethnic loyalties for the parties in the conflict for mobilization and as ideology.

It is worth noting that most religious conflicts are ethnically and politically sourced, as, for example in Islam, religion is hardly separated from politics, and in some situations what begins as ethnic and political ends in a religious crisis (Best, 2001:66).

The first recorded major religious violence in Northern Nigeria was the *Maitatsine* riot, which claimed many lives. This was the crisis that Omotosho (2003:16) and Sodiq (1994:304) explain as being an intra-religious crisis. Sodiq (2009:669) explains that *Maitatsine* was a radical Muslim movement that revolted against the orthodox Muslims in Northern Nigeria. He argues that it was an intra-religious crisis as it was a revolt by Muslims against Muslims, and although he admits that the effects were also felt by the Christians, he insists that the revolt was never directed against Christians (Sodiq, 1994:304).

The activities of the *Maitatsine* were seen and interpreted by some people as an attempt at the Islamic reformation of moral laxity and the political exploitation of the masses by the Muslim leaders of Northern Nigeria, as well as an expression of disagreement with the corruption and the rule of the dictatorship in the northern states (Sodiq, 2009:669). Others saw them as an attack on materialism and modernity and a revolt against all authority in Nigeria, be it Islamic or not; this limited the *Maitatsine* attack not only to Muslims, but also to all the beneficiaries of the material products of the West (ibid). But why did Christians become the victims of these revolts? Sodiq (2009:669) suggests that Christians were seen as the agents of the West, and therefore invariably seen as the agents of oppression against Muslims and their religion, either directly or indirectly.

The *Maitatsine* attack started in Kano (1980), and spread to other parts of the northern states, such as Maiduguri, Gombe and Kaduna (1982), and Jimeta-Yola and Gombe (1984) (Omotosho, 2003:16). The argument of Osia (1993:42) seems strong and convincing that the *Maitatsine* crises of 1980 to 1985 were not an Islamic intra-religious crisis, as the clash was between Muslims and Christians, with the effect being felt more among the Christians – as lives were lost and churches, along with other properties belonging to Christians, were destroyed.

Apart from the *Maitatsine* crises, other religious crises and communal clashes occurred in the same areas of Northern Nigeria with great intensity (Best, 2001:67). According to Omotosho (2003:16), the first major religious crisis after the *Maitatsine* crises was that of Kafanchan in Kaduna State, which happened on 6 March 1987. According to Best (2001:67) the religious crisis was triggered by a clash between Christians and Muslims in Kafanchan over alleged misinterpretation of the Qur'an by a Christian preacher. This crisis later spread to other parts of Kaduna and Katsina States, such as Zaria and Funtua, and many lives were lost and properties like mosques and churches were destroyed (Omotosho, 2003:16). According to Gwamna (2010:5), the Kafanchan crisis introduced a dangerous dimension of religious crisis between Christians and Muslims, in what was generally referred to as the "civilian equivalent of a coup d'état". He asserted that the Kafanchan religious crisis shook the foundation of inter-religious peace in Kaduna State and some northern parts of Nigeria (ibid). After the Kafanchan crisis, the relationship between Christians and

Muslims grew bitter and lacking in tolerance; this led to subsequent crises in 1988, when the Muslim Students Society (MSS) of the Kaduna Polytechnic protested against the construction of a Christian chapel on the campus because it was located near a mosque (Best, 2001:68). In 1991 there was more violence between Christians and Muslims at Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi State, which resulted in the loss of many lives as well as the destruction of property (Omosho, 2003:16). In the same year, the so-called Reinhard Bonke crisis occurred in the city of Kano (Best, 2001:69). In 1992, Jalingo was set ablaze as a result of a disagreement between Christians and Muslims (ibid).

Other religious crises, which happened in almost all the northern states as a sign of Islamic solidarity for their faith, include the Shariah crisis in 2000; Osama Bin Laden's riots in 2001; the Miss World Pageant crisis in 2002; and the Prophet Mohammad Cartoon riots in 2006 (Gwamna, 2010:54-62). There have been a series of inter-religious crises in Northern Nigeria, the details of which can be seen in Appendix I. Some of these crises, as pointed out by Gwamna (2010:65-66), are the so-called "misplaced aggression" exemplified in Osama Bin Laden, the Miss World Pageant and the Cartoon crisis, whose events were not perpetrated by Nigerian Christians. Griswold (2010:23) points out that Christians in Nigeria became scapegoats for the perceived *sins* of the West, which is identified as Christian. He asserts that, when the West proclaims that they are at war with Islam, the Christians of Africa become the enemies of their Muslim neighbours (ibid).

Similar ethno-religious conflicts have been prevalent all over Northern Nigeria. In fact, since the 1980s, ethnic and religious violence has become a recurring event (Abdu, 2010:220). There is virtually no state of the 19 northern states in Nigeria that have not been affected by such conflict (see Appendix I).

2.3.2. The Practice of Dysfunctional Exclusion between Christians and Muslims

As observed above (page 22), the colonial stratification of the inequality between the Muslim and the non-Muslim groups is understood as dysfunctional exclusion between Muslims and Christians today. This can be observed from the subordination of the non-Muslim group (Christians) to the Hausa-Fulani rule and political control, and the unjust colonial political and economic institutions that reflected class,

religious or ethnic biases (Turaki, 1993:189). The report of the International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2012:6) on the recent inter-religious tensions and crises in Nigeria concur with the state of the dysfunctional exclusion between Muslims and Christians. This is explained in the geographical polarisation of Muslims and Christians, where Christian residential areas, and in some cases local markets, are segregated from those of Muslims (ibid). The dysfunctional exclusion existing today between Christians and Muslims has been understood as having originated in the colonial era, as the colonial administration encouraged religious intolerance and prejudice between the Muslims and non-Muslims, most of whom later became Christian proselytes (Turaki, 1993:189). In this sub-section, the concept of dysfunctional exclusion and its practice between Christians and Muslims is explained.

2.3.2.1. The Concept of Dysfunctional Exclusion

Exclusion is capable of being functional and dysfunctional. It can be functional when such exclusive stuffs do not lead to disharmony or cause tension between Muslims and Christians, especially when the contents of the exclusive messages are presented with the consciousness of other religious rights and uniqueness. For example, from the use of the exclusive messages that are found in both religious books it is expected that these exclusive *truths* are known and understood by the adherents of the respective *truths*. And, when spoken and heard by the other party, tolerance should be exercised in appreciating the religious doctrinal diversity. In obedience to the command of the Bible (Mark 16:15) and Quran (9:122), of preaching the exclusive *truth*, the adherents of the *truths* can preach these *truths* with recognition of the non-adherents in love. From the Christian perspective, Charles H. Cosgrove (2002), in his five hermeneutical rules of appealing to the scripture in moral debate, pointed to the “rule of purpose”, referring to the justification for a claimed position. He writes:

Arguing from scripture is one of the public ways in which Christians test their moral judgments. When we speak of scripture as authorizing a particular moral position, we do not (or should not) mean that the logic of this authorization fully or even partly expresses the logic by which we arrived at that moral position “in the first place.” We mean (or should mean) that the logic of this authorization is part of the rationale by which

we hold to that position as members of a community to which we are accountable (Cosgrove, 2002:6).

The justification for the use of this religious exclusion is the two religious holy books. When the exclusive religious messages are understood and practised with consideration and do not inflict or cause tension between the two religions, then they are confirmed as functional exclusion. Functional exclusion demands that its adherents believe and practise them with respect and tolerance for other religious adherents. It is this respect and tolerance for religious differences that make the exclusion functional, because it does not lead to ill relationships.

Dysfunctional exclusion may also be understood from a different perspective. For example, it may be seen from the inability of the religious exclusion to function with consideration of the other religion. When an exclusive religious message is communicated with prejudice against the other religion, it creates a dysfunctional relationship. The other way that dysfunctional exclusion manifests itself is in the practice of unnecessary exclusion by one religious group in relation to the other in society and public institutions, where both Christians and Muslims often meet and/or live together. In such dysfunctional exclusion it is often the minority group that suffers the effect.

Zondag (2007:87) uses the concept of empathy to differentiate between functional and dysfunctional. He explains functional empathy as a relationship that seeks an accurate understanding of what others feel; he refers to this as perspective taking. Zondag affirms that perspective taking is functional from the perspective of the observer and the observed (*ibid*). As the observer takes pleasure in desiring to understand how the other feels, the one observed feels satisfied for being understood (Zondag, 2007:87). Perspective taking gives both the encoder and decoder satisfaction, as it hardly leads to a dysfunctional relationship in an interaction. Zondag argues that relationships experience dysfunctional empathy when care between the two parties ceases (*ibid*). As dysfunctional empathy works towards terminating a relationship, functional empathy appeals for a continuity of care, love and understanding between the two parties.

Urell (2013), in his article titled “Nine warning signs of a dysfunctional relationship”, argues that dysfunctional relationships are relationships that create more emotional

uproar than satisfaction. He asserts that a dysfunctional or about-to-be dysfunctional relationship always has warning signs. Speaking in the context of social relationships, Urell (2013:1-2) argues that there are nine warning signs of a dysfunctional relationship, which are as follows:

1. Addictive/obsessive attitude, when a partner or group develops addictive or obsessive attitudes where the commitment to the relationship is detached and attached to outside pleasure.
2. Imbalance of power – this is a challenge to the relationship between two individuals or groups, where only one partner is making the effort towards building the relationship, while the other seems to be doing less or nothing at all.
3. Tensions show up regularly, i.e. when there is a regular occurrence of tension in the relationship, attention needs to be given to it before it develops into a dysfunctional relationship.
4. Feeling cornered, when a partner or group is trapped in a situation that is unfavourable and the feeling of being trapped keeps recurring; this communicates a sign of a dysfunctional relationship.
5. An inferiority/superiority complex, i.e. when an inferiority/superiority complex begins to manifest in a relationship it communicates an idea of the problems in the relationship. Urell advocates for equality and trust in a relationship.
6. In relation to the feeling of frustration, Urell asserts that frustration is not totally absent in a relationship, but he argues that, when frustrations persist and keep cropping up as soon as one is extinguished, something certainly is wrong.
7. When two individuals or groups experience constant unhappiness, the situation needs to be evaluated.
8. When the situation introduces suspicion and fear, one becomes unsure, leading to hesitation in doing things, thinking maybe the actions would end up causing a rift in the relationship.
9. Emotional blocks, this is a situation where fear, obsession, jealousy, disrespect, non-involvement, distrust, suspicion, manipulation and an uncaring attitude become suspect. If these attitudes continue, the relationship is going into a state of being dysfunctional.

These warning signs are capable of causing dysfunctional exclusion in a relationship. In affirmation, Straker (2013:1) argues that dysfunctional communication releases an effect such as dismissing a partner or group in a relationship; retaliation; being patronising; exclusion and undermining. Volf (1996:75) sees exclusion as an effect of a dysfunctional relationship, which results in elimination, assimilation, domination and abandonment. Dysfunctional exclusion could be seen from the viewpoint of inclusion, which encourages the use of “we” and “us”, which are different from “they” and “them”. The sanctimoniousness by which “they” and “them” are used in exclusion is disturbing (Volf, 1996:58). “They” is not used to describe how “they” and “we” should not behave, but implicitly labels “them” as the kind of people “we” are not (ibid).

Volf (1996:65) argues that there is a distinction between differentiation and exclusion. He uses Plantinga’s theory of “separating” and “binding together” taken from Genesis 1. According to Volf (ibid), Plantinga has made a point by arguing that the creation described in Genesis exists as a complex pattern of “separate and bound-together” entities. “Differentiation” describes the creative activity of “separating-and-binding”, which results in patterns of interdependence (ibid). Volf (1996:66) asserts that the account of creation as “separating-and-binding” rather than just as “separating” suggests that “identity” involves connection, difference, heterogeneity. He argues that the human self is not formed from a simple rejection of the other by a binary logic of opposition and negation, but through a complex process of “taking in” and “keeping out” (ibid).

In describing exclusion, Volf (1996:67) argues that there are two interrelated aspects of exclusion – the one that transgresses against “binding”, and the other that transgresses against “separating”. The first exclusion may be seen in the cutting of the bonds that connect. This is described as taking oneself from the pattern of interdependence and placing oneself in a position of sovereign independence (ibid). The second exclusion can be seen in the case of connecting the bonds that separate; refusing to recognise the other as someone who in the state of otherness belongs to the pattern of interdependence (Volf, 1996:67). Katoppo (1979:5) asserts that to be the “other” is an alienating experience; for example being Christian among Muslims or Muslim among Christians. In most cases, the minority is often marginalised. The “other” is the discordant note, the threat to harmony (ibid). It is

only God who could be understood as the absolute “other”, because He is not a human being (Katoppo, 1979:6).

But if one is identified as the “other” one emerges as an inferior being, who must either be assimilated or subjugated to the self. Volf (1996:67) argues that exclusion happens when the violence of expulsion, assimilation or subjugation and the indifference of abandonment replace the dynamics of taking in and keeping out, as well as the mutuality of giving and receiving. Therefore, as Volf (1996:66) cites Plantinga, exclusion is the violent reconfiguration of the pattern of the interdependence in “separation-and-binding” in an attempt to put asunder what God has joined and joining what God has put asunder.

2.3.2.2. *Dysfunctional Exclusion between Christians and Muslims*

Christians and Muslims in Gombe State, like in any other state of Northern Nigeria, live in fear of a reoccurrence of religious crisis, yet the practice of dysfunctional exclusion remains a challenge. In the past, dysfunctional exclusion has been a trigger for religious crises, leading to the loss of lives and property. According to the briefing of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW; 2008:4), submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review on Current Human Rights Concerns in Nigeria, Christians in the northern states complain of being second-class citizens. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2008:5) reported the discrimination in the granting of jobs in the state sector, so that even when employed, non-Muslims experience difficulty in getting promoted, and regularly are bypassed for promotion on diverse occasions, as senior posts are given to less qualified Muslim candidates. Other discriminations reported against non-Muslims include: discrimination in access to education, access to and provision of public services, and discrimination in the construction of churches (CSW, 2008:4-8). Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2008:6) reports a threat of violence in educational establishments, as a Christian teacher, Christiana Oluwatoyin Oluwasesin, was brutally killed in a particularly appalling manner at Gandu Government Secondary School in Gombe State in 2007. Upon being falsely accused by a student of desecrating the Qur’an she caught cheating during a religious studies examination, Muslim students, along with some outsiders, beat, stripped and stabbed her to death, burning her body beyond recognition. As they were attempting to find and kill her ten-month-old baby, a woman smuggled the

baby to safety under her hijab¹⁹. The students set fire to her car, and to the motorbike of another Christian teacher.

In an earlier publication of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2007:2-3), titled “No justice after brutal murder of Nigerian teacher by students,” the organisation enumerates a series of discriminative attitudes toward Christians in Gombe State:

1. In 1990, Muslim students in Malam Sidi Government Secondary School (Gombe State) attacked Christian students, killing one and wounding several others. Around 30 Christian teachers were also attacked and their property was burned.
2. At Gombe Government Secondary School in 2002, one Christian student was killed and several students and staff members were beaten and hospitalised. One Christian staff member and his family were beaten in his home, and his house and belongings were burnt down. In the same year, a Christian chapel was destroyed by Muslim students from the same school.
3. In 2006, at Government Secondary School Nafada (Gombe State), Muslim students destroyed concrete blocks meant for the construction of a Christian chapel, harassed Christian staff and students, and burnt down the three churches in the town where most of the students worshipped – the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), the Baptist Church, and the Deeper Life Bible Church.

Kwashi (2004:63) asserts that, in all the religious crises in Northern Nigeria, Muslims have frequently been on the attacking side, while Christians were on the defence. This has made Christians suffer the most (see Appendix I). He confirms that, in most crises, the Christians were very tolerant (*ibid*). On the other hand, Sodiq (2009:657) argues that, on the level of provocation, Christians in Nigeria insist that Islam is closer to paganism and, because of that, requires salvation through Jesus Christ. This is why some Muslims express the feeling that as long as they are seen by Christians as subjects for conversion, the issue of cooperation between them will be difficult (*ibid*:658). For Christians in Northern Nigeria, the following scripture has been held to and strongly believed “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If

¹⁹ Hijab is a veil that is placed in front of a person (especially a woman) or an object in order to conceal it from view or to isolate it (Lewis *et al.*, 1971:359).

someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:39) (Kwashi, 2004:68). But today, with the frequent occurrence of and increasing conflict in Northern Nigeria, many Christians who suffer the consequences of these conflicts are beginning to change their attitudes towards violence (Kwashi, 2004:68). Some of these Christians argue that the Muslims have struck both cheeks – nothing is left, bringing their actions into retaliation when Muslims strike (ibid). Kwashi (2004:69) argues that, with these challenges, there is a need to foster dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria for a better understanding of each other’s religion so as to improve the relationship between the two religious groups.

Kwashi (2004:67) complains about the situation where Christian students are denied the teaching of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in both primary and secondary schools in some states in Northern Nigeria. In a briefing submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported the attitude of some Northern State governments, for instance, in 2004, Katsina State Government removed Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) from the curricula of primary and secondary schools and made the teaching of Islamic Religion compulsory for all students. Sodiq (2009:657) also argues that, in the institutions established by Christian missionaries, Muslim students were denied Islamic education and were made to attend Christian Religious Studies by force. He mentions examples of schools such as Wesley College in Oyo, St. Luke’s College in Ibadan, the Mount Olivet Grammar School in Ibadan, Ode-Omu (Oyo State) Community Grammar School, the Loyola College in Ibadan, etc. (Sodiq, 2009:657).

The people of Gombe South Senatorial District complain about dysfunctional exclusion against them by the state. The District is predominantly Christians (Ludwig 2008:628; Premium Times, 2013:1). Three different events indicate the disclosure of the complaint addressed to the Gombe State Government and the 2014 National Conference of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The first complain was addressed to His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Gombe State on 20 February 2013, at the zonal flagging-off campaign for the Gombe South Senatorial zone in Bambam, Balanga Local Government Area of Gombe State. Presenting their grudges to the Governor, the people of Gombe South Senatorial District, through Dr John Lazarus Yoriyo, a one-time deputy governor of the state, called on the State Governor to

address the perceived marginalisation of the people of Gombe South (Williams, 2013:1). Dr Yoriyo complained that high-ranking or lucrative political positions had long been a preserve of the Senatorial Districts of Gombe North and Central, while the lower ranking or less lucrative offices had always been the preserve of the Gombe South Senatorial District. He described this attitude as undemocratic, reminding the Governor of his administration's acclaimed tenets, which included justice, fairness and equity. In response to the people of Gombe South, His Excellency the Governor of Gombe State promised to make a difference in the cooperation of the people (ibid).

The second complaint was in a letter addressed to His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Gombe State, captioned "Plea for equitable allocation of developmental projects and empowerment". The letter, which was written by the people of Gombe South Progressive Forum, outlined some areas in which they felt dysfunctionally excluded in the state (see Appendix II for a copy of the letter). Written on 21 November 2013, the letter first of all acknowledged the Governor for the numerous development projects carried out in the state that had made a positive impact on the lives of the people of the state. The letter then pointed out some areas of disparities between Gombe South and Gombe North/Gombe Central Senatorial Districts, which they argued were dysfunctional exclusion. The dysfunctional exclusion was explained by the lop-sidedness of capital projects, empowerment, and political appointments, where the Senatorial Districts of Gombe North and Central were favoured over those of Gombe South. For example, disparity was shown in the allocation of township road projects across the state, where the Senatorial Districts of Gombe North and Central were highly favoured compared to the Gombe South Senatorial District (see Appendix II paragraph 3). Other areas of dysfunctional exclusion against Gombe South, according to the letter, included the village electrification project (Appendix II paragraph 4); the capital project, such as the construction of more higher institutions of learning (Appendix II paragraph 5); empowerment (Appendix II paragraph 6); and political appointments (Appendix II paragraph 7).

The letter disclosed what it called "an open secret" of the overwhelming votes of the people of Gombe South Senatorial District for the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP)

during the gubernatorial and presidential elections in 2011 without divided loyalties, as was the case in other two Senatorial Districts. The letter argues that, for such an overwhelming undivided vote that led to the emergence of His Excellency as the PDP Governor, the people of Gombe South Senatorial District deserved a lion's share of the dividends of democracy. However, the letter also called for fairness and equity so that development would be spread evenly in the state.

The third complaint was presented in a memorandum to the 2014 National Conference. *Newspot Nigeria* (2014) reported that the memorandum for the creation of Yemen State was presented by the people of Gombe South Senatorial District to the National Conference of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. According to the memorandum, Mr Daniel Maddo, who was the delegate representing ethnic nationalities from Gombe, indicated the marginalisation and discrimination against Gombe South Senatorial District. He asserted that, according to the 2006 Population Census, the proposed Yemen State had a population of 1.5 million, and argued that it was capable of sustaining itself if a state should be created. Among the points presented in the memorandum, Mr Maddo asserted that the area was known as a food-producing region in Gombe State, and had pioneered the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) in 1970. He also affirmed that the area could also boast of having enough manpower, as the history of the country revealed that Western education was embraced very early.

The issue addressed above, concerning the same complaint of the perceived marginalisation and discrimination among the Senatorial Districts of Gombe State, indicates how disturbing this marginalisation and discrimination is to the people of Gombe South Senatorial District. The marginalisation and discrimination constitute the practice of dysfunctional exclusion, which releases its effect in various ways among Christians and Muslims.

2.3.2.3. *The Effects of Dysfunctional Exclusion*

The triggering of religious tensions between Christians and Muslims is the practice of dysfunctional exclusion, which manifests itself in various ways. These include lack of recognition of one another; campaigns of hatred and blackmail; lack of genuine desire to understand each other's beliefs and culture; and extremism (Omosho, 2003:18-19). Craddock *et al.* (2010:205) describe such practices as dysfunctional

perfectionism. They define perfectionism as a person's tendency to regard and pursue excellence, setting and adhering strictly to extremely high standards, and to examine results in a highly judgmental and critical fashion (ibid). The authors distinguished between functional and dysfunctional perfectionism. While functional perfectionism is adaptive, positive and healthy, dysfunctional perfectionism produces maladaptive, negative and unhealthy results (Craddock *et al.*, 2010:205). In discussing the effects of dysfunctional exclusion, attention will be given to three main areas that trigger religious tension between the Christians and the Muslims. These areas are an encapsulated mind-set, the political manipulation of religion and the manipulation of media news reports for selfish or group desires.

2.3.2.3.1. Encapsulated Mind-set

The concept of encapsulation is depicted in the Malay proverb recounted by Marianne Katoppo in her book, *Compassionate and free: An Asian Woman's Theology*. She writes: "Among the 500 or so classical Malay proverbs I had to memorize as a child, one of my favourites was this: *Seperti katak dib awash tempurung* – 'Like the frog under the coconut shell'" (Katoppo, 1979:v). As is the case for this frog, having never escaped its boundaries, all the frogs could conceive of the world was darkness, silence and limitation. For this frog to be told that there actually is another world, one of light, music and wide open spaces, would be a heresy (ibid). According to Wren (1962, cited by Augsburg, 1986:22), an encapsulated mind-set could be understood as a disregard for religious or cultural variations among people. The mind-set could be likened to an addictive process; one could become addicted to one particular system of cultural values that result in the same disorientation and dependency caused by any other addiction (Augsburger, 1986:23). Because of this mind-set among Christians and Muslims, no group is interested in desiring to know and learn from the other (Omotosho, 2003:18). Such a mind-set is only interested in the self; it is not conscious of "another". Because of this encapsulated mind-set, Christians and Muslims live with ignorance of each other's religion²⁰. On the other hand, the religious adherents that constitute the majority in a community often dominate and practise the encapsulated mind-set against the

²⁰ This assertion is found in the report on the inter-religious tensions in Nigeria by the International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2012).

minority. The divide between “us” and “them” becomes evident when this mind-set is in operation.

2.3.2.3.2. Political Manipulation of Religion

Politicians in Nigeria have been implicated in religious and related crises in the country, and in some cases the explosion of conflicts may be linked with the desire of the incumbent public officer for a second term in office; in such cases, the youth are normally sponsored by the political elite to fight their electoral wars (Ukiwo, 2003:126). This assertion is concurred by the report on the inter-religious tensions and crisis in Nigeria by the International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2012:9-10). In outlining the causes of inter-religious tensions and crises in Nigeria, the following were stressed: (1) Tension arising from President Goodluck Jonathan’s continuation as President during the northern unofficial ‘quota’ of office in the People Democratic Party (PDP), the ruling party’s ‘agreement’ after the premature death of President Umaru Musa Yar’adua, and the disputed question as to whether he was constitutionally allowed to seek a further term in the elections in 2015; (2) Tensions created by the statements and actions of political leaders pandering to religious sentiment. According to Griswold (2010:23), the end of military rule in Nigeria in 1999 marked the involvement of religion in the fierce competition for political power. As noted above (2.2.1, paragraph two), the colonial administration, with respect for the decision to allow for freedom of and non-interference in the religion of Islam in Northern Nigeria, warranted the declaration of Islam as a state religion by the premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello. The premier set an agenda for expanding the frontiers of Islam in Northern Nigeria by means of an aggressive, capital-intensive project of soliciting funds from Arab nations for building mosques and campaigns for the conversion of non-Muslims in the Middle Belt to Islam (Kukah, 1999:42). The project proved to be economically and spiritually beneficial to Islam, but politically costly, as it provided the basis for suspicion, which later undermined the much praised unity of Northern Nigeria (ibid).

Some politicians are in the habit of manipulating religion for their own selfish ends. The 2003 general election in Nigeria registered what could be interpreted as the

manipulation of religion by a presidential candidate, the former Nigerian Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd). According to Maru (2002):

As the year 2003 elections draw closer, former Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) has called on Muslims across the country to vote only for the presidential candidate that would defend and uphold the tenets of Islam. Buhari who made the call yesterday at the closing ceremony of the 16th National Qur'anic Recitation competition held in Gusau, Zamfara State told Muslims that they have every reason to thank Allah for restoring the Islamic Sharia under the present dispensation, which he said was destroyed by British colonialists during their crusade in 1903 against the Sokoto caliphate.

It is clear from the above that General Buhari, who was the presidential candidate for the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and a Muslim, was using religion to campaign against his political opponent, who was a Christian. In another development, it was reported that one Pastor Paul Adefarasin warned Christians not to vote for a Muslim president, since Muslims had ruled the country for long enough – also depicting the manipulation of religion (Ikeji, 2010:1). Best (2001:76) refers to the thesis of Yusufu Bala Usman (1987), who argued that the political elite in Nigeria had always manipulated religion for non-religious causes. These elites would make use of others, in the name of religion, to achieve their political objectives; most of the religious soldiers who execute the “holy wars” of Northern Nigeria are instruments in the hands of the political and religious elite (Best, 2001:77). The military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida used religion in 1987 to hold on to power (Best, 2001:77; Kukah, 1999:104). Religious subjects such as the desire for the implementation of Shari'a and Nigeria's membership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) were of interest to the political elites of the Babangida administration (Best, 2001:77). Other ways of manipulating religion are in the area of edging out minority groups from sensitive positions in government (ibid).

In explaining the political manipulation of religion, Gwamna (2010:4) quotes Yusufu Bala Usman as follows:

The real basis of the manipulation of religion in Nigeria today is the need to obscure from the people of Nigeria a fundamental aspect of our reality. That is the domination of our political economy by a class of intermediaries who are being increasingly exposed. And this is to enable this class to cover themselves with religious and ethnic disguises in order to further entrench division among our people, slow

down their awakening at any cost; even unity of our country, for which so much has been sacrificed.

According to Gwamna (2010:4), Yusufu Bala Usman concludes his observation thus:

A series of violent demonstrations, riots and civil uprisings in this country in the last two years, have forcefully made many Nigerians come face-to-face with the harsh reality that religion is being systematically manipulated, by some forces, for specific purposes which are clearly opposed to the unity of the people of this country.

The main reason politicians find it easier to manipulate religion in their political affairs is because religion in Nigeria has permeated the life of every Nigerian citizen. Regarding the proliferation of churches and mosques in Nigeria today, Ehusani (2003:1) asserts that, in many urban areas, there are as many churches and mosques as there are streets! Nigerians are very religious, taking part in crusades, worship sessions, observance of fasting days, and attending religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Mecca, taking pride in being addressed as Jerusalem Pilgrim (JP) or Alhaji²¹ (ibid) for the rest of their lives.

2.3.2.3.3. Manipulation of Media News Reports

The effect of dysfunctional exclusion can also be seen in the role of the media in reporting the events of religious crises. Gwamna (2010:66) argues that foreign media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Voice of America (VOA), Aljazeera and Deutsche Welle, along with some local media such as New Nigeria and Radio Kaduna, are major influences that emerge as strong voices in fuelling religious intolerance between Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria. Exaggeration in presenting the details of religious violence by the media has been considered one of the causes of the religious crises in Northern Nigeria, as it awakens and fuels the aftermath of the crises (Sampson, 2012:124). According to Abdu (2010:177), the media in Nigeria are not only representative of the ideas and economic interests of the ruling class; they also represent the ethnic and religious interests of their owners. When a news reporter gathers and broadcasts the news with religious prejudice, the act of dysfunctional exclusion is clearly displayed in the presentation.

²¹ This is often used as a title among Muslims to refer to a man who has completed a religious journey to Mecca. The feminine form is *Hajija* or *Alhaja* (as preferred among the Yoruba people).

When there was an intra-religious disagreement between Muslim scholars on Radio Kaduna Tafsir²² presented by Abu Bakr Mahmoud Gumi, some individuals among his contemporaries protested against Gumi's Tafsir and called the government and the radio to terminate his Tafsir programme, claiming that it was capable of triggering crises (Brigaglia, 2007:193). The protesters later issued an open letter addressed to Gumi inviting him for a public meeting to respond to forty-one charges against him and his radio presentation of Tafsir. The following were some of these charges (ibid):

1. That Gumi used the radio station as his private property.
2. That the broadcast of Gumi's Tafsir on radio communicated doubt and enmity among Muslims.
3. That the broadcast of Gumi's Tafsir humiliates Christians, thus instigating religious hatred.
4. That the broadcast of Gumi's Tafsir perverted the meaning of the Qur'anic verses by giving insufficient support for his interpretation.
5. That Gumi's exegesis was full of errors.

Gumi did not attend the public meeting to defend himself, but a later resolution by some sectors of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) induced the radio to host another presentation of Tafsir that would operate side by side with that of Gumi (Brigaglia, 2007:194). It was also suggested, however, that the charges against Gumi were because contemporary scholars saw that Radio Kaduna was giving him an opportunity to overtake their popularity (ibid:193). If the charges were confirmed to be true, then the whole scenario explains the media effect of dysfunctional exclusion. Muslim leaders have succeeded in stopping Christian programmes in Kano, Kebbi, Maiduguri and Sokoto in Northern Nigeria (Minchakpu, 1998:78). While some Muslims see the Christian shows in the media as being against the religion of Islam, others see it as a trigger of religious crisis. Because of these views in Christian media presentations, a Muslim leader, Usman Jibrin – the former military governor of Kaduna State – warned that Muslims would never tolerate the Christian shows in the media (ibid). Also, the World-Reach: Nigeria staff, including some Christians working with the Nigerian television stations, have been threatened in

²² Literally, Tafsir means "explaining". It is a term used for a commentary on any book, but especially for a commentary on the Qur'an (Hughes, 1988:624).

connection with the broadcast of Christian programmes (ibid). The statement by Usman Jibrin indicates the interest of Muslims in dominating the media at the expense of Christians programmes.

Since the effect of and the religious crises caused by dysfunctional exclusion are alarming, dialogue was implored as a means of tackling the menace. The next section discusses the success or otherwise of the application of dialogue.

2.4. The Critique of the Practice of Religious Dialogue

This section will engage in a critical discussion of the practice of religious dialogue. It will consider the historical background to the religious dialogue and present the analysis of the practice of religious dialogue between the two religious groups. The aim is to find out the effectiveness of the practice of religious dialogue that has been created as a means of responding to the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships.

2.4.1. A Historical Background to Religious Dialogue

As a result of the reoccurrence of religious crises between Christians and Muslims engulfing the Northern Nigerian region, the need became evident for religious dialogue to be initiated to foster religious tolerance between the two groups of religious believers. According to Yushau Sodiq, an Islamic scholar, religious dialogue in Nigeria started in the 1960s and continues until the present (Sodiq, 1994:304). He commends the efforts of Cardinal Arinze, the president of the Pontifical Council, who has been involved in the arrangement of conferences within and outside Nigeria on the subject of dialogue (Sodiq, 1994:304-305).

Different associations have surfaced proclaiming the need to address and bringing about reconciliation between the adherents of the two religions. But no serious attempt had been made at establishing organisations that could serve as a unifying body for encouraging religious tolerance, even though some individuals were calling for mutual understanding and cooperation between Christians and Muslims (Dopamu, 1989:60). Dopamu asserts that the first major attempt at bringing into existence interfaith interaction was by the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions (NASR) in 1975 (Dopamu, 1989:60). The NASR was involved in the encouraging and teaching of religion; organising dialogue on the interreligious need for coexistence with mutual understanding; and they were also involved in organising

annual conferences and publications of books and journals (Dopamu, 1989:60). Another means of communicating the message of religious tolerance and understanding is through academic journals; for instance, in 1974, a journal of interfaith studies on the relationships between Christianity and other religions was founded at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (ibid). Other universities picked up the challenge and became involved in organising seminars on interfaith coexistence, for example the Department of Religions at the University of Ilorin organised a seminar on religious understanding and cooperation in Nigeria , in 1978 (Dopamu, 1989:61).

The efforts of the military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, who felt the need for dialogue between the religions after the religious crisis of 1987 in Kafanchan, Kaduna State, should also be recognised (Sodiq, 1994:305). Mackey (1988:44 cited in Sodiq, 1994:305) says that, in 1988, General Babangida appointed an advisory council of twenty-four members, comprising twelve Muslims and twelve Christians, to find ways in which all religions in Nigeria could live together in harmony. According to the assessment of Sodiq (1994:305), the practice of dialogue yielded some fruitful result, as was seen in the coexistence and peaceful interaction between Christians and Muslims in southern Nigeria²³. As a Muslim, Sodiq commended the Christians for their initiative in the dialogues. Yet he reported that some Muslims were against the concept of dialogue, as they felt self-sufficiency because Islam is seen as a system of belief that is completed by Allah, therefore Muslims need nothing outside it to borrow or learn from other religions (ibid). The second reason for Muslims resenting dialogue was the thinking that Christians consciously employed various methods of winning Muslims to Christianity, and they assume dialogue may be one and therefore were afraid of total engagement.

As a third reason, Sodiq argues that there were fewer Muslim scholars who were knowledgeable enough in Christian thought to engage on an equal level together with Christian scholars in dialogue; this, Muslims believe, gives Christians an advantage over them, making Christian scholars dominate and control the dialogue in many conferences (ibid). With these excuses it became obvious to the Christians that Muslims were not interested in entering into dialogue with them; this is because Muslims also realised that Christians have made dialogue a strategy for propagating

²³ This is the region dominated by Christians, with the Igbo and Yoruba as the major ethnic groups.

Christianity and blackmailing other religions (Omotosho, 2003:24). Nonetheless, the Muslims believe that Islam recognised and practised genuine dialogue with Christianity right from the inception of Islam, and hold that, on the subject of dialogue they have made giant strides on fundamental issues that are yet to be reciprocated by Christians (Omotosho, 2004:24). Sodiq (1994:305) noted that the current dialogue, which had been initiated, organised, and funded by the Christian body, had given them the opportunity to lay down the rules that govern the game of the dialogue and that they also had the mandate of inviting their choice of participants from among the Muslims.

As religious crises still persisted in Northern Nigeria, the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) was formed in 1999, through the joint efforts of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The objectives and functions of NIREC include (Oloyede, 2011):

1. To honestly and sincerely endeavour, by themselves, to understand the true teachings of the two religions – Christianity and Islam, including their peculiarities and personal mannerisms through dialogue, discussions, workshops, seminars, conferences, pamphleteering, etc.
2. To create a permanent and sustainable channel of communication and interaction, thereby promoting dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria so that members of both faiths may have a mutual understanding of each other's religious position; to achieve co-existence among all people of Nigeria, irrespective of their religious or ethnic affiliations.
3. To promote and inculcate the moral, ethical, social and cultural values of the two faiths for the rebirth and rebuilding of a better society.
4. To provide a forum for mutual co-operation and promotion of the welfare of all citizens in the nation.
5. To create a forum and a channel for the peaceful resolution of any friction or misunderstanding that may arise from time to time.
6. To serve as an avenue for articulating cordial relationships amongst the various religious groups and between them and the government.

7. To assist the federal, state and local governments of Nigeria and the populace by emphasising and accentuating the positive role religion should play in nation-building and development.
8. To serve as a forum to achieve national goals, economic growth, national unity and the promotion of political stability.
9. To consider and make recommendations to the federal and other levels of government on matters that may assist in fostering the integral and spiritual development of Nigerians.
10. To network with organisations with similar aims at home and internationally, for the furtherance of the objectives of the council.

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) continues to strive to maintain its objectives and functions as stated above. In its Communiqué at the second-quarter meeting held from 5 to 7 December 2011²⁴, NIREC urged both Christians and Muslims through their religious leaders to continue to engage in dialogue in order to promote peace and religious harmony in Nigeria. The religious leaders were urged to continue to preach peaceful co-existence and national unity. The council also appealed to the religious leaders and stakeholders to avoid provocative or reckless preaching and utterances that threaten the peace and harmony of the nation. The practice of dialogue should continue as an attempt of creating awareness and making more room for religious tolerance between the two religions.

2.4.2. An Analysis of the Practice of Religious Dialogue between Christians and Muslims

In discussing the subject of dialogue, Augsburg (1986:40) defines it as a conversation about a common subject between two or more individuals having different views with the goal of learning from each other. This definition is supported by Swidler (1983:1), who further emphasises the fact that what has been learned from each other in dialogue should be able to make both parties change and grow. Gwamna (2010:169) asserts that religious dialogue is an effective tool, and that it promotes peaceful co-existence; he believes that in most of the crises experienced in Nigeria over the years, it was through dialogue that tensions were doused and

²⁴ The Communiqué of the second-quarter meeting of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) held at the banquet hall, Government House, Ilorin, Kwara State of Nigeria from 5 to 7 December, 2011 (NIREC, 2011)

confidence regained. But Joseph and Rothfuss (2012:83) object to the effectiveness of religious dialogue, and instead argue that, in spite of the efforts of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) and other numerous interfaith initiatives, the use of dialogue is unsuccessful and therefore its approaches need to be re-evaluated in order to make interreligious dialogue productive; since religious dialogue is a viable alternative, those factors that jeopardise its efforts need to be reassessed (ibid, 84). The International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2012:9) on the inter-religious tensions and crises in Nigeria reports that the ineffective co-operation within the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) compared to two years previously had been identified as a key factor behind the current inter-religious tensions and crises in Nigeria. It should be recalled that one of the main responsibilities of NIREC as it was instituted was to organise dialogue between the two religions.

According to Best (2001:76) there is a weak conflict management mechanism, which is why conflict escalation cannot be avoided. While dialogue is considered a conflict management mechanism, Kerry (2010:195) indicates that the problem with religious dialogue is the fact that no faith enters into dialogue with clean hands. By posing challenging question such as ‘Can a white “think black”?’ ‘Can a Christian “think Muslim”?’ or, vice versa, ‘Can a rich person “think poor”?’ and ‘Can a man “think woman”?’ it becomes clear that answering these questions in the affirmative conveys the idea of genuine dialogue (Augsburger, 1986:38). The choice of thinking black or Muslim or poor or woman requires a shift from identity to mutuality, and mutuality entails entering into another person’s worldview to consciously share and explore its interior while retaining one’s own worldview (Augsburger, 1986:39). Religious dialogue alone is insufficient; there is a need for interactive engagement that will enable people to gain answers to the most basic and fundamental questions (Kerry 2010:196). To live peacefully we have a responsibility to understand each other, and this will come from our engagement with one another (Kerry 2010:196). Talking is not enough, actions must nurture coexistence; there must be congruence between dialogue and action that treat each other with respect (Kerry, 2010:199).

According to the Islamic World News (2000:4), for Don Aldo Danieli, the parish pastor of Our Lady of Assumption of Ponzano Veneto near Venice, the romantic city of Italy, practical dialogue is sharing a Catholic Church with Muslims for their weekly Friday prayers. The pastor was reported to have allowed the Catholic Church to be used every Friday by Muslims for prayers. He describes this action as religious dialogue (Islamic World News 2000:4). When he was asked why he did that, Don Aldo Danieli said, "It's useless to speak of religious dialogue and then bang the door on their face. Pope John Paul II addressed Muslims as, 'dear Muslim brothers'. How can we close our church doors to them?" (ibid). The action of Don Aldo Danieli was challenged by some parishioners, priests and even the local bishop, but Don Aldo Danieli said in support of his action:

I haven't asked the express permission of the Bishop, because it's an act of charity. No permission is needed to do charity. For the rest, I am older than the Bishop and been his Professor in the seminary too. Even if he had prohibited me, I wouldn't be obliged to obey him (Islamic World News, 2000:4).

In another development the Catholic Archbishop of Jos in Nigeria, the most Rev. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, visited the Jos Central Mosque as an act of dialogue; he told the Chief Imam, Sheikh Balarabe Dawud, "We are here to show that you are our brothers and sisters. Sometimes we have problems and tension but it is not by being afraid of each other that the problems will be solved" (NewsRescue.com, 2012:1-2). The Archbishop added that "we will continue to preach that the only way to harmony is in our coming together. We have the same God and we should all behave as children of God" (NewsRescue.com, 2012:2). The Archbishop was cited by Gwamna (2010:176), who believed the actions of the onetime Nigerian Military Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari (a Muslim), who attended a Christian programme, the *Nigeria Prays* service in Lagos some years previously; and that of the former Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (a Christian), who joined in fasting in solidarity with the Muslims during the Ramadan²⁵ period as an act of interfaith dialogue, which he called a "dialogue of spirituality". Michel (2010:531) points out the impact of the interreligious dialogue for which Pope John Paul II called on the first day of prayer for peace in Assisi in 1986. Attendance included adherents of many

²⁵ The ninth month of the Muhammadan year, which is observed as a strict fast from dawn to sunset of each day of the month (Hughes, 1988:533).

religions, while Christians were shocked by the idea of praying together with adherents of other religions, namely Jews, Muslims, Hindus and others. The latter, who had been invited, became suspicious that the invitation might be a ploy to recruit converts. However, on the second and third days of the prayers, relationships rapidly changed, so that, in relation to the next invitation in 2002, there were many Jews, Muslims and Christians from different denominations who wanted to be a part; however, numbers had to be limited strictly (Michel, 2010:531).

From the Islamic perspective (see 2.2.2 above), there was the investigatory dialogue between the delegation of the Najran Christians and the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, which lasted for at least three days, the Prophet willingly gave his Mosque for the Najran Christians to worship in when it was time for their devotion (Acar, 2005:3). The incident is seen and understood as a successful and peaceful dialogue, as Christians were warmly welcomed and hosted securely beside the Mosque, and finally received a peaceful farewell message in conclusion – “O, Abu al-Qasim²⁶, we decided to leave you as you are and you leave us as we are” (Acar, 2005:3). It is believed that the peaceful dialogue ended with a written agreement between the delegation of the Najran Christians and the Prophet Muhammad about the security of the lives, property and religion of the Christians, and this was signed by witnesses (Acar, 2005:3).

The issue of inter-religious dialogue is going through some serious questioning in Christian theology in the efforts of the proponents of religious pluralism to find a theoretical or practical common ground for inter-religious dialogue (Lee, 2005:555). The post-liberal and neo-traditionalist critics of pluralism objected to the possibility that religious dialogue could lead to fruitful deliberation for the alleged reasons that the religions are incommensurable and non-convergent and on the expectation that each religion would have to make a full declaration of itself in all its particularity for the sake of resisting the imperial and the universalist agenda of secular liberal modernity (Lee, 2005:555). Speaking against post-liberalism and neo-traditionalism, Lee (2005:555) argues for the necessity of inter-religious dialogue as a form of “politics of recognition” in the postcolonial and neo-colonial global context today.

²⁶ This means, “The father of Qasim”. One of the names the Prophet Muhammad assumed on the birth of his son Qasim, who died in infancy (Hughes, 1988).

The Hegelian notion of mutual recognition is relevant for its claim that the realisation of a community free from relations of exclusion and domination depends on the mutual recognition of its constituents, where all are acknowledged as free agents (Lee, 2005:563). Christian theological advocates of religious pluralism in the last two decades or so have argued for a paradigm shift that will enable Christians to shift from their insistence on the superiority and exclusivity of their way to giving recognition and equal independent validity to other religions (Lee, 2005:556). The argued paradigm shift by the pluralists is to be made on the grounds of a theoretical explanation of some reality underlying all religions, or some common exhibition of historical traits among them, or from the basis of the strength of engagement in practical concerns that the religions have in a commonly experienced reality of suffering or injustice in the world (ibid). The critics of pluralism, who view the question of religious disparities from a cultural-linguistic perspective, argue that, as a language forms a semiotic “world,” religious traditions constitute culturally and linguistically different communities of interaction and practice that are not mutually commensurable (Lee, 2005:257). This critic contends that religious scriptures and doctrines operate both as the rules shaping and leading the communal life of the religious community, and as the perspective from which all things are interpreted and re-inscribed within their semiotic world (ibid). The post-liberal insistence on a cultural-linguistic and communal state of religious traditions resonates with the neo-traditionalist critics of pluralism, who place the issue of religious plurality in the socio-political context of Western modernity (Lee, 2005:257). They argue that Western modernity, in the context of the Enlightenment project, is where religious traditions, with their claims, are brought under a universal matter of cultural relative and subjective tastes (ibid).

According to the critics, pluralism is established on Western modernity’s concept of “repressive tolerance”, where those advocating pluralism set up a rule against any claim of superiority, uniqueness and finality or demand that the participants in the dialogue must succumb to a universal ethical imperative, for example the idea of justice that is shared among the religions (Lee, 2005:558). Lee (2005:574) asserts that the model of interreligious dialogue as proposed for Christian theology is a way of creating a political unity of the narrative of identity through an intentional hybridisation. For Gwamna (2010:169), interreligious dialogue is necessary for the

fact that most religions share common concerns, such as human development, social justice, equality, peace and basic necessities of life, and these indeed call for dialogue. Given the fact that religion is a major reality in Nigeria, it is very emotive, sensitive and constitutes a public lifestyle for most Nigerians (ibid:171). Most of the adherents of Christianity and Islam are not well informed of religious interaction between people of different beliefs. As a result, anything that affects their religion often creates controversial reactions and responses; because of the politicisation, radicalisation and manipulation of religion in Nigeria today, therefore, the importance of dialogue is crucial and must be stressed (Gwamna, 2010:171). Gwamna (2010:174-177) categorised dialogue into four types:

1. The dialogue of life – referring to relationships at the level of ordinary, everyday life.
2. The dialogue of discourse – involving people of different religions coming together to interact with basic information and ideas on their respective religious beliefs and practices.
3. The dialogue of spirituality – this involves the totality of the person's religious experience, in meditation, prayer, faith and its expression, and can be referred to as the dialogue of the heart.
4. The dialogue of action – this refers to dialogue through cooperative joint efforts towards the promotion of human development, for example issues that promote peace, justice, protection of the environment, defence of human rights, etc.

Grouping dialogue into categories, Gwamna would help Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria to understand dialogue as not being limited to round table discussion. Dialogue could also be practised in the informal communal life of people. Clasper (1982, cited in Augsburg, 1986:44-45) explains dialogue in terms of multiple models, which are the following:

1. The dungeon model – this model views all other religions as imprisoned in darkness, in a dungeon of slavery. The dungeon may be decorated and even made liveable, yet it is still inferior, not capable and condemned.

2. The round table model – this model sees all as equal, and it is believed in this model that no one has all the truth, that for each to be completed all others are needed, since all are variations on a single theme.
3. The graduation model – equidistant from both the preceding, this suggests that all religions are traditional heritages that are now fulfilled and surpassed by scientific ideology.
4. The higher synthesis – this is an inclusive merging of all religions, hailing the coming of a new world religion as a basis for a coming world civilisation.
5. The crown of all religions – this point is in the middle of the exclusive view of the dungeon and the inclusive view of the round table. This model notes both the similarity and the uniqueness of Christ (this is not talking of Christianity) to all other religions, seeing Jesus the Christ as the crown of other ways. Therefore, this model believes that Jesus Christ came to fulfil and not to destroy the best of other religions because He is not an enemy to other worldviews, but rather challenges, completes and consummates the healing, liberation and transformation.

According to Augsburger, the best way to understand interreligious dialogue is to consider meeting each other on the level of humility and with respect for one another (Augsburger, 1986:45). Dialogue is not a game of win or loses, but a game of understanding that improves cordial relationships. Swidler (1983:1) warns against making dialogue a matter of debate. He argued against such a form of dialogue, as was practised in the past, when dialogue was done for the purpose of defeating an opponent or learning about an opponent for the purpose of dealing more effectively with him when another dialogue opportunity surfaced. To practise debate in a dialogue conveys the idea that absolute truth belongs to one party only, and that the other has nothing to offer (ibid). Swidler (1983:1) argues that, for dialogue to make sense, certain rules or “commandments” for interreligious dialogue must be set in place and strictly observed. In view of this, he formulated the following, which he calls “Dialogue Decalogue”. In his first commandment he explains that engagement in dialogue should be done with the purpose of learning, so as to bring about a change in perception, and to grow. The second commandment explains that interreligious dialogue must be understood as a two-sided project – intra- and

interreligious. This is to say that after interreligious dialogue is successfully done, it should be shared in an intra-religious setting.

The third commandment says that the dialogue participant must come to the table with complete honesty and sincerity. Following the fourth commandment, the participant must individually assume a similar complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners. The fifth commandment demands that each participant define himself or herself. According to the sixth commandment, the participants should not come to the dialogue with hard-and-fast assumptions of desiring to know just the areas of disagreement. The seventh commandment encourages dialogue to take place between equals. The eighth commandment notes that dialogue can only take place on the grounds of mutual trust. The ninth commandment demands that those entering into a dialogue must at least be minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious traditions. Lastly, the tenth commandment explains that every participant must eventually attempt to experience the religion of the other “from within”.

Dialogue can only be positive in yielding fruitful results when the two parties exercise mutual respect and understanding towards each other, especially when the participants come to the table of dialogue without the arrogance of superiority or the intention to convert (Sodiq, 1994:306). The ingredient of dialogue includes the embrace of the major values of tolerance, which include acceptance, love, friendship, respect, consideration, understanding, patience and brotherhood (Gwamna, 2010:178). Religious dialogue helps the adherents of the two religions to become aware of what is believed and practised amongst them, but a lack of engaging in dialogue results in a lack of answers to the questions such as, Why do you wear the hijab? or What is jihad²⁷? (Kerry, 2010:196). Reasoning with the subject of dialogue, Kwashi (2004:67) became worried about a statement of Yakubu Yahya, a malam²⁸ and a Muslim activist based in Katsina State:

It is obligatory for us to protect the image of our prophet ... you cannot be a real Muslim and good believer, unless you put Allah first in whatever you do ... If there is any grievance between Muslims and the

²⁷ Jihad literally means “an effort, or a striving.” The term refers to a religious war with those who are unbelievers in the mission of Muhammad (Hughes, 1988:243).

²⁸ Malam literally means a teacher in the Hausa language, but when used in the Islamic context it refers to an Islamic teacher.

government, we can only settle these grievances on the battlefield and not on a round table...We are operating our own independent system, guided and governed by Islamic principles, while governments are operating their system too. We are two different things entirely.

According to Kwashi (2004:67), this quotation is an indication that Christians in Northern Nigeria face the challenge of living together with Muslims, for if Muslims are prepared to settle grievances with the government only on the battlefield, where else can they settle grievances with Christians? With such statement by Yakubu Yahya, dialogue is defeated. The statement of Yakubu Yahya communicates the idea that religion could be part of the religious crisis. Fundamentalism is therefore a challenge to Christian/Muslim cooperation. In responding to such a challenge, Paul F. Knitter offers four theses (Knitter, 2012:397-399). In agreeing that religions constitute part of the problem, Knitter's first thesis argues that, "unless the religions become part of the solutions, they will certainly continue to be part of the problem". His second thesis is formulated on the grounds that causes of religious violence can be likened to bad breath, which requires other people to conscientise you. Therefore the thesis argues for the need of religions to become part of the solution together, and not separately. The third thesis states that, to become part of the solution, religions must confront the reason for being part of the problem. The fourth thesis asserts that one of the reasons why religions are easily exploited for the purposes of violence and hatred is because each religion makes exclusive claims. Knitter's theses explain the need for interreligious understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

In promoting the subject of inter-religious understanding and dialogue, Newbigin (1977:267) argues that as Christians, who are members of the body of Jesus Christ, and the body that was sent into the world, we engage in dialogue to continue that mission of Jesus; implying that, as the manner of the dialogue, we are vulnerable, exposed to temptations, without defences of our own. He believes that in a real meeting in dialogue with a partner of another religion, it must communicate to him that his worldview becomes a real possibility for me (ibid). Augsburg (1986:42-43) concurs by citing Koyama (1974), who argues four positions as follows:

1. Religions are never objectively comparable, since the comparison would require vast knowledge and profound religious experience of each.

2. Religious commitments belong to the world of I-Thou relationships. An “I” can be treated comparatively; and a “Thou” can be compared subjectively but not objectively.
3. To judge all other religions as inferior faiths is arrogance, not an observation made by “a crucified mind”.
4. Theological perception is primarily grace-grasped instead of data-grasped; it is symbolical, sacramental and revelatory, instead of being comprehensive and comparative. It is story-oriented rather than rationally and sequentially argued.

An understanding of the four positions above will improve the practice of interreligious dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Osia (1993:43) argues that Christians and Muslims should appreciate their points of convergence, which include areas of agreement, areas of comparability, areas of similarity, situations of conformity, and context of equality. He stresses the need for Nigerian Christians to engage in a dialogue that would aim at promoting movement towards God, and with a sincere search for the truth (ibid:48). Gwamna (2010:177) warns that dialogue should not be considered as a subject for seeking converts, nor that of turning the dialogue table into a crusade or a jihad arena where participants come to the table loaded with strategic ways of converting the other. He asserts that dialogue respects other people’s beliefs and provides an avenue for people of other religions to express themselves without intimidation and threats. Religious dialogue aims at building bridges of faith with other people. This could be carried out through visitations, the exchange of pleasantries, greetings, messages, attending of social and religious functions such as weddings, naming ceremonies, etc. (ibid:177-178).

This section on the critique of the practice of religious dialogue reveals different ways of practising religious dialogue between the two religious believers. And dialogue has been found to be an important tool for interreligious understanding and the need for peaceful co-existence. But the main challenge is the fact that the practice of religious dialogue has not been successful among the Christians and Muslims in Gombe state and northern Nigeria in general because of prejudices and a lack of strict adherence to the rules of dialogue. This is why I feel there is need for an alternative means of addressing the challenge of the Christian/Muslim relationship, especially in the area of dysfunctional exclusion. I therefore have chosen a co-pathic approach to deal

effectively with the dysfunctional exclusion and religious crisis among the Christians and Muslims, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.5. Conclusion

The research confirmed the assertion of Prof. Yusuf Turaki that the colonial administration instituted dysfunctional exclusion, which is having post-colonial consequences. This was seen in the favouring of one religion over other religious groups, and specifically putting Muslims in charge of all territories and not protecting the Christian missionaries from the Muslim fanatics, claiming that they wanted to maintain their vow of not interfering with the religion of Islam (Barnes, 2004:63). This decision gave Muslims and their religion political protection and a superior status and position in the colonial system (Turaki, 1993:188). The research also shows that the policy of the colonial administration promoted Islam at the expense of any other religion in the northern provinces of Nigeria (Ubah, 1991:133). It was also discovered that the colonial administration was only interested in developing the Muslim areas and to appoint Muslims as leaders over the non-Muslim group (Ubah, 1991:135). As a result of the upper hand given to Muslims and their religion, Islam gained a stronghold in the North, making it the state religion, and its adherents dominated the colonial hierarchical structure (Sodiq, 2009:649). It was made clear to the non-Muslim groups that, in order to enjoy security and free trade alongside Muslims, they would have to be converted to Islam (ibid).

The second main aspect of this research relates to the religious crisis in Gombe State. Because the crisis was not unique to Gombe, I decided to give the account by including the neighbouring states, as in many cases the crisis started from other states and subsequently affected Gombe. Some researchers categorise the Nigerian religious crises into intra- and inter-religious crises, for instance Omotosho (2003:16) and Sodiq (2009:669). But my research has shown that the so-called intra-religious crisis of the religion of Islam was directed against Christians (as noted in Appendix I). In all the religious crises of Northern Nigeria, it was Christians who suffered the most (see Appendix I). The research confirmed that similar religious conflicts have been prevalent all over Northern Nigeria.

The third section of my research in this chapter was an evaluation of dialogue as introduced to curb religious crises. It was discovered that researchers such as

Gwamna (2010:169), Dopamu (1989:61), Acar (2005:3), Michel (2010:531), Best (2001:76), Joseph and Rothfuss (2012:83) and Kerry (2010:195), among others, support and contribute to the use of dialogue. Nonetheless, Best (2001:76), Joseph and Rothfuss (2012:83) and Kerry (2010:195) are among those who argue for the strengthening of the application of dialogue, as its use has not been quite successful.

The last section addressed the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Gombe State. It was discovered that there are nine warning signs of a dysfunctional relationship (Urell, 2013:1). Urell explains that dysfunctional relationships are relationships that create more emotional disturbances than satisfaction. The research revealed the colonial stratification of the inequality between the Muslim and non-Muslim groups and understood it to be the origin of the dysfunctional exclusion between Muslims and Christians today. The report of the International Joint Delegation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2012:6) on the recent inter-religious tensions and crisis in Nigeria agrees with the state of the dysfunctional exclusion between Muslims and Christians. The reports of Christian Solidarity Worldwide indicate some dysfunctional exclusions in the aspect of discrimination against non-Muslims, which include discrimination in access to education, access to and provision of public services, and discrimination in the construction of Churches (CSW, 2008:4-8). The research also shows that dysfunctional exclusion can be seen in communication, as Straker (2013:1) argued that it releases effects, such as dismissing of a partner or group in a relationship; retaliation; being patronising; excluding and undermining. Exclusion was also seen as an effect of a dysfunctional relationship and results in elimination, assimilation, domination and abandonment (Volf, 1996:75). The research indicated that Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2007:2-3), in its publication titled, "No Justice after brutal murder of Nigerian teacher by students", enumerated some of the discriminatory attitudes against Christians in Gombe State from 1990 to 2006. The effect of dysfunctional exclusion was explained in three areas, namely the encapsulated mind-set, political manipulation of religion, and the effect of media presentation of religious matters.

This research indicates that there is religious dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims, which was institutionalised by the colonial administration.

Efforts were made, and are still going on, with regard to the use of dialogue as a means of both curbing the religious crises and the dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Gombe State. Inasmuch as dialogue is important, an avenue needs to be created for togetherness in a continuous relationship between Christians and Muslims. This will be possible through the administration of co-pathy, a concept that will make the adherents of the two religions live together in harmony, as they understand their struggles and suffering together, and live with compassion for one another. The next chapter will discuss this concept of co-pathy in more detail.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF CO-PATHY AND ITS RELEVANT APPLICATION TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter it was discovered the relationship between Muslims and Christians in the colonial era was not founded on equity, as the Muslim community was given priority over non-Muslim communities (as seen in sub-section 2.2.1 above). The disparity was enhanced within the two religious communities, as they were instructed not to enter each other's territory for whatever reason.

In the post-colonial era, the disparity began to manifest itself in dysfunctional exclusion between Muslims and Christians. And the effect of the dysfunctional exclusion began to translate into religious discomfort, leading to religious violence that saturated the territory of Northern Nigeria (see sub-section 2.3.1 above and Appendix 1 for details). The havoc caused as a result of the religious crises drew the attention of the two religious leaders and the government to think of a way of bringing the adherents of the two religions together in understanding. This brought about the idea of dialogue between the two religious groups. In 1975 the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions (NASR) was involved in organising dialogues, conferences and the publication of books and journals on the need for interreligious coexistence and mutual understanding (see sub-section 2.3.2 above). In 1999, the joint efforts of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) led to the formation of a body known as the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), which was actively involved in the administration of dialogue between Muslims and Christians (sub-section 2.3.2). The use of dialogue between Muslims and Christians as a means of curbing the menace of the dysfunctional exclusion and its extended effects did not seem to deter the menace, as it is increasing at an alarming rate (see sub-sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 above). The common understanding of dialogue and its usage as a theoretical tool functions as a round-table involving a number of people. In some cases the round-table dialogue turns into a debating competition, while in other cases the positive

result of the round-table dialogue does not reach the people in the community; it simply becomes for the consumption of the participants. It is in view of the challenges of dialogue that I argue for the reframing of the concept of dialogue.

Donald Capps (1990:11-12) presents the method of reframing formulated by Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland, and Richard Fisch in their book, *Change: Principle of Problem Resolution*. They argue that there are two kinds of change: first-order change and second-order change. The former takes place in a given system but does not change the system, and the latter occurs in a given system but alters the system. Capps affirms that in reframing there are circumstances in life where *first-order change* meets our needs. But in other circumstances of life, such *first-order change* will not meet the need and it will require second-order change.

Despite the fact that the use of dialogue has been commended in its efforts to deal with the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships, its result has not yet been effective. It is on this basis that, instead of insisting on dialogue as a frame that can be seen as the *first-order change*, I would argue for the reframing of dialogue by applying the concept to co-pathway as a *second-order change*. The application of co-pathway will not invite round-table dialogue, which involves only a few selected people from among the Christians and Muslims, but it will work among the Christians and Muslims in the community.

In this chapter, following my methodology adopted from Osmer (2008), the second task of practical theology is a commitment to the normative task. In applying this methodology, this chapter discusses the concept of co-pathway and its relevant application to the relationship between Christians and Muslims, thus making it a normative practice. The chapter will also engage in cross-disciplinary research, where relevant disciplines in the practice of compassion will be studied. This includes an introductory study of African anthropology, Psychology, and Islamic religion.

3.2. The Concept of Co-pathway

To achieve the goal of this chapter, I will focus in this section on the research question stated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.4 above): Can co-pathway contribute to addressing the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships in the area of

dysfunctional exclusion, which often triggers religious crisis among the two religious groups? The discussion will investigate whether the concept of co-pathy would be relevant in approaching the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships. Therefore the structure of the section involves the study of the concept of co-pathy, and then discusses its relevant application to the relationship between Christians and Muslims.

3.2.1. Co-pathy as Compassion

Co-pathy is a word formulated from “co” and “pathy.” The prefix co- indicates partnership or togetherness; it implies being together with, or doing a common thing together, or coexisting (Turnbull, 2010:270). The suffix -pathy is derived from the Greek *pathos*. *Pathos*, when coordinated with *epithumia*, means active and individual desire, as seen in the desire described in Colossians 3:5; the lustful desire in I Thessalonians 4:5; and the vile affections in Romans 1:26. These are lusts that dishonour those who indulge in them (Louw & Nida, 1988:292; Zodhiates, 1984:1862). *Pathos*, derived from *petho*, means to wound, hurt, to suffer. It refers to the condition of being in a diseased soul (ibid). It can also be understood as that which is endured or experienced, in other words persisting in passion, and it conveys meanings such as pity, compassion or enthusiasm (Arndt & Gingrich, 1957:607-608).

The concept speaks of that which has been endured or experienced in physical suffering, as in the physical sufferings of Jesus Christ (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:602-603). Co-pathy therefore could mean togetherness in passion or suffering, in other word it means compassion. When the concept of co-pathy²⁹, which means compassion, is accepted among Christians and Muslims and is practised in reciprocation with one another, it will enhance mutual affection between the two religious groups regardless of their religious differences. Co-pathy as compassion needs to be discussed in more detail.

Described as the love of God, compassion is the love where people live in and relate to one another; it indicates what they are about and also who they are with one another (Graff, 1994:105). It is the attention given to people in suffering, which goes with the impulse to assist where possible (Cornelius, 2013:1). Compassion is a unity

²⁹ Co-pathy has been explained as compassion, and will henceforth be used interchangeably in this thesis.

of a community, it does not have power of domination nor coercion, but rather, it is efficacious, and its efficacy is found in its ability to resist the ravages of the suffering and to bring transformation where it is needed (Graff, 1994:106). According to O'Connell (2009:70), compassion is so strong that it overrides cultural, economic, social, racial and religious boundaries. It brings together all disparate people into unity and an emotional relationship (ibid). O'Connell further explains that compassion does not only pay attention to the symptoms of another's suffering, but it also works towards restoring the sufferers to full membership in the community (O'Connell, 2009:71). Compassion is a form of love that exhibit its first gift in the ability to support the dignity of the one suffering, and it gives to others the empowering power of support that strengthens their integrity and humanity in their weaknesses (Graff, 1994:106). Cornelius (2013:1), in support of Graff, affirms that the motivation of compassion is love, love for God and love for others. He accounts that the precondition to engage in service to one another is faith in God (ibid). Cornelius therefore argues for the need of individuals to be involved with others in need through their personal motivations (Cornelius, 2013:2).

Compassion is an energy that resists suffering and evil and introduces a labour that transforms suffering into well-being and evil into good. It strengthens the work of justice that creates practical social services giving support to human dignity (Graff, 1994:106). Abbott (2012:35, 39) believes that compassion is a way of living together with a practice of lament for traumatised individuals or communities. He explains the focus of compassion as hospitality that is practised by the presence of people (ibid:41). With the idea of hospitality and the practice of presence, compassion can be experienced as a relationship, and such a relationship also exists between people and the compassionate God. Graff explains that, when people experience God, He is experienced as both creator and in compassion as redeemer of the tragic world. In this sense, compassion refers to a mode of divine relationship and an efficacy as well (Graff, 1994:106). The divine compassion is experienced continuously by all humanity, it responds to tragic and irreversible loss through the release of power to resist the destruction of human dignity. It meets evil with the mercy that embraces the sinner, thus offering new life. God's love binds up, creates, gives sight, sets free, heals, transforms and never ends (Graff, 1994:107). It is the responsibility of the church as its mission to see that this compassion that comes through the divine love

of God is incarnated in the world, because it is through love that people are rooted and embraced (ibid). Herrmann (2013:217) concurs with Graff, and further explains that it is through the various callings of people that God reaches out to the hurting and the needy. God also uses the church to restore what has been broken in the world of suffering and death.

Compassion therefore entails that, in every circumstance, people are invited to respond with empathy, care and joy in the well-being of others. In all cases, the invitation by compassion is to give appropriate support to the rhythms of life, and this agrees with the work of Jesus Christ (Graff, 1994:107). Jesus' mission was concrete, he offered immediate care for people who were suffering, and his ministry was a clear restoration of dignity and inclusion in the community of those who were excluded, and those needing physical or mental recovery (ibid). Sobrino (2009:454) describes the compassion of Jesus as a re-action against the oppressors and victimisers, who distinguish between "them" and "others". Feldman and Kuyken (2011:145) believe that compassion opens up friendship to a rejected or needy person, creating a relationship of kindness, caring and connectedness.

O'Connell (2009:85) asserts that the practice of compassion among people makes them appreciate the importance of life in their community and discourages segregation that brings about religious-constructed preferences that lead to independent isolation. Graff points out that Jesus valued people so much that he did not condemn anybody, but rather enjoined his followers to love and show compassion to people, because the poor, the sick, the hungry and the offenders need compassion (Graff, 1994:108). To claim that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, the practice of compassion should be set as a priority in the relationship among people, as it will release love, mercy and hope that will move people toward social interaction that secures the dignity of all people (ibid:111). Feldman and Kuyken (2011:144) add that compassion includes kindness, generosity and acceptance, with strands of tolerance, courage and equanimity as the cloth of compassion. This enables compassion to achieve its goal of seeing people included where they are excluded, and set free from pain and affliction (ibid:153). Oliver Davies (2001:235-236) noted the role of compassion as including sympathy and empathy as important social virtues of the organic harmony of the world order.

Sympathy and empathy are social virtues that communicate the act of compassion between people. Lucille Zimmerman, a counsellor and psychology professor, strongly believes in a drastic difference between the two virtues. She understands sympathy as simply feeling for people without connecting the feelings to heart; and empathy as feeling with people with a heartfelt connection or action (Zimmerman, 2013:1). Nicola Davies (2011:1) asserted that, when sympathy is shown, it leaves a person feeling that people take pity on them, feel sorry for them, and creates a sense of disempowerment and inferiority. But the deep compassionate statements of empathy, such as “I feel your pain”, “I understand that is a great loss for you”, and “Can I help you with that?” lie in the practice of empathy (Ibid).

Empathy is more than just labelling a feeling state, it is a recognition of what the pain of the patient feels like, which has to do with a coming out of self and imaginatively projecting into the inner world of the other’s experience (Pembroke, 2006:288). Zondag (2007:86) argues that empathy has to do with any response to another’s experience, which may be either positive or negative, leading one to either turn away from others or help them on the ground of altruistic motives. This leads to what Zondag calls functional and dysfunctional empathy. Meanwhile, Shrier and Shrier (2008:25) look at empathy as a positive interaction among human beings, and see it as an internal and external relationship that is developed within a person towards the other. Shrier and Shrier explain that the way empathy works begins with an unconscious mimicking of the observed other’s feeling-relating behaviour, and mimicking generates same feelings in those empathising. The ones empathising then pre-consciously evaluate what might be the cause of the feelings of the others, and remember their personal experiences that became causes of these feelings in the past. They will become aware that they are right in the experience of the other person’s feelings, then from there the empathisers become conscious of the comparisons between the feeling of the other person and their own past experiences. From this stage the empathisers imaginatively play the role of putting themselves in the other person’s shoes.

Empathy is an interesting virtue that one person displays toward another. It is different from co-path; while empathy has to do with an individual or group of persons who direct their care towards another or other groups, co-pathy involves

both parties to be involved together in the act of caring for themselves. This will require both parties to understand what it entails and to agree to live by it together. Theresa Edwards (2014:1) sees empathy as closely related to the *golden rule* and says, “In this instance, you would reverse the statement once you have allowed yourself to empathize with another person and consider how it is that they would *like* to be treated” (Edwards, 2014:1). Sympathy and empathy communicate the act of compassion among a group of people. And with the awareness of co-pathy as compassion, the relevant application of co-pathy to Christian/Muslim relationships needs to be discussed.

3.2.2. The Relevance of Co-pathy to Christian/Muslim Relationships

Lorraine Cavanagh has made a significant contribution in arguing what a religion is supposed to do to its adherents. She points out that the word “religion” comes from the root *Ligare*, a Latin term which means “to bind together”, and when applied it implies binding people together before binding them to God (Cavanagh, 2012:70). Cavanagh argues that good religion binds people to God in a healthy manner, implying that people must be helped to relate well toward others to enable them to relate well to God (ibid). When religion ignores love and compassion, people’s needs are equally ignored, because in a real sense the binder of people together is the practice of compassion and love. (Cavanagh, 2012:71).

From the Islamic point of view, compassion is a cherished term practised by the adherents of the Islamic religion and it has also played a significant role between Muslims and Christians in keeping the adherents of the two religions together (Sodiq, 2009:647). Nonetheless, the relationship between the two religious groups has experienced moments of both mutual interactive benefit as well as misunderstanding (ibid). It is believed that a historical cordial relationship existed between Christians and Muslims in the early years of Islam (ibid). The Prophet Mohammed was said to have enjoyed a relationship with a Christian monk called Waraqa Ibn Nawfal, who loved and cared for the Prophet when he felt ill as a result of the impact of receiving the first Qur’anic revelation on Mount Hira (Acar, 2005:1). Acar notes that the Prophet also had several meetings and dealings with individual Christians and groups in his time, relationship of caring and sharing of religious ideas (ibid).

According to Omotosho (2003:21), during the early period of Islam in Medina, the inhabitants were mainly Christians and Jews and they lived in cordial relationship with the Muslims. The two religions were involved in dialogue, as the Quran encourages Muslims to get into dialogue with the people of the book – Christians and Jews (Sura 3:64). Sodiq affirms the relationship and indicates that, when the Prophet Mohammad together with his followers were hated and rejected by their people in the community, he found refuge for his followers with a Christian King in Abyssinia, where they were welcomed and given a warm reception (Sodiq, 2009:647).

Acar explains the continuous relationship, pointing to a visit of the delegation from the Najran Christians to the Prophet Mohammed in Medina. The investigatory dialogue in the Mosque of Medina lasted for two to three days, and when it was time for the Christians to pray, Prophet Mohammad allowed them to use the Mosque. This became the first time when Christians were said to have prayed inside a mosque (Acar, 2005:3). Muslims are admonished not to engage in a senseless argument with the *people of the Book* that could be capable of spurring a crisis, for the Christians have the same source of revelation, and the same God whom they all worship (Qur'an 29:46). In fact, Christians are singled out for special respect among the people of the Book from Muslims (Qur'an 5:82).

“A Common Word between Us and You” was courageously initiated by 138 prominent Muslim personalities in an effort to call the attention of Christians to the points of convergence between the two religions (Awwad, 2009:78). As an open letter addressed to Christian leaders worldwide, the letter called for Muslim and Christian unity in the pursuance of sincere peace and harmony with mutual coexistence and good will. It agitates for the denouncement of hatred and strife, and to seek for fairness, justice and kindness to one another (ibid). The “Common Word” stresses the point of convergence between Muslims and Christians in relation to the “Love for God and the love for neighbour” found in both the Qur'an and the Bible (Awwad, 2009:78).

From the Christian perspective, Veli-Matti Karkkainen (2004a:101) explains Luther's theology of love in relation to faith, noting that all works except for faith should be directed towards one's neighbours, for God is not requiring any work from man with

regard to himself, only faith through Jesus Christ. He emphasises that all works and life should be turned to one's neighbours, and to let the poor, sick and wretched and non-believers enjoy love of service by rendering assistance of various kinds (ibid). This was vividly seen in the earthly life of Jesus, where people felt his love and enjoyed his services (Cavanagh, 2012:47). Christians as believers in Christ should live their lives in connection to Christ by rendering services that show compassion and love both within and outside the Christian community (Cavanagh, 2012:22). It was through such services that the early Christians were attributed to Christ, leading to the origin of the name Christian in Antioch (ibid). A Christian therefore is a "work of Christ" and, more than that, he is "Christ" to his neighbours, as Paul would say, "to live is Christ". This means Christians should engage in doing what Christ does (Karkkainen, 2004a:109). The presence of Christ in Christians through faith makes them act the way that Christ lived a life of love for people in need, and Christians should avail themselves to the suffering of their neighbours (ibid).

According to Davies and Allison (2004:108-109), the statement in Matthew 7:12, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you...", known as the *Golden Rule*, is not a formula for justice, neither has it been made to make the world better, but rather it is an invitation to exceptional benevolence. They explain that the context of the statement of the *Golden Rule* was the Sermon on the Mount, which called for exceptional 'righteousness' that involves love for enemies (ibid). When people engage in doing to others what they wish to be done to them, there definitely will be reciprocal love among them. Matthew 15:21-28 presents a very fascinating story involving Jesus and a Gentile woman known as the Canaanite woman. The story also portrays Jesus as liberating the Gentile and women, who were considered by Jews as underdogs, and it therefore is a message of inclusion of what was excluded, marginalised and disempowered (Baffes, 2011:19). It is also a reminder that God is at work within and outside Christianity, and so to set oneself apart from others for whatsoever reason, either by gender, race, ethnicity, class or religion, is an action of marginalisation and exclusion (Baffes, 2011:20). The story of the Canaanite woman further communicates the message that one is never as different from the other as he or she would think (Baffes, 2011:21).

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), the most important thing to be noted is the statue of the neighbour in the parable – the compassionate man (Awwad, 2009:84). In fact, neighbourliness, according to the context of the parable, should be redefined as an act of compassion toward one's enemies (ibid). In the parable Jesus points to the fact that a neighbour is not necessarily one's colleague in the same faith; it could be one's enemy, as in the story. In fact, based on the parable, a neighbour is never identified in advance, it is the course of life that reveals who a neighbour is (Garland, 2011:448). For Garland (2011:448-449), whoever needs help is a neighbour according to the parable, therefore to be able to show concern requires self-expenditure on another in need. Commenting on the attitude of the Good Samaritan, O'Connell (2009:70) notes that compassion overrides cultural, social, economic, racial and religious boundaries. The showing of compassion brings together people who have been segregated into a personal, embodied and emotional relationship (ibid).

The study of the concept of co-pathy, as explained in relation to the term compassion, indicates that it is an accepted virtue of the adherents of the two religions and that both have experienced a relationship beyond their boundaries. Such an experience should be able to serve as motivation for a co-pathic relationship between Christians and Muslims today. The sociological contribution of other disciplines in the areas of co-pathy will promote the use of co-pathy in relationships between Christians and Muslims. The next discussion therefore will focus on cross-disciplinary study in connection with an understanding of compassion

3.3. Co-pathy and Cross-disciplinary Study

This study is not an intra-disciplinary research where interaction with the understanding of compassion is limited to one discipline. Because much may be learned from other disciplines on the subject of compassion, the research engaged in cross-disciplinary study to learn from other disciplines. And, just as noted by Butkus and Kolmes (2008:44), national and world issues are too complex for the lenses of a single discipline to be used in viewing and analysing them adequately. This makes cross-disciplinary learning crucial. The cross-disciplinary study enhanced my application of compassion as an approach to addressing the dysfunctional exclusion in the Christian/Muslim relationship. Therefore, to engage in

cross-disciplinary study for the purpose of drawing conclusions, the following disciplines were considered at an introductory level: African anthropology, psychology, and Islamic religious belief and practice.

3.3.1. Compassion in African Anthropology

Compassion seems to be what introduced the idea of extended family among the people of Africa. Mbiti (1969:109) explains that in the community of African people, whatsoever happens to any individual in the community automatically happens to the entire group, and likewise, whatsoever happens to the entire group happens to an individual in the community. This makes the individual boldly proclaim that “he or she is because they are, and because they are, therefore he or she is”, and this idea becomes a cardinal point in the understanding of African anthropology (Mbiti 1969:109). An African understanding of community involves all aspects of traditional customs and institutions (Shutte 2001:28). This is clearly seen in the depiction of the institution of the clan, by seeing the community as a unit communal person (ibid). This is where the idea of the saying, “divided we fall, united we stand”, is active in the African community. The community is united in mind and heart, and seen as an extended family (Shutte, 2001:28). Having understood the extent of solidarity in African community, Augsburger (1986:82) indicates that the African people regard personal issues as community issues. One thing that stands essential to an African is a belief in the awareness of others, and Augsburger stresses that they live in solidarity in both a vertical and horizontal relationship with others (ibid). In concurring with Augsburger, Louw (2008:154) asserts that, from an African perspective, to be human means attachment to life, and such connectedness implies mutual interconnectedness, as life is about interrelatedness and communality. That is why African spirituality is harmony in interpersonal relationships structured not in a pyramid order, but in a circle, showing that community and communality constitute the centre of religious life (Louw 2008:159). In other words, it could be said that, in the “blood” of an African man is a human relationship bound first by nuclear family, followed by extended family, then clan, and from there it goes on to the community and then the tribe (Mbiti, 1969:108). These relationships are held in respect so that even when people are not from the same nuclear and extended family, they address each other as father/mother and son/daughter; uncle and nephew/niece; elder-brother/sister and younger-brother/sister etc. (Mbiti 1969:105). This means that an

African man or woman possesses literally hundreds of “fathers”, “mothers”, “uncles”, “nieces”, “sons” and “daughters” (ibid). Every individual is not related to the community as a part to a whole, but as a person is related to themselves; this means an individual member of the community sees and understands the community as themselves (Shutte 2001:26). Each person sees the other person of the community as another self, making it a fundamental ingredient in community life (ibid). For an African community to be healthy, it requires correct relationships to its environment, as illness is as a result of the disruption and destabilisation of the societal order and harmony (Shutte 2001:26). This means that African religion in the context of familiness systems assures respect for and recognition of every individual in the community (Taringa, 2007:247). Pointing to the unity in African communal ethics, Kunhiyop (2010:13) observes that both the parts and the whole are seen as and considered essential. He illustrates his point using the image of the human body, where all the parts of the body are essential to the total person, explaining that in an organic sense, without the whole they lose their individual significance (ibid). As the individual members make up the community, each member contributes to the survival of the community (Kunhiyop, 2010:13).

A very rich and cherished South African concept, *Ubuntu*, has its background in the Nguni group of languages in the formulation “*umuntu ungunmtu ngabanye abantu*”, which literally means “one person is a person through other persons” (Koopman, 2005:195). With regard to the destiny of people being human, the notion of *Ubuntu* is indeed becoming a global concept (Louw, 2008:155). This speaks of the inevitable need for one another and the importance of every one. Shutte (2001:25) concurs and puts it this way: “persons depend on persons to be persons”. It is on the basis of this insight into the importance of one another in Africa that every individual is taken into consideration, giving the community a distinct characteristic.

It is worth noting that the concept of *Ubuntu* has passed through criticism, resulting in some objections to the concept, which explains that *Ubuntu* as a concept leads itself to abuse for selfish desires (Koopman, 2005:197). Some describe the concept as an exclusive one that operates within a certain group of people, and others argue that *Ubuntu* is not a unique concept to Africans, as the quests for communion, hospitality, solidarity and dignity occur all over the world (Koopman, 2005:197).

Despite these objections, because of the positive contribution of Ubuntu it is worth considering in relation to the cordial relationship between people.

Ubuntu conveys a message of human dignity, and speaks to the very essence of becoming human (Tutu, 1999:34). To appreciate and acknowledge someone with high praise, it is said *yu u nobuntu*, that is to say “Hey, he or she has Ubuntu”. Such a message communicates that they are indeed generous, friendly, hospitable, caring and compassionate; what they have is not theirs alone, it is shared (ibid). Human being is therefore seen as a bundle of life, just as *Ubuntu* would say a person is a person only through other persons (Tutu, 1999: 35). It is therefore not “I think that I am”, but rather, it is because I participate, I belong and share that I am human (ibid). When *Ubuntu* is recognised in a person it strengthens cordial relationships, as each other will be considered with dignity and regard. According to Tutu (1999:35), a person who cherishes and applies *Ubuntu* is open and made available to people around him or her, and he or she is confident having known that he or she is coming from a greater whole and conscious of the fact that, when others are humiliated or diminished, he or she is also diminished; and when others are experiencing torture or oppression or even treated with less dignity, he or she feels it. Ubuntu communicates the philosophy of tolerance and compassion with an embrace of forgiveness (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005:225).

Ubuntu is oneness in a community through solidarity, where one’s humanity is enriched by another’s (Louw 2008:155). Koopman (2005:196) indicates that *Ubuntu* implies expiation, as it entails the removal of anything that disturbs the peace and harmony of a communality. According to Dueck and Goodman (2007:614), the subject of expiation, which has to do with the death of one for another, comes from both Old and New Testament teaching. They explain that, in the Old Testament, a scapegoat was sent into the wilderness with the sins of the people, and in the New Testament, the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world was an act of expiation. Jesus taught that He is the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11). This implies that Christians are to display their love for one another by bearing responsibility for one another, engaging in self-limitation for the sake of the other (Dueck & Goodman, 2007:614). It means bearing the painful burden and inabilities of the other, including the responsibility the other has (ibid).

Dueck and Goodman (2007:615) stress that the other needs a created space in one's self so that the other will always be present in the self. Koopman (2005:196), putting more stress on *Ubuntu*, describes it as a seeker of justice in relationship. This was demonstrated in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in post-apartheid South Africa, where reparation was granted to the victims in a desire to restore their human dignity (ibid). Koopman further explains that the choice for restorative instead of retributive justice speaks of an *Ubuntu* interest in supererogatory act (Koopman, 2005:196).

In his effort to support and promote restorative justice, Thesnaar (2010:97) emphasises Thumbadoo's five objectives of restorative work, which states that: restorative justice should invite full participation and consensus; it should heal what is broken; it should seek full and direct accountability; it should reunite what has been divided; and it should strengthen the community to prevent further harm. Thesnaar adds that restoration is more than just a victim-centred criminal justice system. It is also committed to restoring offenders and restoring the community. Explaining the theological grounding for restorative justice, he lays emphasis on the fact that restorative justice is theological, having in mind the restorative work of God in His relationship with Israel in the Old Testament (ibid). Therefore, as people of the covenant, we have a relationship with our neighbours that entail responsibility towards each other. Speaking about communion and reconciliation, the proponents of *Ubuntu* argue that the centre of action of *Ubuntu* is unity and solidarity (Koopman, 2005:196). *Ubuntu* refers to solidarity in sadness and in joy, and this implies feeling, identifying and mutual understanding with each other in a community (ibid). *Ubuntu* is interested in identifying with the subjugated and the marginalised people in a community. It preaches forgiveness and reconciliation for the sake of maintaining unity in a community (Koopman, 2005:196). The proponents of *Ubuntu* insist that the anthropology of *Ubuntu* assisted in the struggle against apartheid (ibid:198). Where people's humanity was questioned during apartheid, it was *Ubuntu* that reminded them of their dignity and humanity (ibid). When the strategy of the apartheid regime was to divide and rule, the lesson from *Ubuntu* was unity and solidarity, so that an injury for one is an injury for all (Koopman, 2005:198). *Ubuntu* strengthens the quest for truth and reconciliation.

Working on the anthropologies of Bonhoeffer and African *Ubuntu*, Koopman (2005:199) noticed a great resemblance, as the former emphasises the communal character of humanity and his anthropology could be described as a relational anthropology. Bonhoeffer explains that the immediate concern of a person is to think about self in responsibility to another, an idea that brings to mind the consciousness of the other as part of the individual, as an individual is not complete without the other (Bonhoeffer, 1963:32). Concerning the use of “I” and “Thou” in exclusion, Bonhoeffer believed that, for an individual to be a concrete “I”, the other “Thou” is equally concrete. This is to say that every individual “I” can be a “Thou” and every “Thou” can be an individual “I”, therefore there is nothing special about an “I” individual (Bonhoeffer, 1963:32).

The idea of “I” and “Thou” has been introduced by Martin Buber in his book titled *I and Thou*. In it he explains that the world is twofold for a human being, which is in accordance with his or her twofold attitude. The attitude of human beings is twofold in accordance with the two fundamental words he or she speaks. The fundamental words are word pairs, the first word pair is *I-You*, and the second is *I-It* (Buber, 1970:53). Buber explains the fact that it is either *I* or *You* in the thinking of human beings, so that whenever *I* is spoken, the consciousness of the other is present as a different person (Buber, 1970:54). But in communicating a meaning that make sense in the African context, Miroslav Volf, though not an African, but points out that the individual who call himself or herself an “I” does exist, but only through the “other” that is call “Thou” (Volf, 1996:58). It should be noted that there is no individual that is self-sufficient; the individual exists because “others” exist too (Volf, 1996:58). It is in the understanding of the existence of people for the sake of one another that people enjoy their freedom, as freedom is about a relationship between two people (Bonhoeffer, 2004:63). Therefore one’s freedom is freedom for the other, because in relationship one is bound to the other, as it is only through being in relationship with the other that is one really free (ibid). Freedom is never to be thought of as a substance or as an individualistic thing, because freedom is both “free-from” and “free-for” (Bonhoeffer, 2004:63).

Togetheriness is a biblical idea. From the account of the creation of man, the bible says “... It is not good for the man to be alone...” (Genesis 2:18). God made people

together in marriages, families, clans and communities. People are alone because others have been hated, ignored and excluded (Bonhoeffer, 2004:96). Since it is God who made people into family, clan and community, to live by promoting togetherness, people need to stay together with love to respect human dignity and bear the burden of others by tolerating the way others are. Those who are weak should not be judging the strong; nor the strong disparaging the weak. The weak should not be arrogant; and the strong should not look at themselves as a different group from the weak (Bonhoeffer, 2007:231). It is more gratifying to feel the sense that one is something for other people, because the relationships of human beings are the most important thing in life (Bonhoeffer, 2007:241). The Bible makes it clear that service to one another is service to God (Matthew 25:31-46). This makes human beings more important to themselves than anything else (Bonhoeffer, 2007:241).

3.3.2. Compassion in Psychology

From a psychological point of view, compassion contributes to the survival of human beings because of its tremendous benefits for physical and mental health including total well-being (Seppala, 2013:3). According to Emma Seppala a leading researcher in positive psychology, APS³⁰ William James and APS James McKeen Cattell, pioneers of the psychology of happiness and human flourishing, suggest that relating in a meaningful way with others helps human beings to enjoy better mental and physical health and brings about speedy recovery from disease (Seppala, 2013:3). The research of Stephanie Brown and Sara Konrath of Stony Brook University and the University of Michigan respectively adds that connecting with others in a meaningful way may even prolong the lifespan of human beings (ibid).

Seppala (2013:3) argues that the reason why a compassionate lifestyle results in greater psychological well-being could be that the act of giving tends to produce more pleasure than the act of receiving. She explains that a brain-imaging study led by neuroscientist Jordan Grafman showed that the “pleasure centres” in the brain, i.e. the parts of the brain that are active when human beings experience pleasure, are equally active when people observe someone giving money to charity as when they receive money themselves! (Ibid).

³⁰ This acronym refers to Association for Psychological Science. It is used as a title.

Jeremy Dean (2014) notes the importance of a compassionate lifestyle and quotes the Dalai Lama – “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive” (Dean, 2014:1). He explains eight psychological effects of living a compassionate life (Dean, 2014:1) as follows:

1. Compassion can be learned. This communicates the idea that compassion is not something that one would say he or she has or does not have, it can and should be learned and nurtured. Dean notes the example demonstrated by Weng *et al.* (2013, in Dean, 2014:1), who gave a one-day course in loving kindness meditation. The result showed fact that an act of compassion helps in fostering benevolence and creates loving feelings towards the self and others. After the course the participants felt better about themselves, and were more compassionate to others.
2. Compassion motivates action. Compassion has the power to motivate a force that results in action. This makes compassion different from other concepts that communicate feelings about one’s suffering, as it motivates action.
3. Compassion makes one happier and healthier. Apart from benefiting others when compassion is shown, practising compassion benefits one’s own psychological and physical health.
4. Compassion boosts the immune response. Compassion has the power to reach into the body’s immune and stress-response system. The research of Pace *et al.* (2009, in Dean, 2014) discovered that participants doing more compassionate meditation had stronger immune responses to a stressor, as measured physiologically by interleukin and cortisol levels.
5. Empathic neural response. Neuroscientists discovered that increased loving compassion can be measured in the living brain. The research done by Lutz *et al.* (2008, in Dean, 2014) generated a mental state of compassion while participants’ brains were scanned. This explains that, while the participants concentrated on being compassionate, the brain regions that are responsible for the processing of emotions were enhanced, in comparison to when the participants were at rest. Areas associated with empathy were also more active.
6. Increased empathy. As it is believed that compassionate thoughts motivate and boost activity in the empathic centres of the brain, and also engage in boosting empathic accuracy. In the research of Mascaro *et al.* (2013, in Dean, 2014),

participants were to guess emotions from only a pair of eyes in a test of empathy called "Mind in the Eyes Test". Those who had passed through a course of compassion and practised it performed better in the test, indicating that their empathic accuracy was enhanced.

7. More helpful. People who participate in acts of compassion are more helpful towards others.
8. Less afraid of suffering. Participation in acts of compassion towards others makes participants less afraid of suffering. As some people tend to have negative, avoiding emotions towards sufferers, a compassionate person can change this attitude by replacing it with positive, compassionate emotions.

In application, the continuous practice of compassion among Christians and Muslims will enhance the physical and psychological health of the two groups of religious believers. And those wonderful psychological effects of a compassionate living would make room for the peaceful coexistence of the religious groups. Robert Wuthnow affirms that compassion provide psychological gratification (Wuthnow, 1991:288)³¹.

3.3.3. Compassion in Islamic Religion

According to Asghar Ali Engineer, the subject of compassion in Islam is a strong and emphasised concept. He indicates that the Qur'an has repeatedly described God (always preferred in the Arabic term - Allah) as the most compassionate and merciful, desiring of all those who worship God to live with a compassionate and merciful heart towards their fellow human beings (Engineer, 2009:86). A Muslim is always reminded of God's attribute of being compassionate in the recitation of the first phrase in each chapter of the Qur'an which, when translated, means "I begin in the name of Allah who is compassionate and merciful"; this recitation is performed at the beginning of "anything" that is to be done by a Muslim (ibid). The Qur'an indicates that the compassion of God has been ordained for people who do what is right and practise charity on a regular basis (Surah³² 7:156). The mercy and

³¹ For a research in sociology of culture and religion, including theology, spiritual perspectives, motivational and psychological perspectives see the book, *Acts of compassion: caring for other and helping ourselves* by Robert Wuthnow (1991).

³² The literal meaning of Surah is "A row or series." The term is used exclusively for the chapters of the Qur'an, of which there are one hundred and fourteen in numbers. (<http://answering-islam.org/Books/Hughes/s.htm>).

compassion of God are always available to be enjoyed, but there are two basic conditions for deserving such virtues (Badawi, 2010:66). The first condition is to have a correct belief in God and to accept that one is a servant to Him. And the second condition is to behave well towards people; this means one's way of life in relation to family, in society, and in political and economic life (ibid). A Muslim is therefore expected to work out his means of enjoying God's compassion by not only believing in God, but also being compassionate to others, for the Prophet Muhammad was sent with the sole aim of showing compassion to the creatures, through giving them guidance and taking them away from false teaching (Qur'an 21:107). The mercy and compassion shown by the prophet liberate those suffering from oppression and exclusion in society (Badawi, 2010:66). Mercy is also understood in this sense, because it stops human tyranny and exploitation by the well-to-do and the powerful (ibid).

In making a connection between a Muslim belief in God and compassion, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in his narration in *Al Tabarani*³³, remarked that a Muslim cannot be a true believer without practising compassion (Badawi, 2010:66). This means that, to be a Muslim, a true one, compassion must be seen in practice in the right way (ibid). Badawi (2010:66) explains that the teaching of the Prophet on showing compassion is not restricted to Muslims as companions and friends, but its practice should be without exception, even to enemies (Badawi, 2010:66). Badawi gives the example of the teaching of the Prophet with the attitude of the Prophet himself, when he and his early followers were persecuted, and when the Prophet was stoned in *Al Taif*³⁴ and bled, he did not utter a curse on them, but rather a prayer of guidance from God to the people: "Oh my Lord, guide my people to the right path for they know not what they are doing" (Badawi, 2010:67). This explains the kind of attitude required of Muslims, which does not limit mercy to only among themselves or certain categories of people, but rather extends it to all mankind (ibid). Badawi (2010:67) emphasises that people should not treat one another based on wrongdoing, but that there should be room for forgiveness, and when the Prophet was asked how many times an offender should be forgiven, the Prophet answered "Seventy times a day".

³³ A compilation of hadiths concerning the person and character of the Islamic prophet by Al-Tabarani (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Tabarani>).

³⁴ A city in western Saudi Arabia (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/580647/Al-Taif>).

The Islamic teaching on compassion is not limited to human beings. The Quran, in referring to the Prophet Muhammad, says “We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures” (Surah 21:107). In the original Arabic the word used for creatures is *alameen*. *Alameen* is a plural of *alam*, which means world. So *alameen* means worlds or universe (Badawi, 2010:68). Therefore, the use of *alameen* for universe shows the inclusion of other creatures, meaning the mission of the Prophet of showing mercy was not limited to humankind, but included all things that are in the universe (ibid). Badawi further explains that, in the collection of Hadith³⁵ in Bukhari, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH³⁶) disclosed that a woman was doomed to hell because of her cruel attitude towards her pet, a cat, as she imprisoned her cat without feeding it or allowing it to go out and search for food (Badawi, 2010:68). According to the Prophet, kindness to animals or pets is a way that one can gain forgiveness for one’s sins, making it explicit that a person who shows compassion to a thirsty dog by giving the dog some water would obtain forgiveness of his sins from God (ibid). In slaughtering an animal for food, it has to be done with compassion, making sure that it is done with as little pain as possible. The animal should not be slaughtered in the presence of others (Badawi, 2010:68). This is an indication that compassion is indeed central in Islam and involves both human beings and animals as beneficiaries.

The teaching of compassion in Islam is in respect to human rights. Despite the fact that the concept of human rights originated from Western European thought, leading to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, Islamic scholars support it, but only on the basis of their own religious beliefs (Oh, 2008:410-411). For compassion to be practised successfully, human rights must be respected. Oh asserts that Abul A’la Maududi and Sayyid Qutb, two prominent Islamic scholars of the twentieth century, freely entered into the global discussion on human rights (Oh, 2008:411). Considered among the most conservative Islamic thinkers of the century, Maududi and Qutb not only concurred with the idea of human rights, but also acclaimed human rights as an expression of Islamic values, calling for a dialogue across traditions perceiving human rights as a subject open to

³⁵ Hadith is the record of the traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, revered and received as a major source of religious law and moral guidance, second only to the authority of the Quran, the holy book of Islam (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251132/Hadith>).

³⁶ This is a revered statement that always goes after the mention of any accepted Islamic prophet. It means “Peace Be Upon Him”.

discussion (ibid). The absence of a language of rights in the Qur'an does not mean that Islam and its religious traditions do not concur with human rights. The language and the concept of human rights have been adopted by most traditional and conservative Islamic scholars, including Qutb and Maududa (Oh, 2008: 418). These scholars defended Islam as a model of excellence in human rights, despite the fact that the language of rights is not in the Quran; they embrace and incorporate the concept of human rights in their writings on Islam. Nevertheless, scholars like Donnelly reject the compatibility of Islam and human rights on the same grounds, namely that the language of rights is not in the Quran (ibid). According to Childs and Williams (1997:55), the involvement of Qutb and Maududa in writings on human rights was not only an indication of a need for participation in the global discussion, but also to resist some more powerful colonial nations who have worked out strategies for destroying Muslim society and making its past of no worth. At the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, many of the representatives from the Muslim-dominated countries indicated their disagreement, especially with the rights regarding marriage and freedom of religion, arguing that the right to marry outside of one's religion is against Islamic tradition (Oh, 2008:418).

Reinbold (2010:455) says that the "materialism" that the enlightenment thinkers based their conceptions of humanity on has been criticised by Qutb, who asserted that the materialism from science and biology rather than from a religious worldview has failed in the cultivation of equality, liberty and brotherhood between human beings. It has failed to give the comprehensive and real freedom needed for every person with respect to the dignity of individuals within a community (ibid). Qutb says that the conceptualisation of humankind by the materialists strips human beings of the necessary qualities that differentiate them from animals, and creates a society that is based on race, colour, nationalism, etc. (Reinbold, 2010:455). Qutb affirms that material comforts are never elevated and made as the highest value at the expense of human attributes such as honour, freedom, family with its responsibilities, and moral values (ibid:456).

Noury *et al.* (2008:103) indicate their desire to strengthen the interreligious relationships worldwide by walking together toward peace. Islam, they say, comes

from an Arabic word *Salam*, which means “peace”. They strongly denounce whatever form of violence coming from whatever source, especially that generated in the name of religion (ibid). Religion should stand as a tool for peace building and not serve as warfare (Noury *et al.*, 2008:103). They believe from the perspective of the Quran and the teaching of the prophet Mohammad that human beings are created to recognise each other (Sura 49:13). They reveal that the universal message of Islam is an invitation to work for the welfare of all, and it is for this reason that they are calling for continuity in the struggle for interreligious cooperation, to recognise each other beyond all biases (Noury *et al.*, 2008:103). Noury *et al.* (2008:103-104) affirm that diversity among people is a gift of God; it is not disunity, when each is recognised it makes room for wisdom and the prophet urges that knowledge be sought wherever it can be found. They are advocating unity so that the diversity will be seen as an asset, not a weapon (Noury *et al.*, 2008:104).

Dundonon *et al.* (2008:105), in their presentation at the Interfaith Youth Forum in London in 2008, began by quoting the words of Cyrus the Great from 539 BCE, where Cyrus proclaims his heart’s desire to stop people from oppressing others, from forced labour, announcing the freedom of religion. Affirming that Islam means peace, Dundonon *et al.* (2008) explained that peace has to do with inner freedom and the spiritual elevation of an individual. With this in mind, they defined human rights as the rights of an individual being treated fairly, equally and with respect, without prejudice, violence, injustice or discrimination (Dundonon *et al.*, 2008:106). They explained that the teachings of Islam revealed that the true identity of human beings can be equated to the divine, as human being was created in the image of God (Dundonon *et al.*, 2008:106). And these human beings are equal before God, regardless of racial, cultural or ideological differences (Gentile, 2008:108). Gentile boldly proclaims, “We are the ones we have been waiting for. Justice, truth, and sincerity begin with us” (ibid).

If the Qur’an and the Hadith are to be believed and practised, Muslims have no choice but to turn toward compassionate living, as it is what God requires of every Muslim (Engineer, 2009:86). Engineer indicates that compassion is at the centre of Islam as its teaching permeates the entire Qur’an and the Hadith, but noted with great dismay the unfortunate shift in what is supposed to be known of Islam as a

religion of compassion to what is now known of Islam as a religion of “Jihad” (ibid). He explains that the concept of “Jihad” was distorted by the rulers to mean war as a means of enhancing their power, which has resulted to much bloodshed in Islamic history, but “Jihad” according to Qur’anic terminology never meant to wage war nor engage in bloodshed (Engineer, 2009:87). It is high time, Engineer argues, for this kind of “Jihad” that has introduced so many faces of terrorists engaging in killing the innocent in the name of Islam to be corrected, and for perfect correction, compassion will have to assume its central place in Islam (ibid).

The need for a universal compassion prompted by the fact that the principle of compassion is found in all religions was stressed at the 2012 United States Islamic World Forum (Armstrong, 2012:3). The conveners included religious leaders from all over the world to discuss and draw up a charter of compassion for the need of restoring it to its rightful position in all religions (ibid). Karen Armstrong states the consensus of the leaders at the meeting concerning the religious position on compassion: “the principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves” (Armstrong, 2012:3). She further indicates that, as a forum, they acknowledged that there was failure among all religions in relation to living a compassionate life, especially in relation to members of other religions that have one way or the other inflicted or increased human misery in the name of religion (ibid). Because of this confession, the following were outlined as the conclusion (Armstrong, 2012:3-4):

1. To restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion.
2. To return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate.
3. To ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information and cultures.
4. To encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity.
5. To cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings— even those regarded as enemies.

The cross-disciplinary study is crucial in considering the subject of compassion from a Christian theological perspective. The study reveals the co-pathic contribution of African anthropology, Psychology, and Islamic religious studies, indicating the fact

that compassion is a cherished concept that can enrich Christian/Muslim relationship thus fighting against dysfunctional exclusion within them.

3.4. Conclusion

I introduced this chapter with an offering of second-order change (use of compassion) instead of first-order change (use of dialogue). My second-order change is a reframing of the common use of dialogue between two persons or groups of people from different backgrounds. The chapter explained the concept of co-pathy, which culminates in the term compassion. Unlike dialogue, compassion works among the inhabitants in a community. Its usage requires reciprocation among the people, as both the giver and the receiver have responsibilities. This is found in the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31) in relation to the golden rule. The chapter discovered the relevant understandings of compassion from the perspectives of Christians and Muslims, as both believe and teach compassion to their adherents. This has become a strong motivation in the application of compassion between Christians and Muslims in Gombe State in Northern Nigeria.

The relevance of compassion was seen from doing cross-disciplinary research in the fields of African anthropology, psychology and Islamic religious studies. The anthropology of the African traditional beliefs strongly upholds human dignity, which values compassion as a recommended virtue of lifestyle. The practice of compassion reveals that those who engage in it enjoy good psychological and physical health. Islam teaches compassion as a strong virtue that every Muslim must hang on to. The result of the cross-disciplinary study motivates the application of compassion as means of fighting the challenge of dysfunctional exclusion among Christians and Muslims thus providing a chance for peaceful coexistence and interreligious understanding. The next chapter will explore a co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious understanding.

CHAPTER 4

A CO-PATHIC THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR INTERRELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING IN DEALING WITH DYSFUNCTIONAL EXCLUSION

4.1. Introduction

In connection with the broad focus of the study, *the dysfunctional exclusion within Christian/Muslim relationships in Gombe State of Northern Nigeria: A co-pathic approach*, this chapter explores a co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious understanding between Christians and Muslims. The approach follows the procedure of the goals of the study stated in Chapter 1 above (see 1.5).

In accordance with the four tasks of practical theology proposed by Richard Osmer for a research methodology, this chapter deals with the normative task that uses some concepts from a theological point of view to interpret particular situations. The normative task answers the question, *what ought to be going on?* In view of this, the chapter focuses on creating a norm for interreligious understanding that will lead towards cordial relationships between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria in general. Therefore the chapter is structured in the following order: the understanding of a co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious relations; the compassionate earthly ministry of Jesus and the challenge of interreligious relations; understanding the theology of interreligious relations; and the challenge of interreligious relations.

4.2. The Understanding of a Co-pathic Theological Foundation for Interreligious Relations

The understanding of a theological foundation for co-pathy calls for an explanation of the theology of compassion. And this would mean understanding compassion from the divine point of view. Theology, according to Sallie McFague, is right thinking and acting in accordance with God's will. It is an experience of the daily practical life of human beings directed towards one another in accordance with the will of God (McFague, 2001:25). She believes that theology is all about God, and whoever does it engages in interpreting who God is and what he does among people (McFague, 2001:40). Therefore, in talking about the theology of compassion, compassion must first be understood in connection with God. In doing the theology of compassion,

Oliver Davies understood God as one who is compassionate and whose incarnation of the compassionate and liberating essence was manifest in Christ, who became the embodiment of the compassion of God (Davies, 2001:250). He explains compassion from the ontological point of view, asserting that through Christians' 'being' with God through Christ, they participate in the compassionate and liberation exercise of God's compassion among people. The continuity of the compassion of God must therefore be sustained by Christians, as God is known as the most compassionate, urging his people to be compassionate towards the widows and orphans, and strangers. Jesus was a compassion of God and lived a compassionate life throughout his earthly ministry. And Christians are the ones to continue living the compassion of Christ (Davies, 2001:251). This section therefore will focus on the compassionate God, Jesus the compassion of God, and Christians as compassion of Christ to their neighbours.

4.2.1. The Compassionate God

There is no doubt that the bible contains the witness of God's love and compassion for his people. Despite his ambivalent feelings on the attitude of the people and the need to punish them, the compassionate God is always willing to transform his punitive desire into a state of blessing (Tiemeyer, 2006:191). Throughout their history, the Israelites experienced the justice and compassion of God. In exercising justice, God punishes sin and whenever people fall into trouble he shows compassion by coming to the people's aid (O'Connell, 2009:66). God is gracious and compassionate to his people, and when they come back to him in repentance and love he responds in deliverance (ibid).

The compassionate God, through incarnation, put on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ as solidarity with the suffering of human beings. Stassen (2012:68) understands the incarnation of God through Jesus Christ as a radical action of entering into the community of a human life of distrust and deception, shame and power domination, taking the form of man – a sinner. He explains that such incarnation is the invitation of people into the compassion and deliverance of God (ibid). The explanation of Stassen concurs with what Raj (2010:79) noted, that the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ demonstrated that the compassionate God is among his creatures to intervene and interact in human situations. The sacrificial

work of Christ of self-giving on the cross is the culminated expression of the compassion of God for his creation (ibid). O’Connell (2009:65) affirms that, for every divine activity in the bible, there is a compassionate God behind it who is always there to liberate and transform the situation. He argues the presence of God as the compassion of God (ibid). Raj (2010:81) is therefore right to have understood the earthly ministry of Jesus – the miracles – as the mighty works of the compassionate God in his kingdom among the people, where the situations of the people received the compassion of God. Herrmann (2013:217) notes that compassion and justice represent the reign of God both in the bible and today, and the allowance of these gives way to the reign of God among his people. For the continuity of what God is doing in the reign of his compassion and justice, he uses human beings through their various callings and walks of life, to bring liberation to those who are being hurt, marginalised and excluded (Herrmann, 2013:218). But when the people of God turn away from the practice of compassion and justice, they become perpetrators of injustice, making the poor and the aliens excluded from the community (ibid). As a compassionate God, he instructs and desires to see his people live with a compassionate heart for one another.

4.2.2. Jesus the Compassion of God

Compassion, according to Keener, reflects the character of Jesus, and therefore becomes his motivation for his ministry that involves, among others, healing and feeding (Keener, 2009:308). In concurring with Keener, Voorwinde (2011:24, 28) affirms that compassion is one of the major motivating factors for the ministry of Jesus, especially in the Gospel of Matthew, where compassion dominates the emotions of Jesus and He is referred to as “the Compassionate King”. He further explains that the Gospel of Mark describe the emotions of Jesus as the “Man of Sorrows”; the Gospel of Luke as “the Sympathetic Son”; and the Gospel of John as “the Loving Lord” (Voorwinde, 2011:57, 119, 151).

“For God so loved the world...”, Bruner (2012:210-211) explains the love of God in the words of Chrysostom:

For great indeed and infinite is the distance between the two entities. He who is without end, or beginning of existence, Infinite Greatness, loved those who were of earth and ashes, creatures laden with sins innumerable. And the act which springs from the love is equally

indicative of its vastness. For God gave not a servant, or an Angel, or an Archangel, but His Son. Again, had He had many sons, and given one, this would have been a very great gift; but now He hath given His Only Begotten Son.

The compassionate God who does not desire anyone to perish shows a universal love by sending His Son with a universal gift of salvation to offer to everyone who accepts His Son (Bruner, 2012:211). Jesus understood the mission of his coming and declared “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). According to Witherington III (2001:290), the statement of Jesus indicates the purpose of his incarnation, not just what the Son of Man would come to do (Witherington III, 2001:290). Sturdevant (2014:30) understands and argues the purpose of incarnation according to the Gospel of St. John as psychagogy³⁷. He indicates three examples from the Gospel of John that points to his reason for asserting the purpose of the incarnation as psychagogical. In the first place, Jesus works with a particular individual (John 3:1-21); secondly, he was involved in teaching anonymous crowds (John 10:1-18); and the third example is the teaching of his disciples in private (John 13:1-20) (Sturdevant, 2014:33). Donald Capps titled his book, *Jesus the Village Psychiatrist*, and explains that Jesus was many things to his contemporaries, including his disciples, but one of the most central services that caught the attention of the public was healing (Capps, 2008:xi). The point remains the same that Jesus came to serve the people.

The compassionate heart of Jesus, like his Father, forgoes the advantage of his deity for the choice of solidarity with human beings (Silva, 2005:99). According to Karkkainen (2013:165), the indication of the “emptiness” of self by the incarnation of Christ does not imply a renouncing or a temporal switching off of divine powers. It rather means a voluntary engagement with submission to the will of God (Karkkainen, 2013:165). God’s compassionate and loving heart manifested in his decision not only to live with human beings, but to suffer with them (Kostenberger, 2004:40). Jesus’ suffering on the cross was an act of compassion for human beings, as he compassionately prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they

³⁷ According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, psychagogy is a psychotherapeutic method of influencing behaviour by suggesting desirable life goals (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/medical/psychagogy>).

are doing” (Karkkainen, 2013:334). And his sacrificial death should not be likened to the “scapegoat” theory, as the suffering and death of Jesus were a voluntary and loving surrender in line with the mission of his coming (Schnackenburg, 2002:196). The compassionate God shows his love by sending his only Son among the needy as a practical compassion, leaving the Christians with the challenge for the continuity of Christ’s compassion among the neighbours. Jesus’s compassionate ministry will be discussed in 4.3.

4.2.3. The Christians and Neighbours

“And who is my neighbour?” was the triggering question directed to Jesus Christ by an expert in the law (Luke 10:29). According to Batson *et al.* (2001), the answer has a dual edge. In the first place, the parable commends the universal compassion of the Samaritan, who identified with the dying situation of a stranger, an out-group member. And in the second place, the parable condemns the piety of the two religious leaders – the priest and the Levite, whose religiousness made them ignore the dying man, choosing to pass by on the other side (Batson *et al.*, 2001:39). Cornelius explains that, despite the fact that it is not clear whether the two religious leaders thought the man was dead or alive, they were very much aware of Leviticus 22:4, which warns against touching a corpse to prevent being defiled (Cornelius, 2013:3). Cornelius (2013) asserts that the religion, self-preservation and self-interest of the priest and the Levite caused them to by-pass the man in need. O’Connell notes that, while the priest and the Levite ignored the dying man in favour of the ritual purity laws, the Samaritan ignored the ethnic and religious animosity between his people and the Jews to save the dying man (O’Connell, 2009:69).

Following the story in the parable, it can be said that one may be religious either extrinsically or intrinsically in connection with universal compassion; the man whose religious orientation is extrinsic focuses his attention on the self in granting safety, social standing and endorsement for a chosen way of life. While to have an intrinsic religious orientation leads towards a unification of being, taking seriously the commandment of brotherhood, striving to surpass all forms of self-centred needs and exclusion (Batson *et al.*, 1999:446). As the extrinsic formulation is compatible with prejudice, the intrinsic form rules out enmity and contempt. This means that it can be said that intrinsic religion results in seeing anyone who has need as a

neighbour, whereas extrinsic religion does not (ibid). With the story of the Good Samaritan, intrinsic religion would go with the Good Samaritan, while extrinsic religion goes with the priests and Levites (Batson *et al.*, 2001:40). Therefore intrinsic religious devoutness produces a universal compassion, rejecting all forms of dysfunctional exclusion in the community and accepting all those in need as neighbours who require attention.

According to Luther's Theology of Love, a Christian has been described as "Christ" to the neighbour (Karkkainen, 2004a:101). Jesus came purposely to serve others, not to be served by others; this was seen in the character of his ministry, his engagement in preaching, teaching, healing, feeding, comforting, etc. (Matthew 20:28). He lived his earthly life advocating and modelling a lifestyle that was aimed at bringing restorative justice to the people he encountered (Johnson, 2012:125). In further explaining the earthly ministry of Jesus, Johnson (ibid) affirms that the mission of Jesus' ministry was set against the social injustice of his time, therefore he came to preach the good news to the poor, declare freedom to the captives, give sight to the blind, to free the oppressed, and to proclaim the kingdom of God among the people (Luke 4:18-19). Then, shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus Christ, in one of his parabolic teachings, communicated a message of caring for the poor, the hungry, the thirsty and the imprisoned (Matthew 25:35-40). Johnson notes that Jesus' ministry advocates justice for the poor, the imprisoned and the marginalised, shows compassion to the people who were shown injustice, and enjoins his followers to learn from him (Johnson, 2012:125). Therefore, for the continuity of the ministry of serving others, Christians must imitate Christ in embarking on the work of liberation. Karkkainen (2004a:101) made a point when he asserted that all works and services, with the exception of those for faith, should be directed towards others. He believes that God does not need from people any works regarding himself; what He needs is only faith through his Son Jesus Christ that alone suffices (ibid). Therefore God ought to be served through serving others, as all work and life should be turned to one's neighbour.

Love for one's neighbour is not to be understood primarily as an emotional intimacy, but more of a practical nature and seeking the daily well-being of all members of the society (Carter, 2008:39). Based on the biblical instructions on the love for neighbours and enemies, believers have no option but to do their best in extending

their love and compassion beyond the church and their community to involve all those who are considered members of out-groups, including enemies (Batson *et al.*, 1999:445). The life of Mother Teresa is an example of religious devotion that advocates for universal compassion. She believed that the engagement of Christians in loving neighbours should be done with the conviction that it is an engagement in God's work and that the neighbours to be loved belong to God (Muggeridge, 1971:67). This calls on Christians to put themselves completely in the influence of Jesus, to be able to think Jesus' thoughts in their minds, and the love of Jesus exercised to the outcast will continue in the Christians' love for their neighbours today (*ibid.*).

Mother Teresa advocated for kindness and compassion to be shown to those who need it, that Christians should be a living expression of the kindness and compassion of God to others, especially the outcast (Muggeridge, 1971:69). Mother Teresa asserted that the biggest "disease" that people are suffering from is exclusion, the feeling of being uncared for, unwanted, and completely deserted. She said if love was the greatest commandment for Christians to put into practice, then the greatest evil is to ignore loving and compassion towards neighbours (Muggeridge, 1971:73-74). Medicine is available for diseases but not for this terrible "disease" of being unwanted and excluded, unless there is willingness to engage in the service of love from the heart and to want to include those excluded, such "disease" will remain uncured (Muggeridge, 1971:99). Mother Teresa explains that, what she and her team do is based on the challenging message of Christ, that he is hungry, he is thirsty, he is a stranger, he needed clothes, he is sick, and he is in prison; this implies that to all those in need of such services, Christians are to serve them as if serving Christ (Muggeridge, 1971:112).

One of the ideas in the theology of Luther is his insistence on the presence of Christ in faith, in other words, Christ in his person and work stands present in the faith held by believers (Karkkainen, 2004a:105). This speaks of the term 'deification', which means the 'participation' of believers in Christ, which is the result of the love of God; ordinarily, human beings can never participate in Christ based on their own human love, and it therefore is the love of God that effects deification (*ibid.*). It can clearly be said that the participation of Christians in Christ resulted from the divine presence in the believers as love (Karkkainen, 2004a:105). In affirming Luther's theology of love,

Herrmann stresses that Christians must let everything they have to serve neighbours, pointing out that neighbours should not only be seen as people in need, but also those who would perhaps one day be brothers and sisters in Christ (Herrmann, 2013:220-221). As salvation is a free gift, there is nothing a person can do to earn it apart from having faith in God, then the work of faith (love) is needed by neighbours, for man is created and born not for self but for the sake of others (Karkkainen, 2004a:107). If what a Christian has is not used in serving his neighbour, then the neighbour is robbed of what he deserves from a Christian according to the will of God (ibid).

When Paul says “to live is Christ”, Witherington III suggests “to be” as the possible meaning, implying that one’s life is Christ, means Christ, and depends on Christ. He argues that the anticipation of Paul’s deliverance is for the sake of manifesting the works of Christ among Christians and others (Witherington III, 2011:90). Therefore a Christian is a ‘work of Christ’, in fact more than a ‘Christ’ to the neighbour; engaging in doing what Christ does (Karkkainen, 2004a:107). Christ living in believers through faith should be a triggered towards doing good works, as they live their faith in his work (Karkkainen, 2004a:108). As has been observed according to the nature of the love of God, which overflows, seeking for people who in themselves are not worthy to be loved – the love of the cross, turning to the direction where good cannot be found but where good can be conferred upon a bad and needy person (ibid:108-109). This love of the cross is the love of God that gives the right perspective to Christians in considering other people. Luther sums up the point this way: ‘sinners therefore are attractive on the basis that they are loved, not that they are loved because they are attractive’ (Karkkainen, 2004a:109). Jesus lived among his enemies, showed his love to them and taught his followers to do the same (Bonhoeffer, 1996:27). Volf argues that, as Christians live among their enemies, they should embrace them with love, just as God has embraced everyone through his Son Jesus Christ (Volf, 1996:9). His suffering on the cross is solidarity, doing that for the sake of others, not himself (ibid:22-23). Therefore all others are identified and recognised in his solidarity on the cross (Volf, 1996:24). If Christians avoid their enemies, they are equally avoiding their mission, because their mission and work is found among the enemies, the others (Bonhoeffer, 1996:27).

According to Luther, the Golden Rule, which says “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12), is a natural law and also the principle of the scripture. Being a natural law, it is likewise a spiritual law. As both natural and spiritual law it is the foundation of all other laws (Karkkainen, 2004a:109). Luther is critical about the interpretation of the Golden Rule that urges one to first of all love oneself in order to be able to love the other. In contrast, Luther’s conviction is that people already know how to care for and love themselves; what they lack is the desire and willingness to care and love the other person, especially when they are aware that nothing good is coming to them in return (Karkkainen, 2004a:110-111). Naturally, the tendency of human love is to work out good things for oneself instead of for others. As long as believers first use each good thing for themselves, that means they are not concerned with their neighbours. True love focuses on others, not the self; in fact, for Luther it is a “hatred of yourself” (ibid, 111). Jesus is the perfect example worth emulating, as will be seen in the next section.

4.3. A Compassionate Earthly Ministry of Jesus and the Challenge of Interreligious Relations

According to Stone, compassion has to do with “suffering with”, an idea which has made him to argue that the appropriate place for the theological understanding of the practice of compassion is with Jesus Christ (Stone, 1996:xi). This could further be explained by the concept of incarnation, where God through his Son, Jesus Christ, in the form of man has come “to suffer with human beings”, taking upon himself their suffering (ibid, xii). Stassen (2012:68) concurs with Stone, and describes the incarnational understanding of the cross as what Jesus Christ did and taught, arguing against the theories that exclude the cross from the teachings and life of Jesus. He explains that the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross is the consequence of his compassion for humankind (Stassen, 2012:79). In the suffering of Jesus Christ, Vogt sees a practice of compassion as the passion of Jesus Christ, which Christians are called upon to consider as a model for having a successful suffering and dying well (Vogt, 2004:135). As the normal case is, one would expect Jesus to be shown compassion during his suffering; but the reverse was the case, as Simon Peter, some women of Jerusalem who wailed for him, and a thief on the cross benefited from the compassion of Jesus Christ (ibid:145-146). This fact of Jesus’

practice of compassion during his suffering and death suggests for the contemporary discussion that it is not just a matter of having a dying person being cared for, but more importantly what expression of compassion the dying person needs to show (Vogt, 2004:145). The argument of Stassen of understanding compassion from the cross is convincing, as he explains the thought that the cross is a confrontation and judgment about sin, yet he believes that the cross is also a place of compassion, repentance and forgiveness (Stassen, 2012:76). Therefore I would like to argue for the understanding of compassion from the earthly ministry of Jesus, considering him as the model of compassion, and his exercise of compassion beyond his boundaries.

4.3.1. Jesus the Model of Compassion

According to the Gospel account of Matthew, the reason for the compassion of Jesus is the state of helplessness of the crowd and how they were being harassed, a situation described as sheep without shepherd (Matthew 9:36). Such a situation of being as sheep without a shepherd implies that the people of God are lacking God-appointed leaders (Keener, 2009:308). In the Hebrew Scripture, such people of God are often described as “sheep without a shepherd”, as seen in the following references – Numbers 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; 2 Chronicles 18:16; Ezekiel 34:5 (Keener, 2009:309). Garland explains that the abandonment of the sheep exposes the faithlessness of the shepherds, who failed in their responsibility of giving the people spiritual nurture and direction (Garland, 1993:109). This calls for the compassionate Lord to care for and shepherd his people by himself (Ezekiel 34:11-16), to feed them (Ezekiel 34:2-3), heal them (Ezekiel 34:4), bring them back when they are lost (Ezekiel 34:4-6), and perform miracles for them at their exodus from Egypt (Micah 7:14-15). The audience of Matthew, the Jews, are very familiar with these Old Testament messages, and know that this mission has been fulfilled by Jesus (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6). Therefore, this reported statement of Jesus about “sheep without shepherd” implies that there was a failure by the religious leaders of Israel, who chose to rule in their own way, neglecting and disobeying the commission of God (Keener, 2009:309).

In relation to the discharge of Jesus’ compassion on the crowd that led to the feeding of four thousand people (Matthew 15:32-38), Keener (2009:419) asserts that the passage does not directly suggest that the crowd were complaining of hunger, but

possibly Matthew implies that Jesus, like his Father, is aware of the needs of his people even before they ask. This was clearly stated in Jesus' compassionate message before the feeding of the crowd, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way" (Matthew 15:32). Schnackenburg (2002:152) notes that Jesus' compassion was motivated by the fact that the people had been with him for three days without eating anything, yet they did not complain of hunger. But Jesus, being a compassionate saviour of the people, had compassion on them, fed them and sent them to their homes in good health (Schnackenburg, 2002:152-153).

Another incidence that introduced a scene of act of compassion by Jesus was the healing of the leper. As the Bible says, "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured" (Mark 1:41-42). According to Keener, before his healing, the leper was in a hopeless situation that seems permanent. In fact it is probably true that the biblical leprosy is not what is called leprosy today, that it possibly may have been an assortment of chronic skin problems that kept the leper isolated from the public audience (Keener, 2009:259). Wenell (2006:153) asserts that there is a problem in defining leprosy, indicating that there are many diseases associated with the English word "leprosy", one of which is Hansen's disease. Capps (2008:40) describes Hansen's disease as:

a progressive infectious disease that attacks the skin, flesh, nerves, and so forth; is characterized by nodules, ulcers, white scaly scabs, deformities due to deterioration of body parts, and the eventual loss of sensation; and is apparently communicated only after long and close contact.

Capps explains that, because of the association of other chronic skin infections with leprosy, the healing of leprosy becomes complicated, as it is uncertain what the real affliction was (ibid). Wenell (2006:153) notes that the Greek term that has been translated as leprosy is probably an indication of a wider understanding of skin disorders. He therefore affirms that "leprosy" may be better explained as a general term that describes chronic, dry flaking skin diseases (ibid). According to McColl and Ascough (2009:3), such a disease that is referred to in the Bible with the Greek term *lepra* was a disfiguring disease that isolates victims from their families and any

association in the community, including religious practices. The disease was given the designation of “unclean”, and the victims often suffered humiliations and censures (ibid). This describes the situation of the leper who approached Jesus from the crowd with a request for cleansing. Jesus’ compassion for the leper pointed to the fact that he was not only ready to heal the man, but to touch what was considered untouchable, declared what was unclean to be clean, and included what was excluded (Keener, 2009:260). According to Stassen (2012:70), by touching the leper, Jesus dramatically entered into the exclusive life of the leper, welcoming him into the physical community. Stassen notes that by touching the leper, Jesus made him clean and included him in the community (ibid). The compassion of Jesus manifested in the public sharing of the leper’s uncleanness, as Jesus reached out and touched the man, resulting in a change in the leper’s status (Keener, 2009:260).

The practical discharge of Jesus’ compassion in his earthly ministry was also felt among adherents of other religions.

4.3.2. The Compassion of Jesus among adherents of other Religions

Jurgen Buhler, the executive director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, using the current situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, asked a question, what would Jesus do? He asserts that a strong guide for answering such a question is by looking at how Jesus dealt with the non-Jews of his time (Buhler, 2014:6). He explains that there are striking parallels between the Samaritans in Jesus’ day and the Palestinians of today. During the time of Jesus, the Jews and the Samaritans were living in sharp hostility, to the extent that the name “Samaritan” became a curse for the Jews (Buhler, 2014:7). It was during this hostile relationship that Jesus introduced a refreshingly different tone towards the Samaritans, as the Gospels surprisingly record the compassion and love of Jesus shown to them in healing, going into their community (ibid). The Jews considered the Samaritans as enemies, but Jesus did not. Rather, he reached out to them with compassion, using them as examples to the Jews and envisioning the Samaritans as part of the harvest (Buhler, 2014:7). Buhler argues that the unique approach of Jesus to the Samaritans can be of help in facing the challenges of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today (ibid:9). A heart of compassion was demonstrated by Jesus towards the Samaritans, who were hated by most of the Jews. The Samaritans were privileged to be the only

people apart from the Jews who experienced the personal touch of Jesus (Buhler, 2014:9). Buhler encourages the Church today to get involved by showing similar compassion in reaching out to the Palestinian people (ibid). He affirms that Jesus Christ, in his earthly ministry, set a remarkable standard for Christians today for how to reach out to people of the other, who are neglected on the ground of religion, ethnicity and race. They need to be reached out to with compassion and love.

According to Nissen, the Gospel of Matthew reveals three remarkable stories depicting some individuals and a group of persons from among the Gentiles who showed interest in Jesus and sought him (Nissen, 2003:322). The first was a group known as the wise men from the east (Matthew 2:1-12). The second is the story of the centurion found in Matthew 8:5-13, and the third, the story of the Canaanite women in Matthew 15:21-28. The courageous search for Jesus by the wise men from the east and the exercise of faith by the centurion and the Canaanite woman suggest that Christians do not have to feel superior to non-Christians, seeing that these non-Christians have their own ways and means of encountering Jesus (Nissen, 2003:323). Strong faith was exercised by the three seekers of Jesus; the last two stories carry the comments of Jesus in his praise of their faith (Matthew 8:10; Matthew 15:28). Sankamo (2012: 141) adds that other involvements of Jesus in extending his compassion and healing to the Gentiles include the Gerasene demoniac, whose story suggests that he was a Gentile even though it is not clearly expressed in the texts. The meeting of the needs of the Canaanite woman, the Centurion and the Gerasene demoniac indicate concretely the events where Jesus got involved in assisting people outside the Jewish community (Sankamo, 2012:141). This suggest that the earthly ministry of Jesus was not confined to the adherents of Judaism, although the Bible says he came for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). But his ministry was later opened to the Gentiles, as declared by Jesus, "I say to you that many will come from the east and west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). This implies the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of God for salvation, as Jesus' working of miracles among the Gentiles implies the reaching out of the reign of God to them (Karkkainen, 2003:41-42). Jesus' inclusive ministry is seen in his attitude towards the Gentiles, as he occasionally crosses the Jewish borders and religion to meet and minister among the Gentiles.

In the parable of the great banquet (Luke 14:15-24; Matthew 22:1-14), Sankamo affirms that the first group of invitees who refused to attend the feast are traditionally argued to be the Pharisees and the religious establishment, whereas the group who surprisingly fill the banquet hall are the outcasts and the Gentiles (Sankamo, 2012:245). Similarly, in the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32; Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19), the message of having the birds of the air enjoying the shade of the gigantic tree seems to refer to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the restored kingdom of God (ibid, 252). The idea of the inclusive ministry of Jesus has been noted by Draper (2009: 2) when he asserted the importance of imitating Jesus in his open and inclusive community, where sinners and outcasts were welcomed in his love and compassion as he interacted and ate with them. The open and inclusive community serves as the foundation for a new ethical theory and practice (ibid).

In his highlights of the two stories about Jesus, Barker (2010:1-3) explains that the first story is a common view among Christians, who were convinced by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, his miraculous ministry, his sacrificial death, his miraculous resurrection, his institution of the church and the mission to carry out the good news into the whole world (Barker, 2010:1). The second story is the one believed by some individuals or groups who understand Jesus in their own ways with a radical reinterpretation of the significance of Jesus in view of their commitment to their religions (Barker, 2010:2). The second story about Jesus has been highlighted by Karkkainen (2013:236-237) where he indicates the engagement of the Christian theology of religion with the four living religions – Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism with regard to Christology. He noted that the role of Jesus Christ is well known and believed in those religions (Karkkainen, 2013:238).

The reverence of Jesus therefore is not a uniquely subject only in Christianity, but also in other religions (Barker, 2010:1). For instance, in Islam Jesus is respected on the understanding of his supernatural conception and is believed to be the servant of God who was sent with a message from God (Quran 2:87). Muslims agree with the miraculous life of Jesus, they believe that the peculiarities of the miracles began when Jesus was a baby, as he spoke in the cradle being empowered by God (Hassan, 1987:29). The spoken words say, “In deed, I am the servant of Allah, He has given me the scripture and made me a prophet” (Quran 19:29, 30). According to Islamic teaching, after these spoken words of Jesus in the cradle, he did not speak

again until he attained the natural age of speaking, when wisdom and eloquence were granted to him by God (Katheer, 2001:334). Jesus therefore is regarded in Islam as a prominent prophet who is highly respected and his name revered with the following words: Hazrut Isa – revered Jesus! Or Isa alaihissalaam – Jesus, ‘peace be upon him’ (Deedat, 1976:20). They understood Jesus as a Muslim, just as they believe his predecessors (Moses, Abraham, Noah, and Adam) were (Quran 42:13). They teach that Jesus’ religion was later changed to Christianity by Constantine, who eventually moderated some religious rites and customs to match the new religion (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2000:171). Despite this view, Muslims still hold Jesus in high regard as one of their prominent prophets, the predecessor of Prophet Muhammad (Maurer, 1997:48).

In his earthly life, Jesus demonstrated love and respect towards people he encountered (Nissen, 2003:332-333). It is in this conviction that Nissen agrees with Kosuke Koyama and argues for a theology of religion that must be opened to the faith of non-Christians, but bearing in mind that it must be Christocentric in nature, based on the crucified Christ (Nissen, 2003:333). He further explains that Christian theology must show respect and humility in its approach to people from other religions, seeing that the search for the truth or for God by people from different religious groups is a journey, which is seen in the bible (Acts 17:27; John 1:38) as something positive (Nissen, 2003:334). And, by the way, regardless of the religious search for God by humanity, God is actually on his own search, coming towards them (ibid). As the compassion of Jesus was not restricted to the Jews in his time, it is also not confined to Christians today; therefore there is a need for a theological application of compassion by Christians to help in the fight against dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims.

4.4. Understanding the Theology of Interreligious Relations

Lee identifies two theological perspectives of “God-centred theology”, the evangelical “theocentric theology”, which emphasises the importance of repentance, and salvation, suggesting the need for the salvation of the world through professing faith in God (Lee, 2006:271). The second view is held by religious pluralists, who offer a perspective of viewing God relatively, having a universal perception of Christ, with a pluralistic understanding of salvation, without considering the uniqueness of the

Christian good news of salvation (ibid). This second view argues for the availability of salvation in other religions, rejecting the fact that salvation is unique in Christianity through Jesus Christ as taught in the bible (Lee, 2006:271). With these theological perspectives in mind, the section will discuss the understanding of religious pluralism; Christians and the religious pluralism; and then Trinity and religious pluralism.

4.4.1. Understanding Religious Pluralism

In defining religious pluralism, Bowden (2005:13-14) identifies three perceptions of it:

1. Religious pluralism can be seen from the sense of having the three great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as a monolithic block, with other religions that are met on the ground described as idolatry or superstition by the Abrahamic faiths, including other new religions that emerged or were discovered during the course of history.
2. The second understanding of religious pluralism can be perceived from the absence of the monolithic block of the three monotheistic religions, which resulted to the development of different views and traditions within each religion. This has led to differences and rival forms of religious beliefs and practices.
3. The third perception of religious pluralism is in the context of many different religions with autonomy and the relativity of the claim of absoluteness.

Bowden points to the third perception of religious pluralism above as the most contemporary issue, emphasising that religious pluralism is essentially relative and its diversity should be against absoluteness (Bowden, 2005:13-14). He suggests the need for openness, mutual understanding and respect for one another's truth among the adherents of religions (Bowden, 2005:15).

As Asian churches believe that relating with other religious adherents, especially through dialogue, is a way of "being church", Knitter affirms that the very nature, well-being, and relevance of the Christian churches among other religions cannot be maintained unless the communities of Christians open their doors and hearts in embracing, working with, learning from, and challenging other religions (Knitter, 2011:124). For Knitter, the consideration of dialogue as a new means of being church must also be thought of as being a new way of doing theology, and religions

play a vital role in the “doing” of this Christian theology. This means that the sources of Christian theology must not just be Christian (ibid). For Barnes, what he calls the “context of otherness” discloses the “possibility of God”, as God is already working through his Spirit in the “context of otherness” (Barnes, 2002:220-223). Christians should not look at their calling only to speak about God that has been revealed through Jesus Christ, but also to critically listen with generosity to what others are saying about God (Barnes, 2002:230). Knitter agrees with Barnes and affirms that the terminology of Tillich, that if in Christian theology Christians want to explore more about “God beyond God” than what they have discovered in Jesus Christ, then there is need to turn and give listening ears to the experience and teachings of other religions (Knitter, 2011:125). He adds that the Christian theology is not complete without making effort to explore beyond the confines of the Christian boundary, because the God who is beyond God is beyond all boundaries, in other words, this God is the boundary, the circle that holds every one (ibid). In his earlier publication (2002), Knitter indicated the need for interreligious cooperation by arguing that Christians should not only be discussing about other religions among themselves but should get involved in interreligious dialogue (Knitter, 2002:243)³⁸.

When Lucinda Mosher was looking for what she called “an umbrella phrase” into which she wanted all of her freelance work, as a Christian and moral theologian, of writing, consulting and teaching, to fit. Reverend Canon Dr Stephen Cherry understood her and presented an idea in his declaration when he asserted that his calling includes enabling interreligious understanding, explaining that his skills make him a good companion, as one “deliberately walks into difference” (Mosher, 2011:637). Mosher concurs with the idea of Cherry, and affirms it as the nature of her ministry over the past years, of walking deliberately into difference, taking others with her as she progresses, and enabling interreligious understanding in the process (ibid). As part of her ministry in promoting interreligious awareness, Lucinda Mosher engages in consultative, educational and writing projects (Mosher, 2011:637). Working as an “interreligious relations consultant” entails advising or coordinating the development of curricula; to brainstorm interreligious partnerships; to organise or facilitate interreligious dialogue; to design or chair conferences, colloquia and seminars; to engage in research for finding whether and how religious leaders’

³⁸ See *Introducing theologies of religions* (2002) by Paul F. Knitter on Christianity and other religions.

information is taught concerning religious diversity (Mosher, 2011:638). Mosher's interest is to encourage Christian love of the neighbour who possesses different religious commitments and convictions. Mosher, in support of the document of the 1988 Lambeth Conference, affirms that the only one God is Triune, that the very life of God is a 'being with', explaining that this is celebrated in what has come to be known as Emmanuel, which means God with us (Mosher, 2011: 639). Therefore she affirms that, as in the reaffirmation from the Anglican Baptismal Covenant, every effort is to seek and serve Jesus Christ in all people, and stresses that the very Christ whom is being sought and served taught believers the greatest of the commandments, that is, loving God and neighbour (ibid). She notes that the idea of neighbour explained in the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 30-37 is in terms of the "other", who is demanding that Christians "be with". Mosher believes that when the bible says Christians should love their neighbours it is like commanding them to "be with" their neighbours (Mosher, 2011 640). These 'others' or 'strangers' are important neighbours to Christians, for it is they who may reveal the aspects of the presence of the Divine that Christians might never have thought of, or may enlighten the path of faith through asking questions that become a challenge to Christians, thus motivating them to go into their Christian tradition (Boys, 1997:87). For Christians, knowing about other religions will make them appreciate their unique religion (Knitter, 2011:127).

In their chapter, "Action through service – from shared values to common action", Eboo Patel *et al.* (2008:116) describe a religious pluralist as one who uses his or her religious motivation to engage in acts of justice, love and tolerance, rather than bigotry and hatred. They commended the life of the late Rev. Dr Martin Luther King Jr., who was acknowledged as a visionary religious pluralist. In his Nobel Peace Prize lecture in 1964, King spoke of his vision not only of racial reconciliation, but also of religious coexistence, indicating his interest in seeing the adherents of all religions living together in peace (ibid). According to Patel *et al.* (2008:117), the desire of Martin Luther King Jr. was to work with people irrespective of religious and racial affiliations. For him that was the best way to make a greater influence in the community. The life of King is understood in the term "civil pluralism", which is different from "theological pluralism". While the former has to do with working together with people from different traditions to make a difference on earth,

“theological pluralism” focuses on people from different faith groups reaching a consensus concerning their beliefs on the nature of God and the validity of each religious path (ibid). To build civil pluralism, the following practical framework of pluralism has been suggested (Patel *et al.*, 2008:120-123):

1. Respect for religious identity.
2. Mutuality inspiring relationships.
3. Common action for the common good.

4.4.2. Christians and Religious Pluralism

The reality of religious pluralism in contemporary society is a challenge to Christians that calls for their response. In his article, “Doing theology interreligiously: Union and the legacy of Paul Tillich”, Knitter sees the importance of the work of Paul Tillich and describes that of union as taking up what Tillich left (Knitter, 2011:117). Knitter focuses on the legacy of Tillich, a theologian who was inspired by his interest in exploring other religious traditions, what was known as “the history of religions” (ibid). According to Knitter, Tillich’s awareness of religious diversity in the 1950s and 1960s, as also taught by today’s theologians, is not “a matter of fact” but “a matter of principle”, in other words, it is not the way things happen to be, rather the way things need to be (Knitter, 2011:118). Stressing Tillich’s theology, Knitter asserts that religious diversity is God’s will. He explains that, if religious diversity is what it is supposed to be, then the existence of people religiously should be done with consciousness and in co-existence with the other religious people in different ways from theirs. Or in language that is more contemporary theological, to be religious today is to be religious interreligiously (ibid).

Wuthnow points to the example of Mother Teresa, who lived her Christian religious life interreligiously from the point of view that “I see God in every human being” (Wuthnow, 2005:1). The true testimony of her interreligious ministry was seen by the attendance of her funeral service, where representatives from the world’s major religions, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, were represented (ibid). During her life, Mother Teresa as a Christian committed herself to serving human beings, regardless of their religious affiliations (Wuthnow, 2005:3). Her ministry was likened to the ministry of Jesus Christ, where he willingly violated the social boundaries that separated Gentiles from Jews, which became an invitation for

Christians to encourage openness to all sorts of diversity (ibid). Karkkainen indicates that Jesus is always present among the poor, the outcasts or the excluded, areas that are his mission field (Karkkainen, 2013:88). The lesson of the parable of Jesus in Matthew 25:35-40 is a reminder that Christians' ministry is among the poor and the outcasts, where Jesus is.

To make the need for "being religious interreligiously" a matter of the praxis of Christian life, Knitter explains that this can be seen lived out in the following threefold urgency that is making itself more clear and pressing today: the need for building a society interreligiously, the need for making peace and establishing justice interreligiously, and the need for caring for the earth interreligiously (Knitter, 2011:118). The contribution of Swami Tyaganda in this regard is to live a religious life with interreligious engagement through dialogue, which will enhance and increase an understanding of the participants' views of their religious beliefs and practices (Tyaganda, 2011:230). He notes that, although every religion is self-sufficient, the respect for and openness to one another may yield new insight into one's own religious beliefs (ibid).

Essentially, what is happening today in relation to what Tillich saw in the 1960s is that multicultural, multiracial civil society is recognising itself and functioning as a multi-religious civil society. Knitter affirms the unexaggerated fact of the title of a book, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, written by Diana Eck and published in 2001 (Knitter, 2011:119). Knitter emphasises the need for a functioning, multi-religious civil society to affirm the validity of all religions, where no gender, race and religion can assume superiority over others, and religious citizens therefore should affirm the equal validity for every religion as religious believers, in other words on the basis of their religious belief and theology (Knitter, 2011:119-120). Tyagananda concurs with Knitter by indicating that it is only on the basis of mutuality and acceptance that there can be a framework for being religious interreligiously (Tyagananda, 2011:230).

With such a religious pluralistic society, the dictum of Hans Kung needs to be strengthened, *the peace among nations depends on the peace among religions*, dialogue and collaboration among the religions strengthens the relationship and promotes peaceful co-existence (Knitter, 2011:120). If the crises among nations and

ethnicities have a religious cause, then the solution should be from religion. Tillich puts it that religion should be used in fighting religion, but much more now that it has to be done interreligiously (ibid). For it is worth affirming that, if religions are not found to be part of the solution to the problem of crises between nations, they definitely will continue to exist as part of the problem (Knitter, 2011:120). Malte C. Boecker points out that one of the temptations that make mutual respect very difficult among adherents of the religions is the teaching about other religious traditions as false or delusory and incomplete or distorted (Boecker, 2007:7). He argues for religious resources for a theology of difference, where he affirms the Christian religious bases of respect for others, for example in the need to welcome and treat strangers with respect and kindness (Boecker, 2007:13). This is also the case in the teaching of Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan, where a neighbour could be anyone outside one's faith.

Already Knitter has made a point regarding the need for doing theology with the consciousness of others from other religions. He notes that to experience the being Christian interreligiously requires the reflection of Christian theologians in affirming the following needs of other religions in the task of doing theology: The need for religious others in order to know and understand one's own particularity; to be able to understand God's universality; and building the Reign or Kingdom of God (Knitter, 2011:121).

4.4.3. Trinity and Religious Pluralism

Karl Barth has received recognition for being the theologian behind the origination of the Trinitarian revival at the end of twentieth century (Karkkainen, 2004b:4). The contribution of Barth's renaissance to the Trinitarian doctrine has a twofold perspective; he made it a structuring principle in his theology, and he saw a bearing between what happens in history and what "happens" in the triune godhead, which explain that history was made to deity (Karkkainen, 2004b:4-5). In understanding the position of Karl Barth, Karkkainen (2004b:6) explains in summary the renaissance of the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian theology in the following points:

1. The doctrine of the Trinity is to be understood as the structuring principle of Christian theology and therefore of the Christian doctrine of God among other religious groups

2. The Triune God is present in history, as history itself depends on and is in the “history of God” with regard to both salvation and creation histories, and perhaps the rest of history.
3. Since God as Triune is divine communion, human beings should engage in communion too, to live in relation to one another.

Seamands understands the divine communion of the Trinitarian Christian ministry as that which belongs to Jesus Christ, the Son, directed to the Father, through the Holy Spirit, to the good of the church, including the world (Seamands, 2005:9-10). In explaining the primary aim of the Trinitarian ministry, Seamands notes that the Trinitarian language is not for communication or comprehension, but is meant for communion with God, for in communion with God our language concerning God is shaped and in turn results in the shaping of our heart as we share in God’s life (Seamands, 2005:12). Earlier on, in his response to the subject of Christian uniqueness as it concerns many pluralist contributors, D’Costa (1990:16) believes that such a concern can be tackled by an appropriate doctrine of the Trinity, for which he suggests a strategy he identifies as inclusivist. With this approach, D’Costa genuinely recognises the religious plurality facilitating an appropriate theological criterion in making sense of the diversity (ibid). Haight (2009:533) notes that the Christian doctrine of Trinity has a universal implication and its doctrine cannot be minimised to truth for a certain group of people. Looking at the heart of the doctrine of Trinity, a reason is found that opens up to the pluralistic religions, taking a special theological significance that Christians who serve and worship a Trinitarian God cannot ignore (D’Costa, 1990:16).

The report submitted by the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity of the Church of England in 1984 noticed and commended the significance of the doctrine of Trinity to the understanding of the theology of religions (Anglican Consultative Council , 1984:20). There is enough biblical evidence that suggests the active involvement of God in all nations and among the people of the world (ibid). What was described by the writers of the Old Testament as the hand of God, the word of God, and the breath of God was understood by the Early Church, through their reading and interpretation of the scriptures, as the person of the Holy Spirit (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:20). D’Costa explains that the Spirit is in the activity of serving in deepening and universalising the Christians’ understanding of

God through Jesus Christ, a process that is not completed until the coming of Jesus Christ (D'Costa, 1990:17).

In his book, *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends*, S. Mark Heim (2001:123) argues for the use of Trinity as a general framework for the understanding of religious diversity. Heim asserts that, as Christians, the understanding of God as Trinity through the incarnation of Christ reveals the main feature of the character of God and His relation with them (Heim, 2001:125). To complement this is to make relationship itself the possible, necessary and productive aim of religion (ibid). As Heim (2001:168-175) believes that the most revealing of the Divine Being in Trinity is the recognition that the ultimate reality is essentially relational, the Divine Being is "Being with", which means that to be God means to connect, to relate, to give and to receive, and to converse. If Trinity is to be a guide, the most crucial definition of being worth giving is person in communion (ibid, 174).

Knitter stresses the need of others for an understanding of the universality of God, as expressed in the Christology of Tillich, where he explains the particularity of Jesus revealing the New Being precisely through transcending, and pointing beyond his own particularity (Knitter, 2011:123). According to Knitter, Tillich discovered from the cross that Jesus gave himself as a sacrifice for the revealing of the New Being powerfully in and through him (ibid). He asserts that faithfulness to Jesus and to knowing God, who was revealed through Jesus, means looking beyond Jesus, as the particularity of Jesus is centrifugal, pointing beyond Jesus' particularity to God's universality (Knitter, 2011:123). The universality would therefore be found among other manifestations of the Divine, different from, and at the same time in relation to, the manifestation in and through Jesus; in fact, to show fidelity to Jesus, Christians cannot be followers of Jesus exclusively, and they cannot either lay claim to Jesus exclusively (ibid). Tillich therefore lays the Christological and theological foundations in respect to the insightful and challenging statement of John Cobb: "Jesus is the Way that is open to other Ways." That to know Jesus, and the God He reveals, is coming into dialogue with others from other Ways (Knitter, 2011:123).

The doctrine of Trinity, in its divine communion and its ministry among human beings, explains the fact that the Trinitarian activities are not limited to among Christians. It suggests that Christians should not shun the adherents of other

religions, but should seek to live together in interreligious understanding. Trinity is a strong motivation to understanding religious pluralism and communion among human beings.

4.5. The Challenge of Interreligious Relation

The contemporary experience of Christianity as a religion among others reveals a new challenge for the Church, which requires Christians to express specific witness that is fresh in view of the new challenge that comes up as a result of an increased contact with the traditions of other religions (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:7). The report of the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity of the Church of England affirms that, for the Christian witness to be dynamic and to be able to engage fruitfully within this changed context, the Church must accept such a challenge (ibid). It is in these circumstances that Christian theologians are moving away from the possibility of dismissing other religions to search for appropriate means to respond to the persistence of their presence (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:7). In citing a more recent official document on the report of the Anglican Communion Network for Interfaith Concerns 2008, Quinn (2012:163) stresses *generous love* as a crucial virtue to practise toward the adherents of other religions. The document speaks of a practice of generous Christianity, charging Anglican Communion in particular to maintain an active presence among other religious groups without segregation (Quinn, 2012:164). Quinn indicates that the practice of *generous love* to the members of other religions is an invariable sign of the presence of Christ ministering among them (ibid).

According to Lai, a theology of religions can be given a negative description as an implicit criticism of the shortcoming of the theology of the history of religions, but speaking from the positive stance, a Christian theology of religions intends to give a theological account of the relationship of Christianity with other religions based on a Christian perspective (Lai, 1994:22). In addition to Lai's consideration of a Christian theology of religions, Paul Hedges notes that a theology of religions is considered a sub-branch of the main branch of Christian systematic theology, which is responsible for the superstructure of Christian faith based on its doctrinal teaching and belief (Hedges, 2010:15-16). He indicates that the relation of Christian faith to other religions constitutes a part to the structure of Christian doctrine and belief (Hedges,

2010:16). In advocating for the need of Christian relations with other religions, Hedges stresses the need for the construction of an interpretation regarding the understanding of how Christianity relates to other religions, the nature of these religions and their soteriological bases (ibid).

The Christian view of the relation of Christianity to other religions has been grouped into certain terms of beliefs, introduced by Alan Race as *exclusivism*, *inclusivism* and *pluralism* (Braybrooke, 2005:219). Paul Hedges added the category of *particularities* to the list of Race (Hedges, 2010:17). The report of the committee of the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity of the Church of England on the Christian view of the relation of Christianity to other religions indicates that the classification in the words of Alan Race is not tightly rigid categories (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:7). Each category has different emphases, as when a person thinks within one category, he or she finds himself or herself moving between other categories (ibid). Braybrooke (2005:219) has pointed out the importance of the views, as reference is often made to them. For Lai, the categorisation is a result of the different views held by the adherents of the religions on the issue of salvation, as it concerns the possibility of salvation for other religions as tangible societies, not as individuals (Lai, 1994:22). The committee of the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity of the Church of England asserts that, for the relationship between Christians and other religions to exist on the grounds of more than mere peaceful co-existence, it has to be based on the understanding of the theology of the work of God in the universe (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:7). The report recognises that there are views that, at their extreme ends, deny dialogue and relationship with other religions. This is true of extreme exclusivists, who claim that there is nothing to learn in dialogue and in relating with the people of other religions, and this leads to the view of the extreme relativists, who do not see the need for mission and evangelism at all (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:7). It therefore is important to further discuss the Christian views on the relation of Christianity to other religions.

4.5.1. Exclusivism

Exclusivism is the position of the Christian exclusivist who considers only Christianity as a religion worthy of truth and salvation (Eck, 2005:23). For the Christian

exclusivists, their community, their tradition, their understanding of reality, their knowledge of God are the only truth (ibid). The report of the committee of the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity of the Church of England explains exclusivism as the position of the Christian exclusivist who believes that other religions as wholly in error, inadequate for salvation and reflect nothing about the saving grace of God (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:8). According to this view, relations with people of other religions should primarily be on a ground of witnessing to God's revelation through Jesus Christ, with the intention of converting them to the Christian faith (ibid). Hedges argue that, although many see Christian exclusivism as a traditional and normative approach for committed Christians, exclusivism is the most "un-Christian" (Hedges, 2010:22-23). He explains that Christianity grew up in a world that is religiously pluralistic and, throughout history, many Christians have experienced religious plurality (Hedges, 2010:109). Stressing the need for openness to other religions, Hedges notes that, in a religious pluralistic society, having the knowledge and appreciation of one another's religious beliefs is crucial; its appreciation promotes the religious reign of peace in the global community (ibid).

4.5.2. Inclusivism

The result of the realisation of a great spiritual depth among the traditions of many religions of the world and signs of their persistence in the future has made theologians focus on a more positive record concerning the place of other religions within a Christian understanding of the work of God (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:8). The view of inclusivism insists that some knowledge of God can be found outside Christianity, although it strongly acknowledges that the "final" and "supreme" revelation of God is in Jesus Christ (Braybrooke, 2005:219). As the one behind the introduction of these views, Race describes inclusivism as having both the concepts of acceptance and rejection from other religions (Race, 1982:38). On the grounds of acceptance, the view recognises the spiritual enablement and depth manifestation in other religions, so that they could properly be identified as the locus of the divine presence. On the rejection side, the view excludes other religions as being incapable of the issuance of salvation apart from Jesus Christ, who alone is the saviour (ibid). Race further states that to be inclusive means to be convinced that all other religious truths belongs to Christ ultimately, and the path of discipleship that springs through

him (Race, 1982:38). According to Eck, the Christian view of inclusivism welcomes other religions but considers Christianity, its traditions and truth superior to other religions, having the capacity to include others under its universal canopy (Eck, 2005:23). From Race's concept of inclusivism, Hedges explains that other religions can find their fulfilment and perfection in Christianity, using the examples of the centurion and the Canaanite woman who exercised faith in Jesus Christ thus having their requests met (Hedges, 2010:23).

Race asserts that inclusivism does not engage in confrontation, but rather seeks the discernment of ways where other religions may be integrated into the reflection of Christian theology by way of creativity (Race, 1982:38). Therefore, it aims to hold together two equal convictions that are binding; first, the work of God's grace among the world's religions for salvation, and secondly, the uniqueness through the manifestation of God's grace in Jesus Christ, making a universal claim for the final way of salvation (ibid). The New Testament is a supporter of the ministry of inclusivity, as seen in the lives of Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul, with his ministry in Antioch, recognising the work of the Spirit of God among other religious groups (Hedges, 2010:23). In the vision of Peter in Acts 10:10-16, God gave Peter a perspective of inclusive ministry, and Peter's later conviction was very remarkable in understanding what God is doing among non-Christians: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34-35). Malina and Pilch (2008:79) understand these texts with a message of universality, as God deals with all human beings, not a particular race or religious group. They explain that God is open to all who recognise and show reverence to him in doing what is right (ibid). Parsons (2008:151-152) asserts that the openness of God to all people was the main message of the vision of Peter, as he was instructed not to label anyone unclean, for all are creatures of God. Therefore the knowledge of knowing who is doing what is right is with God, for us all belong to God.

4.5.3. Pluralism

Pluralism is a view that is against a religion claiming a monopoly on the truth; it rather advocates that all religions have access to the divine mystery, which is its religious source of life (Braybrooke, 2005:219). John Hick, a prominent proponent of

pluralism, initially held the view of exclusivism, but in the course of time, his experience of the reality of religious plurality led him to believing that the God he believed in did not match with his view (Hedges, 2010:114). Therefore Hick's vision shifted from seeing Christianity as the only religion in charge of truth to opening up to other religions who also have experience of God, the source of truth (ibid). According to Eck (2005:23), pluralism appreciates the diversity of the understanding of the truth, and the visions of God as an opportunity for a dynamic engagement with one another in dialogue. He explains that the recognition of other religious communities and traditions is not at the expense of one's Christian commitments, but rather opens up the commitments to the idea of give-and-take through mutual discovery and understanding (ibid). The committee of the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity of the Church of England indicated that the adherents of pluralism were interested in seeing how other religions could be brought into a manner of relationship where the religious truths could be seen as complementary to each other (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:9-10). This means the witness of Christianity about Jesus Christ as a norm for all people is held by some pluralists, but it does not deny the possibility of having other norms that are capable of making a contribution to a larger picture of the activity of God in the whole world (Anglican Consultative Council, 1984:10). Hedges (2010:27) argue that pluralism should be regarded as a serious and committed form of Christian theology. It should be seen as a Christian radical openness to other religions, which allows for an open border in a permeable existence between the Christian faith and other religions (Hedges, 2010:111-112). Religious pluralism is a realistic fact in many societies today, where Christians live and work together with people from other religions as neighbours, and their children as schoolmates and friends (Smith, 1995:9-10). Smith affirms that it is significant that Christians develop an understanding of other religions without the temptation of being negative towards them (ibid).

4.5.4. Particularities

This option explains that all religions are welcome but, on a ground of each religion's uniqueness, interaction can only be done from a specific religious point of view, not from a pluralistic or common interpretation (Hedges, 2010:27-28). In recognition of other religions, this view believes that the Holy Spirit may be at work among them, unlike in the case of the inclusive view, where it is certain that the Holy Spirit works

among other religions (Hedges, 2010:28). According to Braybrooke (2005:224), particularities see religions as both unique and universal; they are unique in their beliefs and practice, and at the same time universal in the sense that the core experience of religious beliefs and practice has a supreme significance to every human. He explains that every religion has a particular message for all people in the world (ibid).

For me, it is not easy to hold exclusively to only one of the three views above, for as one holds a certain view, in explaining it may fall into another, and subsequently touching almost all the views in the explanation of the one view held to. But I am convinced that we are in a religious pluralistic world, where our societies are mixed up with adherents of different religious beliefs and practices. Therefore living with the consciousness of religious plurality will pave the way for religious tolerance and understanding.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the co-pathic theological foundation for religious pluralism in handling dysfunctional exclusion. The first main section discussed a theological foundation and motivation for co-pathic application, where God is seen as a compassionate God, and his love for the world resulted in the sending of his Son to the world. The section also discussed Christians as the work of Christ among neighbours, and that they are to consider themselves individually as “Christ to the neighbour”. This is found in the work of Veli-Matti Karkkainen (2004a) on Luther’s theology of Love (4.3.3).

The second section considered the earthly ministry of Jesus as characterised by compassion between the Jews and the Gentiles, suggesting that he ministered in a religious pluralistic society. This point to Jesus as a model of compassion for Christians. And as Christians understand their positions as “Christ to the neighbour”, their services to the neighbours automatically becomes a task. The section also discovered that there are extrinsic and intrinsic religious practices, where the latter are commended as capable of producing a universal compassion that rejects all forms of dysfunctional exclusion in a community and accepts others as neighbours.

The third section discussed a theology of religious pluralism with a focus on the Christian attitude towards other religions. The section challenged the need for a pluralistic religious consciousness and living a religious life interreligiously. As the last section considered the challenge of religious pluralism, the most important point is the acceptance and consciousness of religious pluralism in our society today. For exclusion to be discarded from the affairs of people in a community, and especially among Christians and Muslims, the “other” has to be invited and be made part of oneself. In other words, Christians must embrace the “other”, and love and serve them as Jesus did. The next chapter concludes this thesis research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The research topic considered in this thesis was *Dysfunctional exclusion within Christian/Muslim relationships in Gombe State of Northern Nigeria: A co-pathic approach*. The research was guided by a research question, through the goals of the study and by using the four tasks of practical theological methodology as proposed by Richard Osmer.

As this chapter concludes the thesis research, its focus will be on the last task of practical theology – the *pragmatic task*, following the research methodology of Osmer (2008). The pragmatic task deals with the question of *how might we respond?* This requires the contribution of the research to the problem of the study. The chapter is basically structured into two main sections. The first section revisits the statement of the problem, the question, and the goals of the study with the aim to bring out the research findings and the main conclusion. The second section responds to the question of the pragmatic task by presenting the research contribution to the problem of the study and making recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2. Revisiting the problem, the question, and the goals of the study

Dysfunctional exclusion in Christian/Muslim relationships and religious crises complement each other, as each is capable of triggering the other. Therefore, as Christians and Muslims live together in the same community, their relationship is often challenged by the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between them. The practice of dysfunctional exclusion is a constant trigger of religious crisis. As the research addresses this problem of dysfunctional exclusion between the two religious groups, the research question was *can co-pathy contribute towards addressing the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships in the area of dysfunctional exclusion, which triggers religious crises between the two religious groups?* The following goals were set for the purpose of answering the research question:

1. To examine the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims in Gombe State of Northern Nigeria.
2. To discuss the concept of co-pathy, and its relevant application to the Christian/Muslim relationship in Gombe State of Northern Nigeria.
3. To explore the co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious understanding in dealing with the dysfunctional exclusion between the adherents of the two religions.

With these goals of the study, the research was carried out with the methodology of practical theological interpretation.

5.2.1. Research finding

The first goal of the research was to examine the practice of dysfunctional exclusion between the Christians and Muslims in Gombe State. The discussion of the research was done in Chapter 2, structured into three main sections: the historical background to Christian/Muslim relationships in Gombe State, Northern Nigeria; the post-colonial history of religious violence in northern Nigeria; and the critique of the practice of religious dialogue.

In examining the historical background to the relationship between Christians and Muslims, the research discovered that the leadership of the colonial administration were not fair in the discharge of their responsibilities in dealing with the religious groups of their time. While Muslims on the one hand were given preference by the colonial administration, the non-Muslims, especially Christians, on the other hand suffered marginalisation and exclusion. The consequent effect of such administration is the claim of superiority by the former over the latter. Later in post-colonial history the problem of marginalisation and exclusion metamorphosed into religious crises.

The study of the post-colonial history of religious crises traced the background to the *Maitatsine* crisis in 1980, which engulfed almost all the northern states of Nigeria. The religious crises continued with an escalated loss of lives and destruction of property. More recently has been the dreaded activities of the Boko Haram – a radical Islamic group that have claimed many innocent lives. The religious crises continued to create more of a gap in the relationship between the Christians and the Muslims, thus making room for more dysfunctional exclusion between them. The dysfunctional exclusion is evident in the *encapsulated mind-set*, where a religious

adherent sees herself as the only one that exists or needs to exist, therefore others need to or should be eliminated. This mind-set lacks the consciousness of religious plurality. Other effects of dysfunctional exclusion are the political manipulation of religion, where religion is often manipulated for personal or group desire. The last effect discovered was the use of media for the exclusive presentation of a religious prejudiced report that has triggered more religious crises among the Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

The reoccurrences of religious crises and the continued dysfunctional exclusion, along with its effects, led to the introduction of religious dialogue. Unfortunately, as critiqued in relation to the practice of religious dialogue, the need was found for the reconsideration of its application and/or a new approach to the fight against the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships.

The second goal of the study, which was discussed in Chapter 3, addressed the concept of co-pathy and its application to Christian/Muslim relationships. As the problem of dysfunctional exclusion and its effects needed to be addressed, I suggested and used the concept of co-pathy as an approach to the fight against dysfunctional exclusion. Co-pathy, described as compassion, was discovered to be a common virtue among the Christians and the Muslims. Both believe that God is a compassionate God who desires his people to live compassionately with one another and their neighbours. While the Christians hold on to Jesus as their model of compassion, the Muslims believe and respect the teaching on compassion.

From the Muslims' perspective, the Prophet Muhammad was said to have had a cordial relationship with a Christian monk, Waraqa Ibn Nawfal. In another development, the Prophet also welcomed a group of Christians who came from Najran. At the time when the Prophet and his followers were hated and rejected by his community, it was a Christian community in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) that compassionately welcomed them as refugees, hosted and took care of them. The Qur'an admonishes Muslims to live compassionately by staying away from anything that can cause an ill relationship between them and the Christians, reminding Muslims that they have the same source of revelation and same God as Christians (Quran 5:82).

From the Christians' point of view, compassion is a way of life that was seen in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. The teaching of Jesus points to the need for compassionate living among Christians and their neighbours. Jesus supported his teaching of compassion with the golden rule (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31). Therefore the common perspective among the Muslims and Christians on compassion is a motivation for the application of a co-pathic relationship between the adherents of the two religions.

At the 2012 United States Islamic World Forum, the Religious Leaders Working Group invited the religious leaders and activists from all over the world to a discussion on the subject of compassion, particularly on how to restore it to its rightful place, being the heart of religious and moral life. A Charter of Compassion, which was written by the leading activists and thinkers in 2008, representing the major world religions, was considered. The Charter was written for the purpose of building a global network of compassionate religious communities. This means the practice of compassion within Christian/Muslim relationships therefore was capable of addressing the dysfunctional exclusion between the adherents of the two religions. As compassion is not a concept unique to Christianity, which means that the language of compassion is also spoken by others, it was necessary to listen to their contributions in cross-disciplinary studies.

In engaging in a cross-disciplinary study, it was discovered that compassion was a promoter of human dignity. African anthropology upholds community life, where every individual does not exist for himself alone. *Ubuntu* is a South African term that speaks of a compassionate relationship between African people. The term describes the idea that *one person is a person through other persons*. Other disciplines that cherish and talk about compassion are the Islamic religion and Buddhism. Buddhism and Islam, in the same vein, believe and teach co-pathic relationship among their adherents as a strong virtue that every Buddhist and Muslim must hang onto. These voices that are talking about compassion need to be listened to by Christians, and not only listened to but also complemented by one's own understanding and practice of compassion.

The third goal of the study explored a co-pathic theological foundation for interreligious understanding. In discussing the theological foundation and motivation

for co-pathy, God is seen as the creator who is ever compassionate to his people. The incarnation of Jesus explains the act of God's compassion and love for human beings, as God took on flesh. Compassion was a major motivating factor during the earthly ministry of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. All the Gospel writers identified Jesus in connection to his compassionate heart. Matthew describes Jesus as the *Compassionate King*; John Mark refers to him as the *Man of Sorrows*; Luke calls him *the Sympathetic Son*; and John *the Loving Lord*.

Luther's theology of Love is convincing, as a Christian is described as *Christ* to the neighbour. Jesus purposely came to serve others and, as such, Christians should turn their love and compassion toward others. The religious orientations of people have been discovered to be either extrinsic or intrinsic in connection with universal compassion. The interest of those with an extrinsic religious orientation is just about the self, while the religious orientation that is intrinsic has others at heart. The intrinsic orientation to religion is found to be a means of universal compassion, Mother Teresa and the Good Samaritan being examples of those whose acts of compassion are felt even outside their communities

A theology of interreligious understanding was discussed, in terms of which Christians are encouraged to love their neighbours with different religious commitments and convictions, just like Jesus was open to adherents of other religions. The contribution of Trinity was seen in the understanding of the theology of religions, as it is believed that the Christian ministry is the ministry that belong to Jesus Christ, the Son, directed to the Father, through the Holy Spirit, to the good of the church and the world as well. The report submitted by the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity of the Church of England in 1984 noticed and commended the significance of the doctrine of Trinity to the understanding of the theology of religions.

In becoming conscious of religious pluralism, Christians are challenged not to look only at their calling to speak about God who has been revealed through Jesus Christ, but also to listen critically with generosity to what others are saying about God. The research discovered the challenge of religious pluralism, which comes from the extreme exclusivist and extreme relativist positions. These positions have

produced four main beliefs in understanding religious pluralism: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism and particularism.

5.3. Main Conclusion

According to the research in chapter 2, the dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims originates in the colonial era. The immediate consequence was an exclusive claim of geographical territory by one religious adherents. And later the consequences include exclusive religious education in public schools; denial of rights and privileges of minority religious group; political manipulation of religion for individual or group's desire; life of encapsulated mind-set among each religious adherent; and manipulation of media news reports for religious biasness. All these consequences trigger religious crises (see Appendix I). Despite the practice of religious dialogue among the Christians and Muslims in Gombe state, dysfunctional exclusion and religious crises still persist.

My approach to this problem of dysfunctional exclusion that manifest in the above consequences is the application of co-pathy, a concept which is interpreted as compassion. The research question, *can co-pathy effectively contributes in addressing the challenge of dysfunctional exclusion within Christian/Muslim relationships?* according to Osmer's methodology is a pragmatic task (how might we respond?). The question was attempted through the goals of the study (section 1.5). The result indicates, in the first place, that there is the practice of dysfunctional exclusion among Christians and Muslims in Gombe State. In the second place, the discussion on the concept of co-pathy, indicates its relevant application to the Christian/Muslim relationships as both religious adherents are familiar with compassion from the Qur'anic and biblical point of views. And in the third place, the co-pathic theological foundation gives a reason for interreligious understanding and co-existence as both the Prophet Mohammad and Jesus Christ lived in a pluralistic societies with the consciousness of the adherents of the contemporary religions. Christians and Muslims should be motivated by the biblical and Qur'anic teachings on compassion as emphasised and practiced in the ministries of Jesus Christ and the prophet Mohammad whose practices of compassion went beyond their religious groups. Therefore, a compassionate co-existence among Christians and Muslims

with the consciousness of the religious diversity and exercise of tolerance deals with the problem of dysfunctional exclusion.

5.4. The Contribution of this Research

The contribution of this research is the suggestion for using compassion between Christians and Muslims. My research has shown that the concept of compassion has been accepted unanimously by the adherents of the two religions. Therefore the motivation to use compassion is the fact that Jesus Christ and the Prophet Mohammed both lived a compassionate life within and beyond their religious groups.

The use of compassion by Christians and Muslims creates an interreligious consciousness and understanding. Since both Christians and Muslims live in the same community, compassion is highly needed to foster unity and improve the relationship, regardless of their religious differences. I strongly agree with the constitution of the charter of compassion of the representatives of world major religions, which is aimed at building a global community that would warrant that people of all ethnicities and religious backgrounds can live together in mutual respect. According to Karen Armstrong, time has come for religion to be proactive, thus calling on all people to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion (Armstrong, 2012:3). I therefore believe that, if compassion is practiced in the sense of the golden rule, it will address the negative challenges of Christian/Muslim relationships. The recommendations below complement this contribution.

5.4.1. Recommendation

In view of my research contribution I would like to make the following recommendations for consideration by the Christians and Muslims in Gombe State, Nigeria:

1. I strongly recommend an intrinsic religious orientation among the Christians and Muslims that advocates for universal compassion.
2. Despite the fact that the effects of dysfunctional exclusion are being experienced among Christians and Muslims, sincere forgiveness and genuine love for one another should be administered for the purpose of healing of the past.

3. Christians and Muslims should apply the theology of interreligious understanding and see each other's religion as recognising faith in society. None should speak of the other's religion or label it as an inferior faith, but they should be willing to listen critically and with generosity to what the other religion is saying about God. The adherents of the two religions may learn from one another.
4. Christians and Muslims should accept the fact that they are living in a pluralistic society, and as such each adherent of a religion should practise his/her religious obligations freely and with respect to the other's religion.
5. Cross-disciplinary studies should be strengthened in theological faculties and seminaries.
6. Christian/Muslim interreligious understanding should be taught as a course from secondary schools to tertiary institutions, especially in the religious studies department of Gombe State University.
7. Public office holders should contribute their quota to the consciousness of a pluralistic society, thus discharging their responsibilities with equity and respect between Christians and Muslims.
8. Political leaders should stop the manipulation of religion for whatever reason. This means religion and religious symbols should not be used in political campaigns.
9. Christians need to understand that the ministry of the Trinity is not limited to them, therefore they should not view non-Christians as outsiders.

5.4.2. Suggestions for Further Research

In the course of my research there were issues that sprang up through allusion, but because they were not within the scope of my research I did not give them full attention. Therefore I am suggesting them for further research. They include:

1. The need for the extension of the research to Northern Nigeria.
2. Research on the understanding of the Quranic and Biblical exclusive statements.
3. Consideration of inter-pathy as a further way of addressing dysfunctional exclusion between Christians and Muslims.

4. Consideration of the trans-disciplinary approach to finding ways of addressing the challenge of dysfunctional exclusion.
5. Research on the Boko Haram movement.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

The Effects of Religious Crises in Northern Nigeria

Location	Date	Nature of Conflict
Kano, Kano State	18 th -20 th Dec. 1980	Islamic revivalists (the <i>Maitatsine</i> group) attacked Christians and burnt churches over 4000 Christians were killed with properties worth millions of Naira lost.
Maiduguri, Borno State	26 th -29 th Oct. 1982	<i>Maitatsine</i> riot, over 100 Christians lost their lives, property belonging to Christians were also lost.
Kaduna, Kaduna State	25 th -30 th Oct. 1982	<i>Maitatsine</i> riot, over 50 Christians were estimated to have died.
Sabon Gari area, Municipality of Kano, Kano State	30 th Oct. 1982	Two churches burnt to ashes and six others damaged
Jimeta Yola, then Gongola State	15 th Feb. -2 nd March 1984	The <i>Maitatsine</i> group attacked Christians, over 500 people were killed
Gombe, then Bauchi State	23 rd – 28 th April 1985	<i>Maitatsine</i> uprising, more Christians lost their lives
Kafanchan, Kaduna, Zaria – all in Kaduna State and Katsina, Katsina State	6 th – 12 th March 1987	Muslim students attacked Christian students at the College of Education Kafanchan and Christian fought back. The fight later spread to other places as indicated here under location, more than 150 churches were burnt and over 25 Christians lost their lives.
Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna State	8 th March 1988	The Kaduna State Government destroyed Christians Chapel under construction at the Kaduna Polytechnic. This led to religious uprising, Benson Omenka, a final year Christian student in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria was killed by Muslim students during the students' union election. Some other Christians were stoned and maimed while

		female students were raped
Bauchi, Gombe, then Bauchi State	1988	Religious riots in Bauchi State Secondary Schools. Muslim students attacked Christian teachers and students in Government Secondary School (GSS) Gombe, Government Technical School (GTS) Gombe and Government Secondary School Bauchi, and other secondary schools in Bauchi State. Some of Christian students were seriously wounded.
Bauchi, Bauchi State	20 th – 23 rd April 1991	Fighting between Muslims and Christians. More than 200 people lost their lives and 700 churches and mosques were burnt
Kano, Kano State	14 th -16 th Oct. 1991	The Reinhard Bonnke riot – fighting between Muslims and Christians as Muslims activists rampaged and protested a planned revival meeting during which a German evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke was expected to be a quest preacher
Jos Plateau State	Oct. 1991	A young man from Anaguta was beaten to death in a field opposite University of Jos during election primaries of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP)
Zangon Kataf local government area, Kaduna State	15 th -16 th April 1992	What began as communal riot turned into religious riots between Muslims and Christians and spread throughout Kaduna State. Hundreds of people lost their lives and houses were burnt.
Kaduna, Zaria, Kaduna State	18 th May 1992	Revd. Tacio Duniya of ECWA, Revd. Musa Bakut, and a host of others were murdered by Muslims fanatics
Kano, Kano State	1992	Many Christians were massacred and Churches destroyed
Jos, Plateau State	Feb. 1992	A young Christian married with a child was beaten to death as he was going home from an evening church meeting at Yan Taya junction Jos.

Jos, Plateau State	12 th April 1994	Fighting between Muslims and Christians over the appointment of one Aminu Mato as Chairman of the caretaker committee for the Jos-North local government area. 16 lives were lost and properties destroyed.
Borno State	1999	Religious riot as Borno State Government mooted the idea of not allowing the teaching of Christian religious studies in schools.
Kaduna, Kaduna State	Feb. & May 2000	Christians in Kaduna were attacked on two different occasions as Muslims fanatics protested against the late introduction of Sharia in the State.
Jos, Plateau State	7 th -12 th Sept. 2001	Muslims attacked Christians immediately after Muslims prayers on Friday. Churches were burnt, Christian business centres were looted, Christian homes destroyed, and many Christians killed.
Jos, Plateau State	2 nd May 2002	Muslims attacked Christians, property was destroyed and people lost their lives.
Federal Government College Zaria, Kaduna State	Sept. 2002	Muslim students fought against Christian students as the Muslim students discovered that a Christian student was likely to win the position of student union president during student election. Many were killed and female students were raped.
Kano, Kano State	2007	Baptist church and Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) ordered to vacate their premises to make way for construction of court house; their churches were damaged during religious violence in 2007 ("Churches damaged in religious violence ordered to vacate the premises")
Kano, Kano State	2007	In September 2007, a Christian teacher allegedly displayed a caricature of the Prophet Mohammed which resulted in violence between Muslim and Christian youths; nine persons killed ("Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2007").

		<p>“On September 29, violence erupted in the Tudun Wada area of Kano State after a Christian teacher allegedly displayed a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad in his classroom. Nine persons were killed and churches were razed during altercations between Muslim and Christian youths.”</p>
Yelwa, Bauchi State	11 th Dec. 2007	<p>Violence erupted following the demolition of a mosque by persons who were allegedly upset that it was being constructed on the grounds of a public secondary school. In retaliation, Muslim youths destroyed churches and properties belonging to Christian residents. Many residents fled their homes during the violence and remain in neighbouring villages. The military was deployed to the area and imposed a curfew to calm the violence."</p>
Maiduguri, Borno State	29 th July 2009	<p>Boko Haram launches a short-lived uprising in parts of the north, which is quelled by a military crackdown that leaves more than 800 dead - mostly sect members, including BH leader Mohammed Yusuf. A mosque in the capital of Borno State (Maiduguri) that served as a sect headquarters is burnt down.</p>
Maiduguri, Borno State	7 th June 2011	<p>Attacks on a church and two police posts blamed on the sect, leave at least 14 dead.</p>
Bulabulin Ngarnam, Maiduguri, Borno State	29 th Oct. 2011	<p>BH gunmen shoot dead Muslim cleric Sheikh Ali Jana'a outside his home. Jana'a is known to have provided information to security forces regarding the sect.</p>
Geidam, Yobe State	26 th Nov. 2011	<p>Three policemen and a civilian are wounded in BH bomb and shooting attacks. Six churches, a police station, a beer parlour, a shopping complex, a high court, a local council building and 11 cars are burnt in the attacks.</p>
Madalla, Niger State and Jos,	25 th Dec. 2011	<p>On Christmas Day BH bomb attack on Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla town near</p>

Plateau State		Abuja kills 42 worshippers. A policeman is killed in a botched BH bomb attack on a church in the Ray Field area of Jos, capital of Plateau State.
Maiduguri, Borno State	30 th Dec. 2011	Four Muslim worshippers are killed in a BH bomb and shooting attack targeting a military checkpoint in Maiduguri as worshippers leave a mosque after attending Friday prayers.
Gombe, Gombe State	5 th Jan. 2012	Six worshippers are killed and 10 others wounded when BH gunmen attack a church in Gombe city.
Yola, Mubi, Adamawa State	6 th Jan. 2012	Eight worshippers are killed in a shooting attack on a church in Yola. BH gunmen shoot dead 17 Christian mourners in the town of Mubi in the northeastern state of Adamawa. The victims are friends and relations of one of five people killed in a BH attack on a hotel the previous day.
Biu, Borno State	7 th Jan. 2012	Three Christian poker players are killed and seven others wounded by BH gunmen in the town of Biu.
Potiskum, Yobe State	11 th Jan. 2012	Four Christians killed by BH gunmen in Potiskum, Yobe State, when gunmen open fire on their car as they stop for fuel. The victims had been fleeing Maiduguri to their home town in eastern Nigeria.
Bauchi, Bauchi State	3 rd June 2012	Christians were killed on their way to church
Kaduna, Kaduna State	17 th June 2012	Suicide bombing attacking on three churches

The above information is adapted from Sampson (2012) with additions and modifications by the researcher.

The following record is adapted from BBC News Nigeria profile (2015)³⁹

Location	Date	Nature of conflict
Jos, Plateau State	June 2012	Boko Haram claims responsibility for attacks on two churches in Jos city and Borno state, in which one person died and dozens of others were injured. An angry crowd kills six Muslims in Jos in retaliation.
Katsina, Katsina State	Dec. 2012	A French engineer is abducted in northern Katsina state. The Islamist group Ansaru claims responsibility. At least 20 Christians are killed in attacks by suspected Islamist militants in the northern states of Yobe and Borno over the Christmas/New Year period.
Yobe	July 2013	Secondary schools close in Yobe state after a massacre of 22 pupils at a boarding school, which the government attributes to Boko Haram. The Islamist group has burned down several schools since 2010.
Northeast and Abuja	Sept. 2013	Boko Haram Islamists murder more than 150 people in roadside attacks in the northeast. Separately, security forces fight Boko Haram armed insurgents in the capital Abuja.
Chibok	April 2014	Boko Haram kidnaps more than 200 girls from a boarding school.
Kano	Nov. 2014	More than 100 die in attack on the central mosque in Kano, at a time

³⁹ Available: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13951696>

		of numerous high-profile assaults by Boko Haram.
Baga and Doron Baga	Jan. 2015	Boko Haram capture towns of Baga and Doron Baga on Lake Chad in major operation, killing hundreds of local people and displacing thousands more.

Note that the data presented are by no means exhaustive.

APPENDIX II

A Letter to His Excellency Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo



GOMBE SOUTH PROGRESSIVE FORUM

(A Subsidiary of Gombe South Progressive Multi-purpose Cooperative Society)

Opp. Maiyamba Hotel Yola Road Billiri,
Gombe State.

email: gombesouthprogressiveforum@gmail.com

Our Ref

Your Ref

Date

21th November, 2013

His Excellency,
Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo, oon,
(Talban Gombe)
The Executive Governor,
Gombe State

PLEA FOR EQUITABLE ALLOCATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS AND EMPOWERMENT

Your Excellency, we wish to on behalf of the good people of Gombe South Senatorial District express our appreciation for your various developmental strides as depicted in the people oriented projects embarked upon by you which has invariably made touching impact on the people of the State.

Your Excellency, Sir, though, it is evident that your work speaks volume in all facets of our lives today in Nigeria and indeed our state, we wish to observe with dismay the apparent lop-sidedness in the distribution of these projects in our dear state, where some Senatorial Districts are favoured over and above Gombe South Senatorial District. It is on record to this moment that the people of the district have continually contributed much in whatever form in making the state live up to its billing in the country.

Sir, looking at the present scenario of projects distribution and allocation, one wonders what informed the disparity and priority of urban and rural network of roads distribution across the state. In your speech of 13th Sept, 2013 on the occasion of the signing of contract agreement at the new Banquet Hall Government House, Gombe you said, " It is worthy to note that provision of socio-economic infrastructure is pre-requisite for the development of any society.

It is in this regard that this administration embarked on the construction of numerous urban and rural road networks throughout the state to facilitate social linkages and embrace economic activities of our various communities. This will promote the peaceful co-existence of our people and their socio-economic relationship". Laudable as the statement is, but we noticed with dismay how only about N862million worth of township roads is to be constructed in Gombe South Senatorial District within that period as compared to N13.3 billion and N1.1 billion linkage roads to villages/communities in Gombe North and Gombe Central respectively. This is without reference to earlier constructions in 2012. Sir, going by the budget above, the Southern Senatorial District is left behind in terms of rural road distribution considering that your administration is almost half way to the end of its first mandate.

Furthermore, Your Excellency, in just less than two months about seventy (70) villages in the Central Senatorial District were electrified particularly, in the Pindiga-Kashere axis, and another over thirty (30) villages are earmarked to be electrified in the same Central Senatorial District as recently announced by the government and none in the Gombe South Senatorial District. This is truly worrisome, especially where some Wards are not even connected to electricity. Sir, we were happy when you announced a regional water project that will serve the entire Gombe South from Tula Hills, but, two (2) years after the announcement the project is yet to commence. Even though a Tula township water project was said to be rehabilitated, the water is not flowing to sufficiently serve the people in spite of the four hundred and fifty million (N450,000,000.00) naira said to have been spent.

OTHER CAPITAL PROJECT: Your Excellency it is an open secret that the people of Gombe South Senatorial District have not known any other party except the P.D.P. have voted for it overwhelmingly during the gubernatorial and presidential elections, while other Senatorial District have divided loyalties yet, are always favoured to the detriment of Gombe South Senatorial District. We deserve a lion share of everything in the state but as considerate and peace loving

people we just ask for fairness and equity to all in allocation of projects, appointment opportunities and empowerment, so that development can be evenly spread in the state. For instance, your Excellency, how do you reconcile the fact that Gombe North Senatorial District that have already two existing Higher Institutions i.e Gombe State University and F.C.E(Tech) is now a beneficiary of another three Higher Institutions thus; State Polytechnic Bajoga, School of Nursing Dukku and College of Legal and Islamic Studies Nafada, and Gombe Central again is already a beneficiary of F.U.K(Federal University Kashare) and over 5 billion naira is being expended in the remodelling of College of Basic Studies Kumo and of course, in addition to College of Horticulture Dadinkowa, while a paltry sum of 1.3 billion naira is use for construction of College of Education Billiri whose work is moving at snail speed. It is also surprising that Tsangaya Schools are springing up in Gombe North and Central without a single construction in Gombe South Senatorial District. As it is now, almost all the Local Govt headquarters in Gombe state have general hospitals with the exception of Shongom Local Government of Gombe South Senatorial District. In fact, a Local Govt. like Balanga with a very difficult terrain deserve another General Hospital to cater for the people of Balanga south as well as another General Hospital in Billiri West.

EMPOWERMENT: Your Excellency, we recall with nostalgia your cache during campaign when you used to say, "Kuri'arka, Jarinka" meaning your vote, is your investment. Well, we did invest in you whole heartedly but the dividends is in no way commiserate to our investment for those of us from Gombe South. You promised to take our youth off the street immediately you are sworn in and you kept your promise only to the advantage of Gombe North and Gombe Central. This is so, because of the one thousand three hundred marshals recruited less than fifty youth are from Gombe South as if idle youth are only in Gombe North and Gombe Central. Periscoping into contract awards, we discovered a sad scenario in which indigenes of Gombe South Senatorial District are perpetually short changed as they are always consigned to the crumbs of contract awards, while those of Gombe North and Gombe Central receive juicy contracts. This portrays a clear case of uneven economic empowerment.

APPOINTMENTS: It will interest you to note, Your Excellency, when you released your first appointments, we were shocked of its lop-sidedness. We decided to maintain cool posture with the hope that subsequently amends could be made but, unfortunately it just continued. For a zone that voted you en-mass and had the highest number of votes for you and Mr President, one expected a fair share in appointments both at the state and at the federal level. However, by whatever means, zones that almost did anti party got more than their fair share.

The table below shows clearly the disparity in appointments both at Federal and State.

STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

L.G.A	NO of Commissioners	Others
Gombe	3	Governor, DCoS
Y/Deba	3	Speaker, DCoS
Akko	3	Chief of Staff
Kwami	3	
Dukku	2	
Nafada	1	Dep. Spkr
Funakaye	1	SSG
Billiri	1	HOS?
Shongom	1	---
Balanga	1	Dep. Gov.
Kaltungo	1	DCos

State Appointments of Boards and Parastatals:

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Chairman GvB | Gombe State University | Prof. IdrisMoh'd |
| 2. Chairman | Subeb | Prof. Moh'dGurama |
| 3. - do - | Teachers Serv. Comm. | Alh. Kuna Biri |
| 4. Special Adviser | MDGs | Alh. Audi Adamu |

5. Chairman	Civil Service Commission	Alh. Manu Malala
6. -do -	Gombe State Sport Comm.	Alh. FarukYarma
7. - do -	Muslim Pilgrims Board	HRH Saleh Muhammad
8. Secretary	Muslim Pilgrims Board	Alh. UsmanGurama
9. Chairman	Christian Pilgrims Board	Rev TulfukutKardi
10. Secretary	Christian Pilgrims Board	Mr KambeiJessu
11. Chairman	Gombe State Trans Serv.	Mr EdukLabetek
12. Chairman	State Assembly Comm.	Alh. Muh'dJungudo
13. Chairman	Gombe Media Corp.	Alh. MagajiMuazu
14. Chairman	Sch. Of Health Tech. Brd	Mr Robert Danja
15. Chairman	Sch. Of Nur/M/wives Brd	Alh. JaloBajoga
16. Chairman	Scholarship Board	Mr Alhassan Sati.
17. Chairman	Local Govt. Serv. Comm.	Alh. AbdullahiKulani

FEDERAL MINISTERIAL, BOARDS AND PARASTATAL APPOINTMENTS:

S/No.	Name of Beneficiary	Nature of Appt	South	Central	North
1.	Alh. Abubakar H. Muazu	Chrm(FMC B/Kebbi)	-	1	-
2.	Prof Rufai Alkali	Chrm(FUT Minna)	-	-	1
3.	AlhYerimaAbdullahi	Chrm(FUT Akure)	-	1	-
4.	Alh. AdamuYaro Gombe	Chrm Sure-P	-	-	1
5.	Alh. Hassan Santana	Chrm Nat. Orthopedic-	-	1	-
6.	Alh. A.A. Abdulkadir	ChrmFedPolyBauchi1	-	-	-
7.	Dr Christy Silas	Chrm Lower Benue	1	-	-
8.	Alh. AbdulkadirHamma S.	Chrm Nat. Automo.C-	-	-	1
9.	Sen. AbdullahiIdris	Minister	-	1	-

FEDERAL COMMISSIONERS:

1. Alh. BalaMagaji	National Popu Comm. -	-	1
2. Alh. Samaila M. Hassan	Physical Res. Commi -	1	-
3. Alh. Mahmud Haruna	Federal Charac. Com. -	-	1
4. Alh. AbubakarAbubakar	Fed. Public Comp.Co. -	-	1

FEDERAL BOARD MEMBERS

1. Alh. YayaHamhari	FMC Gombe.	-	-	1
2. Alh. Musa Kafarati	CBN	-	-	1
3. Alh. Samaila M. Dukku	EFCC	-	-	1
4. Dr MikahJimeta	UMTH	1	-	-
5. Mr NuhuPoloma	River Basin Dev. Com1	-	-	-
6. Alh. Adamu G. Kalba	FCE	1	-	-
Total No. of appointments per Zone		5	4	10

MATTERS ARISING:

Sir, you may recall that with the demised of Hon. Jack Gumpi the erstwhile Chairman of the PDP, the chairmanship position by now should have been filled by person (s) from the Southern Senatorial District but, up till now, the seat is vacant. This we regard as equally a deliberate ploy to further disenfranchise the Southern Senatorial zone for political participation. Equally, too, with the retirement of Mr Eli Akeme as Head of Civil Service, his position is still not occupied by a successor from the Southern Senatorial District as per the so – call PDP's foul formula.

Your Excellency, bearing all the foregoing, you can understand our grudges with your administration. We are having a situation of "Baboon dey work, monkey dey chop" in Gombe State. Being your true friends, we feel is only logical that we bare our minds to you because as John Adams once said "there is something very unnatural and odious in a government of our own choice, managed by persons whom we love, revere, and can confide in, has charms in it for which men will fight" Sir, even at the initial stage, Gombe South has demonstrated its unflinching

support for you which was translated into the massive votes you received from the zone but, alas! the realities on ground is not reciprocal.

PRAYERS:

Your Excellency, after careful perusal of your stewardship so far, it is evident that Gombe South Senatorial District is far behind its compatriots in terms of developmental projects, empowerment and appointments hence, it is our prayers that your administration has a moral responsibility to address the imbalance, unholy, and unfair distribution of projects and other opportunities for even development of the whole state and for the sustenance of the tripod nature of the state. Sir you may wish to consider some of our plea below for immediate action:-

1. Facilitate the appointment of people from the Southern Senatorial District into Federal Boards and Parastatals.
2. Ensure the appointment of an indigene of Gombe South Senatorial District into the Federal Executives Council (Minister).
3. Appoint additional commissioners from Gombe South into the State Executives Council, and fill the existing vacancies vacated due to the death and retirement of the Past PDP chairman and the former Head of Civil service.
4. Construct additional rural link road networks in Gombe South.
5. Construct at least three (3) more General Hospitals, one at Shongom LGA where none exist, one in Tal Billiri West and the other in Southern Balanga LGA due to its difficult terrain.

6. Speed up work on the construction of College of Education, Billiri and ensure its take off soonest.
7. Recruit youth of Gombe South origin into the Youth Empowerment Programme (Marshals).
8. More Patronage of Contractors of Gombe South origin.
9. More projects that has direct impact on lives of the people of Gombe South to be sited in Gombe South.
10. Link villages and towns with electricity under the rural electrification scheme.
11. Commence the southern Gombe regional water project at Tula Hills as promised.
12. Revisit the Tula rehabilitation water project, so that water will be very much available to the people.
13. Equip Kaltungo General Hospital with more Anti Snake Venom, as the Hospital serves the north east sub-region.

Your Excellency, addressing issues with regards to your performances as far as Gombe South is concern became imperative because of our unalloyed loyalty and support to your administration. Looking into our plight, you will recall the sad events of the post election violence that took away so many lives and properties destroyed mostly of southern Gombe extraction, it became only natural for us in


Southern Gombe to be pained by deliberate lack of concern from the government. However, we preferred communicating to you through this medium instead of going public is because of how highly we regard your administration at least for now.

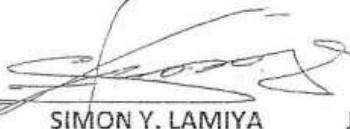
We wish you long live for continuous deliverance of democratic dividends to the people of Gombe State and to humanity.


LONG LIVE GOMBE SOUTH PROGRESSIVE FORUM

LONG LIVE GOMBE STATE

LONG LIVE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA


ABUBAKAR M. BELLO REME
PRESIDENT


SIMON Y. LAMIYA
VICE PRESIDENT


JOSIAH NABINTA
SECRETARY

Copy to: The Deputy Governor,
Gombe State,
Gombe.

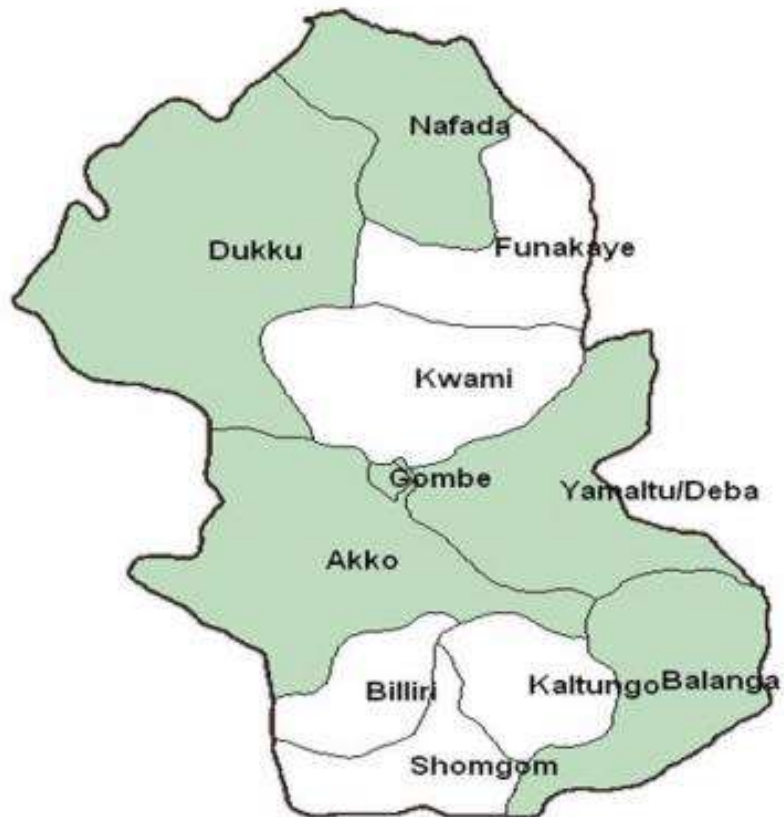
The Speaker,
Gombe State House of Assembly,
Gombe.

Above for your information.

NAME	SIGNATURE	WARD	LGA
Asubawin ...		Talasse, Bung, Rese	Balanga
Simon T. Lamig		5/south	Billiri
Josiah Nabinta		KI/WEST	Kaltungo
Sule Anthony L.		Shongom	Shongom
AbdulHamidu Mosher		Aurea	Kaltungo
Hajara .D. Ishaq		Bare	Billiri
Jibrin Wangas		Kano	Billiri
SAMMY AMOS FILIYA		FLIYA	SHONGOM
Timothy S. Labatak		Tanglag	Billiri
ADAMU LIMAN		Bamban	Balanga
EZEKIEL MARIUDA		Billiri West	Billiri
BULAFUL MARSAMARI		Gwandam	Shongom
Mrs Rachel Amos		TODI	Billiri
Musa Juman Seleh		Gumbale	Shongom
Hon Sarki Abbas		Shongom/Rese	Billiri
Hon. Manzo Takim		TIRI Kaltungo	Kaltungo

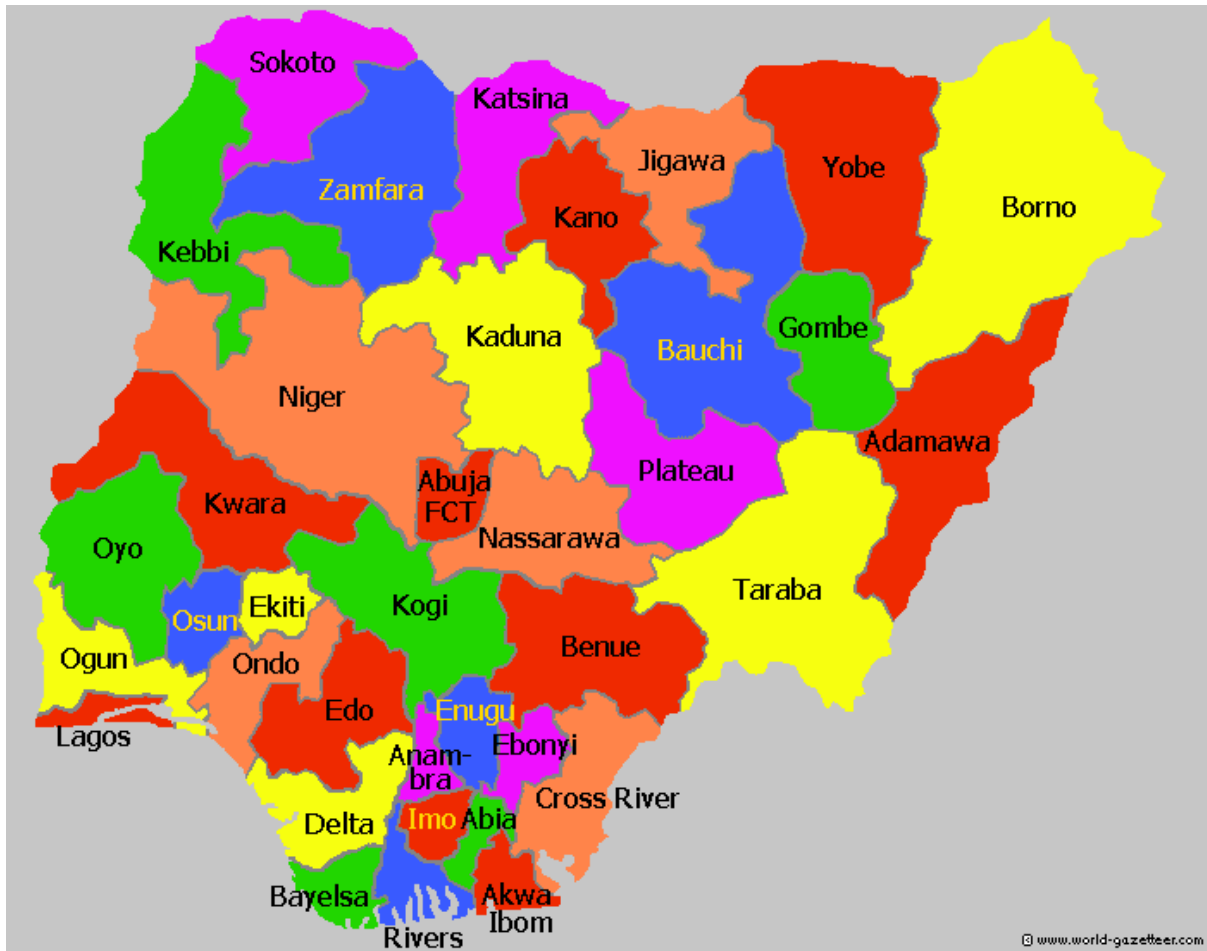
APPENDIX III

Map of Gombe State



APPENDIX IV

Map of Nigeria



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