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A Theological Analysis of Confessional-Centric Curriculum of Christian Religious Education: Towards an Inclusive Religious Pluralistic Centered Curriculum for Nigeria Colleges of Education

Ilesanmi Ajibola

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CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE RELIGIOUS
PLURALISTIC CENTERED CURRICULUM FOR NIGERIA COLLEGES OF
EDUCATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Ilesanmi Gabriel Ajibola

May 2018

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ABSTRACT

A THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CONFESSIONAL-CENTRIC CURRICULUM OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE RELIGIOUS PLURALISTIC CENTERED CURRICULUM FOR NIGERIA COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

By

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May 2018

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Marinus Iwuchukwu, Ph.D.

Desire to live in peace and unity despite the multi ethnic and multi religious composition of Nigeria, remain ideals that are constant in the nation's Constitution. However, accruable benefits of a culturally and religiously pluralistic society have continued to elude Nigeria due to incessant religious violence arising from the mutual suspicion of Christians and Muslims in the country. Nevertheless, the nation's National Policy on Education proposes the education sector as one of the platforms to inculcate a sense of unity and religious tolerance in the country. The policy considers the nation's learning centers and religious courses offered in such institutions as media to attain the goals of peaceful co-existence and unity of all citizens. Unfortunately, this goal has remained unrealized. It is from this background that this dissertation conducts a theological analysis of the curriculum of Christian Religious Studies operative in Nigeria Colleges of

Education and finds it defective by default for the purpose of facilitating religious harmony in the country. For one, the curriculum is mostly catechetical in content, and transmits a confessional orientation of religious studies across board from the training of CRS teachers, to their engagement in teaching at primary and secondary school levels. The project deploys Jacques Dupuis' 'inclusive religious pluralism' in drafting a Christian religious studies curriculum for Nigeria Colleges of Education. The submission is made on the assumption that a robust community of religiously pluralistic society operates on respect for each other's' religious views, and avoidance of attempt at relegating adherents of other religions and their religious views to an inferior status.

DEDICATION

To victims of interreligious ruckus in Nigeria

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My unalloyed gratitude goes to God Almighty who have been my Guide, Protector and Provider especially in circumstances where human supports are at the lowest ebb; and to Dr. Marinus Iwuchukwu, my supervisor, and *provocateur* of my interest in this area of research. I am grateful to Dr. Elochukwu Uzukwu and Dr. Maureen O'Brien of Theology Department, and Dr. Julia Williams of Instruction and Leadership in the School of Education, for their immense suggestions and contributions to the completion of this work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	African Education Commission
ATTC	Advance Teacher Training Colleges
BEC	Basic Education Curriculum
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CCN	Christian Council of Nigeria
CCNY	Carnegie Corporation of New York
COEs	Colleges of Education
COEs	Colleges of Education
CRS	Christian Religious Studies
ETC	Elementary Training College
FRN	Federal Republic of Nigeria
HETC	Higher Elementary Training College
IRPC	Inclusive Religious Pluralism Course
ISS	Islamic Religious Studies
N.C.E	Nigeria Certificate in Education
N.C.EMS	Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards
NACOMYO	National Council of Muslim Youth Organization of Nigeria
NCA	Northern Christian Association
NCCE	National Commission for Colleges of Education
NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
NPC	The Northern People's Congress
NPE	National Policy on Education
PPP	Public Private Partnership
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNN	University of Nigeria Nsukka

INTRODUCTION

0.1 An Overview

There is an intricate relationship between the practice of religion, religious education, especially Islam and Christianity, and Nigeria's educational policies, governance and politics, as well as the social life of the nation.¹ To a great extent religious education in Nigeria's public schools is susceptible to the nation's sensitive religious climate.² Nigeria's religious climate is such that it defies a positive correlation of religious fervor with religious tolerance in the country. According to Archbishop John Onaiyekan,³ "the phenomenon of religion in Nigeria verges on outright contradiction."⁴ His reason is founded on "an overwhelming evidence of religious fervor in Nigeria; places of worship are full, pilgrimages are overbooked, religious sentiments are high and religious issues are handled with extreme care by the government and security agents. From all indications, one would be justified to describe Nigeria as a religious nation."⁵

¹ For a correlation of these subjects See Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998) 136.

² The vulnerability of religious education to the Nation's chequered religious climate is occasioned by attempts to redress claims of religious bias and discrimination through religious education curriculum and policies. For example, Cardinal Olunmi Okogie, a renowned Catholic Church leader in Nigeria had once presented undue government favoritism for Islam as part of the reasons for government takeover of Missionary schools in Nigeria, see Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 134.

³ John Onaiyekan is a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church, and the current Archbishop of Nigeria Federal Capital, Abuja. He is a Co-President of the World Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace (WCRL-RfP) with headquarters at the UN headquarters in New York, and a Co-Chairperson of the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), an organization that promotes the ideals of peaceful coexistence among Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

⁴ John Onaiyekan, "Recent History of Religions in Nigeria." Quoted in Emeka Ezejobelu, *Challenges of Interreligious Dialogue: Between the Christian and the Muslim Communities in Nigeria* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009) 39.

⁵ Onaiyekan, *op cit.*

However, Nigeria's social, political, and religious experiences have been punctuated with many religiously informed crises that have led to mutual suspicion and unhealthy competition among religions' adherents, especially between Christians and Muslims. Part of the measures to safeguard each other's religious identity and heritage has been through the education sector of the country. Thus, the tendency to safeguard the faith and formative influences of religious dogmas on pupils in public schools is deliberate.⁶ Such measures are given definitive expressions in the various religious curricula of the country's public schools and are necessarily, and deliberately, confessional in nature.

While the confessional-centric religious curriculum currently implemented in Nigerian public schools may have its advantages which include the preservation of religious and moral values, and a religious check on modernism and globalization among others,⁷ its disadvantages in a pluralistic society as Nigeria tend to outweigh those values.⁸ It is for this reason that the confessional-centric status of Nigeria religious education curriculum needs to be reconsidered.

⁶ Aisha Lemu was on the panel that reviewed the religious education curriculum being implemented in Nigeria. She acknowledged that the curriculum was intentionally made to have a confessional orientation. Cf. Lemu, "Teaching for Tolerance in Nigeria," in *Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies*, ed. Recep Kaymakcan and Oddbjorn Leirvik (Suleymaniye - Istanbul: Center for values education (DEM) Press, 2007):222.

⁷ While the confessional pedagogical approach to the study of religion has the advantage of advancing religious ideals and mores for the preservation of the society, it must be acknowledged that such a curriculum also has the negative capacity to breed fundamentalism, intolerance, and unhealthy proselytism. The double-edged capability of a confessional pedagogy is acknowledged by Oduntan Jawoniyi who hinges the aim of such approach on "religionizing, moralizing, and initiating pupils into, and nurturing them within, a particular faith tradition." see Jawoniyi, "Rethinking the Religious Education Curricula in Nigerian Schools," *Journal for the Study of religion* 22, no. 2 (2009):68.

⁸ Such a curriculum according to Jawoniyi, "Rethinking the Religious Education Curricula in Nigerian Schools," 68, is "to all intents and purposes aimed at the formation of

Given the sensitive roles that religion plays in the private and public life of an average Nigerian, the theological implications of a confessional centric curriculum on the nation's socio-religious equilibrium cannot be ignored. It is from this understanding that this dissertation considers the theology of the current curriculum of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) operative in Nigeria's Colleges of Education (COEs) for the promotion of religious harmony and peaceful coexistence in the country. The analysis reveals that the curriculum is inadequate for the required theological disposition necessary for "moral and spiritual values requisite for smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations,"⁹ especially among the various religious adherents in the country. It is argued that the COEs remain strategic to the dissemination of knowledge and promotion of government policies, and a useful hub for the sustenance of moral and social values of Nigerians. The project recognizes the potentials of the COEs, which are the production and nursery platform for Nigeria teachers, as good grounds for the dissemination of interreligious ideas and useful apparatus for schooling in tolerance and peacebuilding. However, the medium must be fine-tuned for that purpose. Thus, this work proposes Jacques Dupuis' inclusive pluralism¹⁰ for the theological fine-tuning of the CRS curriculum in COEs for

pupils' ethnic or national religious identity, culminating in the continued entrenchment of a particular religious tradition."

⁹ Part of the objective of the minimum standard for Nigeria Certificate in CRS is attainment of "moral and spiritual values requisite for smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations." See Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences*. 2012th ed. Garki, Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012. <http://www.fcezarionline.net/ncce/arts&socscience.pdf> 1

¹⁰ This form of religious pluralism was developed by Jacques Dupuis in *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004); and his *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002). The designation describes Dupuis' response to the debate around the soteriological potency of religions outside Christianity. Succinctly, Dupuis' response is captured by the designation: "Inclusive Pluralism." In his view, citing *Ad Gentes*, #9, other religions contain "elements of truth and grace" by which their adherent could be saved (cf.

better interreligious relation in the country. It argues that commitment to one's religious tenets with conscientious openness to the study of others' religions as they are, guarantee a way to greater appreciation of all religions, and remains a viable means to ameliorate the dangerous effects of an exclusive confessional approach to religious education in Nigeria.

0.2 Background to the study

Nigeria has witnessed several educational reforms since it came into existence as a nation in 1914, over a century ago. These reforms take on board pertinent concerns and agenda through which to navigate the nation to better times economically, politically, religiously, and socially. Initial curricula concept of the country's education system was highly influenced by the British educational system. With time, the system went through various modifications that address the needs, interests, and aspirations of the citizens. The first of such review since Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule was the 1969 National Curriculum Conference. The proceeding from the Conference is what has now become the "The Philosophy of Nigerian Education." The document forms the bedrock of the nation's current educational paradigm, among which is the role of tertiary schools in 'forging and cementing national unity.'¹¹ Notably, the CRS curriculum is one of the tools through which the government intends to achieve its education objectives in the

Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism, 179, 326). Note that Dupuis' focus is not necessarily about comparative measures of religion, but about sufficiency of the content of other religions toward salvation for their adherents, however, such content is anchored on the Christic presence in all religions.

¹¹ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), 26. https://issuu.com/esspin/docs/national_policy_on_education (accessed 26 September 2016.)

country.¹² However, the reality of Nigeria as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi religious country with about 180 million people,¹³ continues to demand constant review of the various education policies to meet up with unfolding contextual realities.

The religious population of the country is unevenly distributed between Christians, Muslims, and indigenous religion adherents, with Christians and Muslims holding greater numeric allocation of the population.¹⁴ Nevertheless, while religion occupies a paramount place in the daily affairs of the Nigerian populace, the religious climate of Nigeria may rightly be described as apprehensive, given the incessant occasions of religious riots and violence. In Nigeria, religion takes paramount place in governance. For instance, several states of the federation have instituted Islamic Shari'a

¹² CRS is listed as one of the approved courses for Nigeria universities and colleges of education (cf. National University Commission, *Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for Undergraduate Programmes in Nigerian Universities (Social Sciences)* (Abuja: NUC, 2007), and Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for General Education*, 2012th ed. (Garki, Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012).

¹³ The National Population Commission of Nigeria (NPCN) goes by its 2006 census and places the country's population at 140 million *see* Federal Republic of Nigeria, *2006 Population and Housing Census* (Abuja, 2010). However, the World Bank and the US Congressional service estimated 174 Million and 180 million respectively, *see The World Bank, Nigeria* (Abuja/Washington, 2016), and Clarence J. Bouchat, *The Causes of Instability in Nigeria and Implications for the United States* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2013). I consider the latter approximation to be a more realistic estimation given the context of the time lapse between 2006 and 2016, with the rate of Nigeria's population growth of 2.6% in 2015, *see The World Bank 2016*.

¹⁴ Christianity and Islam are generally regarded as the two most populous religions practiced in the country. Umaru A. Pate, Song Ahmed H. Abdullahi Musa, and Umar Abdullahi M. note that the population of Nigeria comprises of "millions of people who are adherents of the two major religions of Islam and Christianity and, to a lesser extent, the traditional religion" cf. "Religious Diversity and National Integration in Nigeria." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, 25 (2014): 112–114. The claim by Umaru et al, is typical of the way Nigerian authors cite the religious population of the country. However, Johnson Terwase rightly observes that most claims about Nigeria's Christian-Muslim population distribution are anecdotal and are based purely on assumption, since 'religious distribution' is not an index in Nigeria's National Population Commission's population distribution head counts, *see Isaac Terwase Sampson, "Religion and the Nigerian State: Situating the de Facto and de Jure Frontiers of State–Religion Relations and Its Implications for National Security," Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 3, no. 3 (2014): 311.

rules in the administration of their respective governments.¹⁵ Although, the validity of such legal system in those states sparked nationwide debate, much of its constitutional legality was glossed over without any formal and distinctive declaration on the matter by the federal government. Similarly, it might not be coincidental that the country's constitution defines its sovereignty in part as a "nation under God"¹⁶ since national holidays are declared for religious ceremonies, and taxpayers' monies are expended on religious programs and pilgrimages. However, while the role of religious influences in governance is given high premium, deliberate efforts at regulating the negative effects of religious practices, and enforcing the constitutional guidelines on religious matters have conspicuously been misplaced in government's strategic plans for education.¹⁷

The lack of adequate plan to utilize religious education in the service of conflicts arising from the multiple presence of religions in the country downplays the role of religion as one of the major causes of instability in Nigeria. Obviously, such gap has consequences on Nigeria's internal unity, inter-religious corporation, and the nation's international relation.¹⁸ The gap further promotes the classrooms as breeding ground for

¹⁵ Although the affected states claimed that such introduction and implementation of the Islamic legal system in their states would not affect the Christian population in those states, there were apprehension and anxiety among non-Muslims living in those states. The states affected are Zamfara State, Kano State, Sokoto State, Katsina State, Bauchi State, Borno State, Jigawa State, Kebbi State and parts of Kaduna State, Niger State, and Gombe State.

¹⁶ Federal Republic of Nigeria. *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (1999). <http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Nigeria/constitution2.pdf> (accessed 20 January 2016.)

¹⁷ The most recent evidence for this claim is the non-direct inclusion of the management of religious issues in the current strategic plans for education. Federal Ministry of Education. See *Federal Ministry of Education 10 Year Strategic Plan: Draft. National Education Plan* (Lagos, 2007).

¹⁸ Bouchat, *The causes of instability in Nigeria*, 41f

religious fanaticism in the country.¹⁹ Ironically, the most viable avenue to inculcate the much-cherished value of peaceful co-existence in the country is also the classroom.

It is against the background of inadequate exploration of the education sector for interreligious peace and harmony, and the need to review the overly confessional centric nature of the nation's teachers' curriculum in CRS that this project is embarked upon. It considers the latent potential for peace building offered by formal schools, especially the COEs as good grounds to promote the ideals of a religiously inclusive pluralistic curriculum, and to "forge and cement unity"²⁰ in the country.

0.3 Statement of the problem

This work is prompted by observed inadequacies in the works of many researchers who have examined religious education as a solution to issues that threatens Nigeria's unity. Most of these researchers acknowledge the need to make a shift from the present confessional approach and evangelization centered religious curricula to curricula that are more open and reflective of the nation's religious composition.²¹ However,

¹⁹ This view resonates with the thoughts of Rosalind I. J Hackett, "Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2, no. 3 (1999).

²⁰ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, 2013, 26.

²¹ Such researches include, but are not limited to works by the following researchers: Anthony Ikechukwu Chimaka, *Formal Education : A Catalyst to Nation Building: A Case Study of Nigeria* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014); Edmund Emeka Ezegbobelu, *Challenges of Interreligious Dialogue: Between the Christian and the Muslim Communities in Nigeria* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009); Hackett, "Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria"; Joseph A. Ilori, *Dialogue between Christian and Muslim in Nigeria, How Feasible?* The First International Conference on Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations (Miango, Plateau State, 1993); Jawoniyi, "Rethinking the Religious Education Curricula in Nigerian Schools"; Umaru, et al, "Religious Diversity and National Integration in Nigeria"; Sampson, "Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendations to the State and Religious Communities"; M. U. Ushe, "The Role of CRS in Resolving Political Violence in the Northern States of Nigeria." *Journal of Education and Practice* 3, no. 1 (2012): 41–53.

acknowledging the necessity of a curriculum that would retain the advantages of the confessional approach to religious education while ventilating the reality of the nation's religious plurality are often lacking. Secondly, none of the researches, to the best of my investigations, has conducted a theological analysis of the current CRS curriculum in COEs with an aim to proffer theological model that would more positively address the theological pitfalls of a confessional-centric curriculum in a multi-religious country as Nigeria. Thirdly, while there are departments and specialized schools dedicated to the study of conflict resolution and interreligious dialogue in the country, there have been no effective CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs specifically designed to “forge and cement the unity” of Nigeria as inscribed in the *National Policy on Education*.²²

Considering the various loose ends in previous and current researches in religious education curriculum, as identified in the preceding paragraph, and the need for an interreligious model for religious education curriculum, it is obvious that there is a problem with using the current curriculum to achieve religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. Thus, the primary problem considered in this work is an examination of the theological adequacy, and religious relevance of the current confessional approach to CRS curriculum operative in Nigeria COEs.

It is assumed that the present form of the CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs does not have the capacity to address the incessant cases of religious intolerance arising from the multi-religious status of the nation. Nevertheless, such institutions remain viable contexts to the promotion of religious peace in the country. In this regard, Rosalind Hackett rightly observed, “institutions - whether primary, secondary, or tertiary - have

²² Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, 2013, 2

been connected to the growth of religious conflict in Nigeria.”²³ Wherever one may live in Nigeria, he or she cannot be unaffected, directly or indirectly by the sporadic, but never-ending socio-religious cum political unrest in the Country. Instances of violence are often appeased with palliative words from the government and other stakeholders. Such palliative words result from various reports of commissions of enquiry, and panels of investigations set up by the government. As often the case, solutions proffered by these commissions and panels of investigations are at best transient, with obtuse recommendations, and appeals that are characteristically *ad baculum*.²⁴ According to Eric Guttschuss, effective remedies to religious violence through the formal criminal justice system in Nigeria have eluded members of aggrieved communities that are often harassed by law enforcement agents in the country.²⁵ Such aggrieved individuals or groups carry out reprisal attacks and do take the law into their own hands to kill in communities.²⁶ From these observations, it is understandable that recommendations from panels of enquiry set up to address these cases of violence arising from religious, social and/or political conflicts, do not seem to be profound enough to curb or ameliorate the religious crises in the country. A reason for the inefficiency of the recommendations has been

²³ Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions,” 37

²⁴ By this expression is meant an appeal to the use of force. The use of threats, negative force, and or coercion is not uncommon in addressing conflicts resulting in riots and violence in Nigeria. Obinna Anyadike quoted Eric Guttschuss, a Nigeria researcher in Human Right Watch, Africa division on how security agents handle instances of violent riots which makes individuals and groups to be uninterested in pursuing dialogue or other methods for curbing such cases: “the police or the military will randomly round up anyone they find at the scene of the crime and them lump them all together and charge them before a magistrate court ...more often than not, the majority of these cases are dropped and no charges are made.” Cf: Anyadike, “Sectarian violence goes unaddressed in Nigeria,” *IRIN: The inside story on emergencies* (13/12/2013), <http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2013/12/13/sectarian-violence-goes-unaddressed-nigeria> (accessed July 16, 2016).

²⁵ Reported in Anyadike, “Sectarian violence goes unaddressed in Nigeria.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

identified by Monsignor Raphael Anasiudu²⁷ who claims, “at the root of the religious problem is intolerance together with disregard in high and low places for the principles of fair-play, and peaceful co-existence.”²⁸

Assuming Anasiudu is right in his conclusion, and he probably is, judging from the continued religious violence in the country, it would be correct to argue that the problem of religious intolerance has not been given a radical tackle from the very source where structured attitudinal formation partly develops, that is, in schools. This argument finds substance in Hackett’s view, which locates the breeding of religious intolerance in the classroom.²⁹ The current religious education curricula (Islam and Christianity) have the potential to impede thorough acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the religious traditions of the Other,³⁰ and “potentially facilitates misconceptions and misgiving about the faith traditions of the ‘Other.’”³¹

It is sad to note that whenever the culprits of religiously informed violence and crimes are paraded in parts of the country, the major perpetrators are youths.³² Ironically,

²⁷ Msgr. Raphael Anasiudu worked at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria for 14 years (1980 – 1994), and as its Secretary General for 9 years. Cf. Anasiudu Raphael, “Receive The Holy Spirit. Whose Sins You Forgive, They Are Forgiven,” *Fides Communications: Living the Faith*, last modified 2016, <http://www.fidesnigeria.org/index.php/frontend/column/readcolumnarticle/ripn6ss9h3/049c08be04#>.

²⁸ He is quoted in Ilesanmi Ajibola, *Symmachus Unearthed: A Handbook on Ecumenism and Religious Dialogue* (Zaria: Faith Printers International, 2004) 4

²⁹ Cf. Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions,” 37

³⁰ This claim is made by Jawoniyi who argues that the confessional approach to religious education undermines the deliberate effort to know about the other’s religion, specifically from the adherent’s own perspectives. cf: Jawoniyi, “Rethinking the Religious Education Curricula, 71.

³¹ Ibid.

³² For instances of such incidents and other details of such occurrences See Nigeria: USCIRF 2013 Annual Report, 5 <http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/resources/Nigeria%202013.pdf>. Similarly, Falola, and Hackett, in their respective works note that Schools in Nigeria have been major breeding grounds for religiously motivated violence, and riots. For

those profoundly affected are also youths who cannot chose to live and blossom wherever they wish because of possible attacks, violence, or reprisal outbreaks in parts of the country.³³ The problem of religious tension as it is now prevalent in the Country tends to sour the cordial relationship that ought to exist among the various religious adherents that are compatriots. Yet, the constitution and people of Nigeria have the common vision and desire to build a united, virile, and just society³⁴ that is based on respect for fundamental rights of all, irrespective of religious affiliations.³⁵ By this understanding, the goal of Nigeria *Constitution* and *National Policy on Education* is for the citizens to live in peaceful atmosphere and religious freedom. The means to attain this goal must be the concern of curriculum planners and every stakeholder. In this respect, this dissertation offers suggestions towards attaining a united and religiously peaceful nation through a review and updating of the current CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs.

0.4 A Literature Review on the State of the Question

The history of formal education in Nigeria from inception to the present has undergone various reforms; many of these reforms focus on curriculum reviews and

details from these authors, *see* Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 3-4, and Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom.” 551-557.

³³ For instance, in the wake of the *Boko Haram* insurgency in 2012, a suicide bomber’s attack on a Kaduna (North central Nigeria) became a reason to set up checkpoints in faraway Taraba State (North East, Nigeria 756 km away) to protect worshipping Christians communities. An attempt by a Muslim man who insisted on going through the checkpoint led to his death in the hands of the Christian vigilante. Subsequently, the incident led to burning of houses, churches, shops and the death of at least four people in other pars of the country. *See* details of this incident in Ibrahim Abdul, “4 killed in religious riots in central Nigeria” (November 18, 2012), <https://www.yahoo.com/news/4-killed-religious-riots-central-nigeria-135404324.html?ref=gs>, (accessed 31/8/2016).

³⁴ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), 1. https://issuu.com/esspin/docs/national_policy_on_education (accessed 26 September 2016.)

³⁵ Federal Republic of Nigeria, “Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria” (1999), <http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Nigeria/constitution2.pdf>. (accessed January 20, 2016).

general education policies. The 1887 and 1916 Education ordinances were among the considerable landmarks in Nigeria education reforms and development. Subsequently, there was the Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education Development in Nigeria, and the 1969 Curriculum Conference from which emerged the Nigeria policies on education in 1977, which was subsequently reviewed in 1981, 1998, 2004, and 2013 respectively.³⁶ All of these were attempts to make education responsive to the needs of the country.

One of the objectives of the Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education in Nigeria was to “investigate the educational needs of the people with special reference to the religious, social, hygienic, and economic conditions.”³⁷ Among its recommendations was the need to “design instructional programs for health and leisure, religious life, character development and family life.”³⁸ Observably, the recognition of religious roles in the daily needs and development of the nation was neither underplayed nor did subsequent reviews and recommendations on education policies of the country out-rightly rule out the relevance of religion and religious studies in the development agenda of governments in Nigeria. Consequently, many academic works and in-depth researches have been conducted in the area of religious education and its relevance to the nation’s needs.³⁹

³⁶ FGN, *National Policy on Education*.

³⁷ Babatunde Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, Revised ed. (Ibadan, Nigeria: NPS Education Publishers Limited, 1995) 120.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Some of the relevant works in recent times are listed in footnote no.22, further details of the listed books and other study of related works shall be included in the enlarged version of this section in the dissertation. Other relevant sources include: R. A. Ajayi, *The Purpose of CRS in Nigeria Schools* (Ibadan: Africana FED Publishers Ltd., 2007); F. A. Arinze, *The Impact of Christian Education at Present* (Onitsha: Archdiocesan Secretariat publication, 1994); G. E. Obioha, *Religious Education for Life Transformation* (Enugu: Chinecherem Press., 1999); C. C. Udofot, *Road Map for Religious Education in Nigeria* (Calabar: University of Calabar Publishing Press, 2006).

These works cut across religious education as tools for national development, historical investigations of curriculum development, and history of religious violence in the country. Studies in religious education curriculum with specific focus on the Nigerian education system have also been conducted in recent times; such studies recognize the need to review the current religious education curriculum and channel its strength towards attainment of particular outcomes in national development.

Among the many researches on the relationship between religious education curriculum and religious violence, attainment of peaceful coexistence and religious tolerance in Nigeria, is the work of Rosalind Hackett.⁴⁰ In her work on “Conflict in the Classroom,”⁴¹ Hackett rightly conceives Nigerian educational sector as “a microcosm of wider religion-state relations.”⁴² Her perception is not far fetched from the overall interest of this project which sees the educational sector as a viable path to resolving issues of religious intolerance and national integration. Hackett established a link between “the ways in which educational institutions - whether primary, secondary, or tertiary - have been connected with the growth of religious conflict in Nigeria,”⁴³ and wondered “[H]ow might Nigerian schools and institution of higher learning constitutes sites for generating or countering religious intolerance?”⁴⁴ She cites instances in curricula matters in

⁴⁰ Rosalind Hackett spent approximately nine years teaching and researching in Nigeria and was Asst. Prof. in Religious Studies Department of University of Calabar, Nigeria. She has authored many works on Religious education curriculum and the problem of religious violence in Nigeria.

⁴¹ Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria.”

⁴² Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom,” 558.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Nigeria's religious education, religious activities in schools, as well as constitutional issues as lenses through which rights pertaining to freedom of religion or beliefs has the methodological and theoretical advantage of obliging researchers to consider the question of religion and tolerance at local grassroots, regional, and at national levels. Notably, she observes that the Nigerian system of religious education "encourages confessional approach to religious instruction in the schools;"⁴⁵ and that such approach has contributed to a further polarization of Nigerian society along religious lines.⁴⁶ She opines that such approach to religious education "leads to probable violation of the principles of religious freedom embedded in the United Nations declaration on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief."⁴⁷ While her work opens subsequent conversation on the need to review the confessional approach to religious education in Nigeria, it fell short of any provision of religious education curriculum to attain religious "tolerance"⁴⁸ in Nigeria.

Since Hackett's work, subsequent researches in religious education curriculum and peacebuilding in Nigeria have emerged. Most of the researches attempt to correlate the schools' capacity for moral and attitude transformation with the contents of religious education curriculum.⁴⁹ Most of these researches do not directly establish any link

⁴⁵ Ibid., 538.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ By religious tolerance here is meant the recognition of a fundamental need to peacefully correlate with the Other in spite of differences in religious views that are either totally different from one's own or a religion having slight differences in details.

⁴⁹ There is an abundance of literature and researches on this correlation, among the recent works that established such connection are the now published dissertation of Rowland Onyenali, *Appraising the Nigerian Problem through Education and Religious Dialogue* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013). Other scholarly works include those of Emele M. Uka, "Relevance of Religious

between religious education curriculum in Nigerian tertiary schools and attainment of religiously peaceful society. In fact, as recent as September 30, 2016, the current minister of Education in Nigeria, Adamu Adamu, reiterated the need to make “the study of Christian Religious Knowledge compulsory for Christian students and the study of Islamic Religious Knowledge compulsory for Muslim students.”⁵⁰ The reason for his proposal is clear, “[T]here is nothing we can give them [Nigerian children] than to give them character, teach them about their God – the source of all values on which life and peaceful coexistence depends.”⁵¹ The disparity between his emphasis on confessional study of religion and attainment of peaceful coexistence was probably not obvious to him.

Nevertheless, a close attempt at establishing such relationship is found in the work of Aisha Lemu.⁵² In her work, Lemu presents a “critical analyses and innovative visions for tolerance education in school, focusing particularly on the role that religious and ethical education ... can play in fostering tolerance and promoting inclusive notions of citizenship.”⁵³ She examines the historical background and interreligious contexts for the teaching of religious studies in Nigeria, and notes that religious studies syllabi in

Education in Nigeria,” *African Journal of Religion, Culture and society* 1, no. 1 (2013): 95–103; and Ushe, “The Role of CRS in Resolving Political Violence in the Northern States of Nigeria.”

⁵⁰ Chijioke Okoronkwo, “Minister Wants Religious Studies Compulsory in Nigerian Schools, Reintroduction of History,” *The Express News* (Abuja, September 30, 2016). <http://theexpressnews.com/minister-wants-religious-studies-compulsory-nigerian-schools-reintroduction-history/> (September 30, 2016). The report states that the Minister made the proposal to delegates to the National Council of Education 61st Ministerial Session of NCE in Abuja, Nigeria.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Aisha B. Lemu, “Teaching for Tolerance in Nigeria,” in *Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies*, ed. Recep Kaymakcan and Oddbjorn Leirvik (Suleymaniye - Istanbul: Center for values education (DEM) Press, 2007) 230-232.

⁵³ Ibid., 7

Nigeria have always been streamlined along the line of evangelization interest.⁵⁴ It is of importance to note that Lemu had served on the panel that drafted the Islamic studies syllabus for use in Nigerian Secondary schools. According to her, the current Islamic religious education syllabus was drafted on the principle of what a young Muslim should know about Islam in order to live as a Muslim when he leaves school.⁵⁵ Consequently, she acknowledged that “the way of teaching Islam and Christianity in Nigeria is expected to be confessional, that is, students are taught how to practice their religion as well as being taught about their religion.”⁵⁶ Further, she notes that neither the Christian religious knowledge syllabus nor the Islamic religious studies have separate sections that deals with interreligious relation. According to her, the syllabi were not specifically designed for such matters; they do not particularly aim at peaceful interreligious coexistence.⁵⁷ Both the Islamic study syllabus and the Christian knowledge syllabus are highly flavored with evangelization spices⁵⁸ with much emphasis on doctrines and moral teachings.⁵⁹ In spite of the primary intention of the religious studies curriculum, Lemu argues that the syllabi for religious studies could be used in promoting tolerance but with caution, since such efforts would require having a component of Christianity in the Islamic studies syllabus, and the component of Islam in the Christian religious knowledge syllabus.⁶⁰ She recommends that any attempt to tilt the curriculum in the direction of interreligious

⁵⁴ Ibid., 222

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 223

⁵⁸ Ibid., 227

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

dialogue should be underscored by the existing tension between Muslims and Christians in the country in order to avoid opening “a can of worms.”⁶¹ Nonetheless, she argues, “the teaching of the current syllabi in government schools is in no way a part of the problem of religious friction in the country.”⁶² Nevertheless, she notes that the syllabi help in “however small way to enlighten Christians and Muslims about the true teaching of their own respective religions and thereby protect them from false information.”⁶³ What is not acknowledged by the latter argument is the breeding of segregation that such one sided, and unpluralistic religious education curriculum and its implementation could cause.

The claim by Hackett that confessional approach to religious education breeds polarization of the nation and fractured a united Nigeria along intolerant religious affiliations⁶⁴ contrasts with Lemu’s claim that the current curriculum is in no way part of the problem of religious friction in the country.⁶⁵ If the latter is to be the case, one wonders why Lemu would further advocates for a curriculum that is more responsive to multi-religious composition of the nation, though with caution.⁶⁶ One thing that is clear by these arguments is that the debate on the approaches to religious education is a sensitive one in Nigeria. However, the sensitivity of issues involved in discussing religion in Nigeria, especially between Christians and Muslims on how religion should be taught in schools, should not negate the need for a review of the existing curriculum; what is

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 321-322

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom,” 538

⁶⁵ Lemu, “Teaching for Tolerance in Nigeria,” 321

⁶⁶ Ibid., 227

important is to take seriously the concerns of stakeholders who fear losing their religious hold on their kids and teens. In spite of such concerns, the education sector remains a viable way to address Nigeria's interreligious issues.

From the perspective that religious education remains a viable path to addressing Nigeria's religious problems and other concerns, proposals have been made toward addressing the hydra-headed problems of the country via the education sector with particular attention to religious education. It is from such background that Onyenali adopts a cognitive approach in a PhD dissertation⁶⁷ to appraise Nigeria's problems through education and religious dialogue.⁶⁸ Onyenali argued that the solution to Nigerians multiple problems lie in an intellectual reformation,⁶⁹ and religious dialogue.⁷⁰ He proposed religious education "for the bulk of the masses" as a way to "inculcate the spirit of cooperation among the adherents of the different religious sects in Nigeria."⁷¹ Nevertheless, Onyenali like many other researchers as Emele Uka,⁷² Isaac Terwase Sampson,⁷³ and Mike Ushe,⁷⁴ did not go beyond a theoretical proposal of an intellectual revolution in addressing the problem of multi religious presence and violence in Nigeria.

⁶⁷ Submitted to Julius-Maximilian University of Wuzburg.

⁶⁸ The dissertation has since been converted into a published book: Onyenali, *Appraising the Nigerian Problem through Education and Religious Dialogue*. (Peter Lang Academic Research, 2013).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 10

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 119

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 149

⁷² Uka, "Relevance of Religious Education in Nigeria."

⁷³ Sampson, "Religious Violence in Nigeria."

⁷⁴ Ushe, "The Role of CRS in Resolving Political Violence in the Northern States of Nigeria."

However, an in-depth research, which particularly focused on drawing attention to strategic requisite for implementing non-confessional, multi-faith religious education in Nigeria's publicly funded schools, was carried out by Jawoniyi.⁷⁵ Jawoniyi advocates "the substitution of the currently deployed confessional, mono-religious education curricula with a non-confessional, multi-faith religious education."⁷⁶ His advocacy favors a religious education curriculum reform that would feature a study of all the World religions with New Religious Movements duly represented in Nigeria.⁷⁷ Jawoniyi's position marks a shift from the conservative position of solving the multiple religious problems of religious intolerance from the confessional curriculum menu. He notes that a teacher training/education in religious education towards the multi-faith approach is vital to the strategy necessary for a successful implementation of a multi-faith religious education curriculum.⁷⁸ His recommendations are based on the perceived needs for a religious education curriculum that would rightly address the multi-faith status of Nigeria. The details of what should go into such curriculum and how it should be implemented are however conspicuously missing in his work.

Further, the recent review of the primary education curriculum by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) features a new subject listing in the primary school curriculum; it is titled "Religion and National Values."⁷⁹ The

⁷⁵ Jawoniyi, "Rethinking the Religious Education Curricula in Nigerian Schools."

⁷⁶ Ibid., 74

⁷⁷ Ibid., 74

⁷⁸ Ibid., 75

⁷⁹ Federal Ministry of Education, *9-Year Basic Education Curriculum: Religion and National Value: Prg 4 - 6* (Yaba, Lagos, 2012) v. According to Sunday Orji, a Senior Research Officer with NERDC, Abuja, the document is NERDC response to the National Council on Education (NCEd) 2005 mandate to produce a "viable curriculum to meet national goals." Cf.

curriculum is the new minimum standard of the Federal Ministry of Education for the 9-Year Basic Education for primary schools. In its efforts, NERDC notes that such a review is necessary “in line with contemporary global and national concerns.”⁸⁰ While this review takes cognizance of the role of religions in aiding moral uprightness, the global and national concerns regarding the role of religion in peace building through a multi-religious approach to the study of religion is not addressed. Similarly, the *Federal Ministry of Education 10 Year Strategic Plan Draft* for education in Nigeria respond to the current crises of education in Nigeria,⁸¹ but the document did not address the necessity for a religious education curriculum that would be responsive to the interreligious problem of the country. The *10-year strategic plan* was drafted in line with the Vision 2020 statement that by 2020 Nigeria would be one of the top 20 economies in the world. The document pursued this intention with a plan for the future of education that would support the vision. That document is important to the extent that it reflects the federal government policy for the education sector as a whole, and the direction been embarked upon by the federal government in the setting and monitoring of standards for the education sector. Further, the document outlines the various education responsibilities of the three tiers of government: the federal, the state, and local government.⁸² In particular and in relation to this work, it is observed that both the federal government and the state government control delivery of tertiary education in the country, but within the purview of policies outlined only by the federal government. There is no doubt that a

Sunday N. Orji, “The New 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum,” in *Sensitization & Advocacy Workshop for Teachers in TarabaState*, 2012.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, v

⁸¹ *Federal Ministry of Education 10 Year Strategic Plan Draft*, 1

⁸² *Ibid.*, 2 - 3

peaceful coexistence is required for the promotion of these ideals. However, the translation of this responsibility towards a practicable religious education curriculum for peace building in the country, at tertiary level of education is not indicated in the plan.

Conclusively, the state of the question of religious education curriculum that would speak directly to the interreligious needs of the country, especially towards peace building, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence has remained at the level of mere acknowledgment of that necessity. At best, there are suggestions towards drafting a curriculum to that effect, but an actual effort in making such curriculum available has not been done. In other words, the need to review the current religious education curriculum towards a curriculum that would be sensitive and compliant to the multi-religious realities of Nigeria as a nation have been well acknowledged by many authors and researchers without commensurate efforts at producing one. At the nation's primary school level, national values are now being conceived as attainable through religious education curriculum. However, two things are yet to be done in respect of an inclusion of "religion and national values" into the primary schools' religious education curriculum. They are: the training of teachers for the specific implementation of a CRS curriculum designed for the attainment of peaceful coexistence in the country. Secondly, since the CRS curriculum currently used in the training of primary school teachers is highly confessional, there is a need for a draft of a religious education curriculum in feeder tertiary school like the COEs, from where the ideals of national integration and peaceful interreligious coexistence would be incorporated into the training of the teachers.

0.5 Purpose of the study

This dissertation is aimed at conducting a theological analysis of the contents and drawbacks of the current CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs. The research brings the work of Jacques Dupuis⁸³ on “Inclusive Pluralism” into conversation with the objectives of CRS curriculum for NCE students in order to construct a CRS curriculum that could address the problem of religious intolerance in Nigeria using the platform of teacher education.

There is a consensus among the authors whose works were reviewed to demonstrate the state of this research problem, on the inadequacy of a confessional approach to religious education in Nigeria. However, dealing with religious diversity, and making theological sense of the differences and of Christian identity in the light of the diversity could be cumbersome, both for the government and for CRS curriculum planners. Nevertheless, theologians and researchers of religions have always made efforts at proposing guiding models in interreligious relationship. Of these models are two outstanding positions, the pluralistic and the inclusivist models of religious relation.⁸⁴ Both models give positive recognition to plurality of religions in a society. While religious pluralism upholds equal rights of all religions, and rejects any absolute claim of religious truth by any particular religion, religious inclusivism delineates “lines between

⁸³ Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*.

⁸⁴ Religious exclusivism is not included in this categorization since it is not positively disposed to religious plurality. A threefold category that are commonly used in discussing types of religious dialogue in a multi-religious environment have been well articulated in the work of Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1982). In the work, Race categorizes the options in Christian theology of religions as exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. These models are matched in Paul Knitter’s four “models” with an additional expression designated as “acceptance model”: Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*.

the Christian faith and the interreligious dynamism of the other faiths.”⁸⁵ It sets parameter within which particular religions may be considered normative. To Race, inclusivism is “both an acceptance and a rejection of the other faiths, a dialectical ‘yes’ and ‘no.’”⁸⁶ Nevertheless, in the context of religious education, Carl Sterkens identifies three models as most prevalent: the mono-religious model, the multi religious model, and the interreligious model.⁸⁷ Among the three theories, Sterkens argues, “the monoreligious model pays little or no attention to the polarity between involvement with one’s own religious tradition and recognition of other traditions.”⁸⁸ Largely, a monoreligious model emphasizes an exclusivist view that is tantamount to what is obtainable in a confessional-centric curriculum in Nigeria’s COEs. The multi religious model aptly represented by John Hick emphasizes religious differences as varied interpretation of the same ultimate reality.⁸⁹ *Ipsa facto*, people of different religions participate validly in their religious practices as do every other religious adherent of other religions. On this note, no religion can claim absolute normativity in religious matters. According to Sterkens, one wonders

⁸⁵ Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism*, 38. According to him, the model accepts the spiritual power and depth manifested in other religions, so that “they can properly be called a locus of divine presence,” while it also rejects other religions as not being sufficient for salvation apart from Christ, for Christ alone is Savior,” Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 38

⁸⁷ Carl Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education* (Boston: Brill Leiden, 2001) 47 - 74.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 54

⁸⁹ John Hick is a leading theological voice on this model of religious dialogue. He had argued in the tradition of Anselm of Canterbury that “God” is that beyond which nothing greater is conceivable. Thus, the mode by which each culture describes “God” is to that extent culture bound because “God” is unknowable. Therefore, since “none of the concrete descriptions that apply within the realm of human experience can apply literally to the unexperienceable ground of the realm,” impersonal conceptualizations as Vishnu, Allah are human constructs to describe the unknowable. See Hick, *An Interpretation of Religions: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989) 246; and. *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religions* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1973). 143-147.

the extent to which this model may provide insight and indicators to clarify the polarity between involvement with a particular tradition and recognition of religious plurality.⁹⁰ He argues that the model “ignores such polarity by leaving the pole of involvement with a particular tradition out of the discussion.”⁹¹ The position ventilates what Sterkens refers to as “negative freedom principle” where the required measure of commitment to particular religion as necessary for dialogue is absent.⁹² The third model, which may rightly be referred to as religious pluralism, is characterized by religious plurality, and “its normative condition can be found in the pluralistic theologies of the world religions which accentuates dialogue as the mode of contact with other religions.”⁹³ This model recognizes similarities within differences and does not subsume one in the other. It accommodates differential religious identities that are unique to each religion, while accepting the fact of tolerant space for an inclusion of other religions under a single truth. For example, the religious differences between Islam and Christianity remain glaring in beliefs, theology and praxis, yet there is no denying of certain commonalities which include the shared faith in the revealed God in the tradition of Abrahamic heritage. Yet, for Sterkens, the model “does not adequately explore the conflicts between religious traditions and immanent world-views and between their adherents. These include conflicts about the diversity of religious concepts, about their incompatibility, and about the incommensurability of alternative concepts.”⁹⁴ Considering the deficiencies of these

⁹⁰ Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education*. 61

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 62

⁹³ Ibid., 63

⁹⁴ Ibid., 69

models for religious education, Sterkens suggests that they are only typological ways of dealing with other religions in an educational context, with each model emanating from a specific socio-cultural context.⁹⁵ Although he favors the interreligious model for religious education, he advocates further exploration of the relation between the individual religious identity and the collective identity of traditions.⁹⁶ The variety of religious pluralism that would fill the lacuna observed by Sterkens within a religious education context is suggested in this work as Dupuis' inclusive pluralism.

Considering the multi-religious composition of Nigeria's COEs where students comes from various religious background, and are trained to teach students from varied religions, Dupuis' theology of religions, that is "inclusive pluralism," stands shoulder high above other forms of religious pluralism. The details of this argument shall be discussed in subsequent chapters of this work. Suffice it to say that Dupuis argues in his magnum opus: *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*,⁹⁷ that other religions contain "elements of truth and grace" by which their adherent could be saved, and as such, the religions "have a positive meaning in God's single overall plan of salvation."⁹⁸ What Dupuis' 'inclusive pluralism' offers is a favorable condition for the teaching and profound learning of different religious traditions, while leaving the teacher and learners' religious identity intact. The purpose of this work is the translation of Dupuis' view into practical use in the formation of teachers of CRS in Nigeria COEs.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 72

⁹⁷ Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*.

⁹⁸ The highlight of Dupuis' Inclusive Pluralism as provided in this paragraph is my summary of Peter Phan's review of Dupuis' book. The review is contained in Peter C. Phan, "Inclusive Pluralism," *America: The National Catholic Review*, no. 2003 (2003).

0.6 Research methodology

A threefold methodology comprising of historical, analytical, and prescriptive approaches is engaged in conducting this research. A historical review of shifts in curricula foci in Nigeria education system is engaged in order to gain the necessary historical background to curricula drafting, contents, and the focus of CRS' curriculum in Nigeria COEs. Similarly, the historical approach sheds light on the core question of dialogue and conflict in the development of Nigeria's religious education curricula. The importance of the segment is further captured in the words of Nigeria's minister of education: "how can we know who we are when we do not know who we are not? How can we know what to make of our society when we do not know how our society is made up? How can we hope to make sense of the world when we don't know our place in it?"⁹⁹ Thus, a historical approach to this study gives credibility to knowing where we come from and how such history has shaped our current religious experiences as a people.¹⁰⁰

The theological aspect focuses on the analyses of the study with an eye on the underlining theology. Hence, an examination of certain theological implications of the content of the current CRS curriculum on interreligious relation was carried out. The need for a theological analysis in the research is important to the overall interest of the

⁹⁹ This is from a report by Chijioke Okoronkwo, "*The Express News*, Minister wants Religious studies compulsory in Nigerian schools, reintroduction of History." <http://theexpressnews.com/minister-wants-religious-studies-compulsory-nigerian-schools-reintroduction-history/> (September 30, 2016). The report states that the Minister made the comment at the National Council of Education (NCE) 61st Ministerial Session of NCE in Abuja, Nigeria.

¹⁰⁰ The Nigerian minister for education made the comment in relation to the need to reintroduce the study of history in Nigerian school curricula. Details of the session could be read in footnote no. 79. National Network News (NTA), "NCE to Deliberate On History," NTA Network News Summary 29th September, 2016, <http://www.nta.ng/news/20160930-nta-network-news-summary-29th-september-2016/>

dissertation, as the exercise opens up the strengths and weaknesses of a confessional-centric CRS curriculum for peaceful co-existence in a multi-religious environment. As a research method, a theological evaluation of the text of the current CRS curriculum and of models of interreligious dialogue facilitates a better platform to evaluate the current CRS curriculum and design an update that could adequately address the concern of the government and the need of the people as regard living in peace with one another.

A combination of historical and theological approaches to the research provides clarity on issues of confessional divergence that underlies the current CRS curriculum. The outcome of the exercise is then brought into conversation with theories on interreligious relation by Jacques Dupuis.¹⁰¹ An engagement with the views of Dupuis is justified by his consideration of inclusive pluralism as a way forward in equitable relationship with other religions. The common factor between his ideas and the theme of this work is the facilitation of peaceful coexistence in a religiously pluralistic society. His religious pluralism provides the required theoretical framework on which dialogue for contemporary study on interreligious education may be formulated.

Secondly, Dupuis' views present workable principles of interreligious dialogue with emphasis on respect, justice and mature consideration of other religions. His varied discourses on religious pluralism synchronize with the mission statement of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Education's *10-year strategic plan* on Education. The latter is aimed at promoting "quality education and lifelong learning relevant to the dynamics of global

¹⁰¹ The reason for the choice of these individual figures is informed by their extensive works on the two major components of the research. The former for his educational prowess and universal approach to education, and the latter for his dexterity in going against the trend in religious dialogue which makes religious inclusive pluralism appealing and apparently the best form of dialogue as an alternative to pluralism and its theological limitations.

change through effective policy formulation, and the setting and monitoring of standards at all levels; and delivery of tertiary education through federal institutions.”¹⁰²

Furthermore, Dupuis presents a model of interreligious dialogue that considers God as the ultimate truth while avoiding the problem of relativism, which is often a barrier to interreligious learning particularly in an environment as Nigeria. An application of his methodology on inclusive religious pluralism provides good standpoints from which an update of the current national curriculum on CRS is generated. What is envisaged is a model of interreligious learning for peace building where religious studies in tertiary education as the COEs would provide an avenue for political unity, religious reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence in the country.

The choice of Dupuis’ model of religious pluralism as a theoretical framework is informed by the ultimate goal of the dissertation – an update of the current overladen confessional CRS curriculum to one that would speak to the religious configuration of Nigeria in the search for unity and peaceful coexistence.

0.7 Research Questions

The dissertation is primarily qualitative and is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the role of religious education in the history of polarization of Nigeria along religious lines?
 - The idea behind this question is to determine the extent or otherwise of religious education in polarizing the nation along religious divide. In other words, does the religious education operated by Christians and Muslims since their inception in Nigeria demonstrate any potential for conflicts and

¹⁰² Federal Ministry of Education, *Federal Ministry of Education 10 Year Strategic Plan: Draft* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Education, 2007).

religious intolerance, or provide opportunities for dialogue among religious adherents?

2. Which model of CRS curriculum can enhance dialogue and understanding between Christian and Muslim students in Nigeria without ignoring existing doctrinal tension between adherents of both religions?

➤ The aim of this question is to provide guidance in recommending a model that would speak to the Nigeria situation while maintaining a balance of religious pluralism and of personal commitment to one's religious demands.

3. What should be the form and structure for a peace-building curriculum for CRS in COEs in Nigeria?

➤ The question is aimed at providing guidance in the evaluation of the current CRS curriculum, updating the curriculum for effective impact on interreligious education, and in suggesting the implementation strategy. The emergent curriculum is intended to form the kernel of the dissertation's contribution to knowledge.

4. What are some of the benefits of an inclusive religious pluralistic centered curriculum to the CRS students in the NCE program?

➤ This question is intended to address the relevance of the curriculum review to the NCE CRS students. It shall focus on some of the benefits accruable from the proposed curriculum review.

0.8 Research population

The target population for this research is the CRS students in the NCE program in Nigeria. The research investigation focuses on the impact of a confessional curriculum on the students' preparedness to promote interreligious dialogue in their various post-training teaching assignments. Since no one gives what he/she has not, the student population in the NCE program is therefore considered the target of the intended curriculum; to be better equipped for the realization of the objective of unity in the

country, be disposed to peaceful coexistence, and to promote same in their various teaching engagements.

There was no direct participation of the NCE students in the study, rather, the research avails itself the use of educational tools intended for use in attaining the set objectives of CRS in the NCE program. The samples entail texts of the Minimum Standard for NCE, and the National Policy on Education. These documents were obtained from the National Commission for Colleges of Education, (NCCE) Abuja, and the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) respectively. In addition, specific documents produced by the NERDC in advancing the national objectives for religious education were also used as part of the research data.

0.9 Scope and limitation of the study

It is understood that a work of this importance to Nigeria's education system and national development should have taken on board a study of varied religious curricula being currently implemented in the country. However, this dissertation is limited to the current confessional-centric curriculum of CRS in Nigeria COEs. The reason for this limited scope, among other reasons, is to pave way for an extensive and detail study of possible theological pitfalls, as well as social implications of a confessional-centric religious education curriculum.

Secondly, although I am privy to the fact that religious education curricula in Nigeria COEs also consists of Islamic Studies, I did not delve into any detailed theological analysis of such curriculum in this work. Great as such effort would have been, I do not possess the academic prerequisite necessary for such engagement.

Similarly, as important as it may be, a study of Nigerian Indigenous Religions is not given any independent consideration in this dissertation. While the work advocates the inclusion of a distinct Indigenous Religious Study in the curriculum of religious education in COEs, it does not dwell on making a proposal or a study of such curriculum. First, there are no independent Indigenous Religious Education Departments in Nigeria COEs, therefore there is no such thing as an independent Indigenous Religious Education Curriculum in Nigeria COEs. Secondly, it would require the competence of an expert in the study of Indigenous Religions to take up the task of developing such curriculum; therefore, such efforts are beyond my competence and available resources.

In spite of the identified limitations however, aspects of Islamic and Indigenous Religions that form parts of the CRS curriculum are analysed in relation to the overall objective of the study, which is, an attempt to develop an inclusive religious pluralistic centered curriculum for CRS in Nigeria COEs.

0.10 Significance of the Study

The intention of this work is to address the incessant interreligious violence arising from mutual distrust and inadequate knowledge of each other's religions in Nigeria. The CRS curriculum in the grooming ground of Nigerian teachers, that is, the Nigeria COEs, is the medium through which the dissertation breaks new ground towards ameliorating the incessant interreligious unrest in the country. By developing an inclusive religious curriculum for peace building within the context of the present apprehensive religious situation in Nigeria, the dissertation makes positive contributions to academics and to the Nigerian situation in the following ways:

The dissertation:

1. presents an evaluation of the current CRS curriculum for Nigeria COEs vis-à-vis the Nigeria policy on education and the nation's education vision.
2. produces a CRS syllabus that provides a balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning in terms of balance between theory and practice of an inclusive religious pluralism in interreligious relationship in Nigeria COEs.
3. provides CRS teacher-based activities for implementing an inclusive religious plurality curriculum. The activities include suggestions on detailed steps needed for effective implementation of the proposed CRS curriculum.
4. recommends benchmark students' classroom activities towards achieving the set objectives of peaceful coexistence in teacher education institutions in Nigeria.
5. makes recommendations to stakeholders in teacher formation and curriculum development (i.e., the Federal Ministry of Education, National Council on Education, National Education Research and Development Council, National Commission for Colleges of Education, and Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria) on the need to implement the developed curriculum for religious tolerance in COEs.

0.11 Chapter Synopses

This work begins with a section on “introduction.” The section provides the basic structure and a synopsis of the entire dissertation as a road map to the research and for clarity purposes. The content presents the statement of the problem and a review of the state of the problem. The section further exposes the reader to the basic thesis of the research, its structure, methodology, research questions, population, the scope, and limitation of the study, and the expected outcomes.

In chapter one, “Religious education and the polarization of the Nigerian society,” the religious landscape of Nigeria with particular attention to Christianity and Islam were discussed. The chapter briefly considers the modes of implantation of Christianity and Islam and their approaches to religious education in the country. It further considers the

status of Nigeria as a multi-religious state in the teaching and learning process of CRS. The historical survey explores a thesis that the mode of implantation and the education system embarked upon by Islamic and Christian missionaries laid the foundation for mutual suspicion, distrust, and have continued to characterize the relationship between the two religions in Nigeria. The basis for this thesis revolves around the connection between the idea of propagation of faith and an emphasis on confessional commitment in the theory and practice of religious education in the country. Relatedly, the correlation of confessional commitment and the infiltration of religious intolerance into Nigeria's higher schools of learning was established. The chapter concludes by assessing the efforts by the federal government to address the problem of intolerance among citizens through religious education, especially in COEs.

Chapter two consists of "A Theological Analysis of Models in Interreligious Dialogue and Nigeria Christian Religious Studies Curriculum." The chapter focuses on analyzing the theological contents of the current CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs, and its compliant level for interreligious dialogue. The primary question that is answered in the chapter revolves around the model of interreligious dialogue that informs the drafting and contents of the CRS curriculum. The chapter begins with an overview of biblical bases for interreligious dialogue, before embarking on an analysis of various models of religious relation in religious education. It is from that background of an analysis of the various models of religious relation that the question of theological adequacy of CRS curriculum for interreligious dialogue was raised and examined. Further, the chapter brings Jacques Dupuis into conversation with the current contents of CRS curriculum in conducting a theological analysis of inclusive religious pluralism for peace building

curriculum in Nigeria. It is within this chapter that the reasons for proposing inclusive religious pluralism as the most viable model that is favorably disposed to teaching different religions' traditions irrespective of personal religious commitments are tabled and argued. The chapter further demonstrates that a basis for peace building can be crafted into CRS curriculum through recognition of religious plurality and an allowance for each individual's commitment to personal religious beliefs. The exercise highlights the weaknesses of the confessional model of religious education in fostering effective interreligious relation. While the advantages accruable from the present CRS curriculum are acknowledged, the ways and means by which such curriculum promotes intolerance and unhealthy proselytism, which *ipso facto* makes peaceful coexistence in Nigeria elusive are discussed.

Chapter three constitutes the crux of the whole dissertation. It is built on the background information provided in chapters one and two. From the weaknesses observed in the current CRS curriculum of Nigeria COEs, the chapter embarks on crafting an inclusive pluralistic religious education curriculum on which it is hoped that a sense of better interreligious relation among COEs students would be facilitated. The curriculum template is designed on the framework of Jacques Dupuis' model of religious pluralism, that is, inclusive religious pluralism. Subsequently, the philosophy and objectives as well as the structure and features of the proposed curriculum are presented alongside its implications for the teaching-learning processes. The chapter concludes with a sample of lesson plans and suggestions of instructional resources and teaching methodology for the implementation of the proposed curriculum.

The fourth chapter of this work concludes the research efforts on the theological analysis, and the socio-religious implications of the CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs. A general overview of the entire work is presented in the chapter and evaluated vis-à-vis the proposed CRS curriculum for peace building in Nigeria. The evaluation was done with an eye on the objectives of Nigeria National Policy on Education, and the vision and mission of Nigeria National Commission for COEs on religious education. For the purpose of contextual validity of the research results, the findings are juxtaposed with Sterkens' empirical work on interreligious education. Finally, recommendations to the National Commission for Colleges of Education and related educational research agencies were made in the chapter, before conclusion on the research was drawn.

CHAPTER ONE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND POLARIZATION OF THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY

1.1 Introduction

In her current state, Nigeria is bedeviled with different problems of varied magnitude. Among the most prevalent of these problems are the current economic recession and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Issues around interpersonal relationship have attendant interreligious complications that are often experienced in moments of direct, or indirect religious and social difficulties in the country. It is important to note that social relationships among Nigerians are often defined along tribal and religious interests. Sadly, the federal government policy of “Federal Character”¹ in granting jobs, political appointments, and location of federal presence in parts of the country has sustained this polarization. Citizens are designated and known by the parts of the country where they originated, or by the religion they practice. Hence, a Nigerian is

¹ The “Federal Character” principle was established to “promote, monitor and enforce compliance with the principles of the proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic, media and political posts at all levels of government.” cf. Federal Republic of Nigeria, “Federal Character Commission” (Abuja, 1996), <http://federalcharacter.gov.ng/>. A Commission to oversee the principle was established by an Act (No 34) of 1996. The Act was subsequently consolidated in the provisions of the 1999 Constitution, Sections 14 and 153. Although the Act might have been well intended, Adedeji argued that its implementation tends to consolidate politicization of ethnicity in the country, cf. Ademola Adediji, *The Politicization of Ethnicity as Source of Conflict: The Nigerian Situation* (Koln, Deutschland: Springer VS, 2015). Similarly, the current Vice President of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, has also observed that such system is detrimental to the progress of any society. According to him, “to build a new Nigeria, we need a new tribe of men and women of all ethnicities, of all faith committed to a country run on high values of merit, integrity, hard work, justice and love of country” and not simply because they come from particular part of the country at that moment in time. Cf. News Agency of Nigeria, “Vice President Osinbajo Condemns Nigeria’s Quota System, Insists on Merit,” *Premium Times*, December 3, 2016, <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/216955-vice-president-osinbajo-condemns-nigerias-quota-system-insists-merit.html>.

first, and foremost, a Yorùbá, Igbo or Hausa, or more generally, a Christian, a Muslim, or a traditionalist with associated cultural and ethnic stereotypes.

The history of balkanization of Nigeria into ethnic or religious profiles is traceable to the beginning of the nation's modern history at the amalgamation of 1914.² However, the intensity of polarization tends to have gotten more aggravated with time through various administrative policies of the federal government, such as the Federal Character policy³ and other discriminatory rules that benefits indigenes over non-indigenes of various federating states. Of course, polarization is a problem that concerns every individual interested in the country's unity; especially government at the federal, state, and local levels who have the greater responsibility to facilitate unity in the country. Among various steps, that the federal government has taken in addressing the problem of unity in the country is the strategic use of formal education. Religiously, culturally, and socially, government has developed strategies at various levels of formal education in the country to project teaching and learning sessions as platform for unity in the country.⁴

2 See "Developments in Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria: A story of Tension and Toleration" 12 of this chapter for the reason and history of this assertion.

3 See footnote #1.

4 Several works have been done in this regard. Such work include a Cambridge University published article in 1967 in which Alan Peshkin observes government's effort at using formal education platform for national integraton. He notes that such effort could assist in integrating sub-populations fragmented by religious, linguistic, or ethnic differences. Cf. "Education and National Integration in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 3 (1967): 323–334. There have been several articles and books since Peshkin's article that project the same idea. Among many of such works are, Philip A. Akpan's "The Role of Higher Education in National Integration in Nigeria," *Higher Education* 19, no. 3 (1990): 293–305; Ibaba Samuel Ibaba, "Education and National Integration in Nigeria," *Journal of Research in National Development* 7, no. 2 (2009); and the recent work by Rowland Onyenali, *Appraising the Nigerian Problem Through Education and Religious Dialogue* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), All of these writings agreed that education remains a viable means to national integration. They however, differ in methodological application of formal education in addressing the problem of disunity in the country.

Nevertheless, the result of the effort does not seem to be quite positive. Hence, this chapter considers the abysmal performance of the strategy from a historical background of education in the country. It observes that the history of western education in the country is a history of interreligious struggle between Christianity and Islam for religious dominance in school curricula control, and the protection of their confessional interests.

The role of religious education⁵ in the unfortunate perpetuation of disunity in the country is highlighted in this chapter. The chapter begins with a historical survey of the role of the harbingers of Christianity and Islamic religions in establishing their various religions on exclusive religious modality. It argues that the forerunners of both religions (Islam and Christianity) competed for the heart of the country through religious manipulation of governance and educational policies. The chapter goes further to examine government efforts at bridging religious and ethnic divide through deliberate educational policies, such as the establishment of Colleges of Education (COE), and subsequent introduction of programs that are expected to build patriotism and peaceful co-existence of all citizens. Among the courses expected to effect attitudinal change in prospective teachers of COEs is Christian Religious Studies (CRS). The would-be teachers of CRS are expected to deal directly with pupils and students of the lower and middle rungs of education in the country. Their role is therefore strategic to government promotion of attitudinal change program at the grassroots level. Thus, the chapter

⁵ The phrase “religious education” designates education about religion wherein studies are conducted in the concerned religion to afford the learner an opportunity to learn about the religion. In most Nigeria institutions, religious education is tantamount to what Rosalind Hackett describes as “religious and moral instruction of a confessional or denominational variety.” Cf. Rosalind I. J Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria,” *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2, no. 3 (1999): 540. Its contents are often confessional based with emphasis on moral instructions.

examines the contents and adequacy of the current CRS curriculum vis-à-vis the stages of faith development of the would-be teachers in relation to the objectives of their training. The chapter concludes with performance assessment of the current curriculum and its adequacy or lack thereof for effecting national integration and promotion of unity among students of Islam and Christianity in the country, and Nigeria at large.

1.2 The Geography and people of Nigeria

Nigeria occupies a 923,768 km² land mass of the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa.⁶ The country has 36 states with the federal capital in the central city of Abuja. Its population has been debated to vary between 140 million people to an estimated 180 million people. Although the Nigerian National Population Commission subscribes to the 140 million people based on the 2006 census,⁷ the World Bank and the United States Congressional Service estimated 174 million, and 180 million people respectively.⁸ Considering the time lapse between 2006 and 2016, and the rate of Nigeria's population growth of 2.6%,⁹ the United States Congressional service estimation might be most probable.

6 Federal Republic of Nigeria, "Federal Republic of Nigeria: Country Profile," *Nationsonline.org*, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/nigeria.htm>.

7 See Federal Republic of Nigeria, *2006 Population and Housing Census* (Abuja, 2010).

8 See The World Bank, *Nigeria* (Abuja/ Washington, 2016), and Clarence J. Bouchat, *The Causes of Instability in Nigeria and Implications for the United States* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2013).

9 The World Bank, "Nigeria" (Abuja/ Washington, 2016), <http://search.worldbank.org/all?qterm=Nigeria+population+growth&title=&filetype=>.

Two major rivers, Niger and Benue, naturally influence the country's geometric properties and spatial relations.¹⁰ Thus, States above the confluence are loosely referred to as the northern states and those on the east and west of the confluence are tagged accordingly. Similarly, appellations of dominant ethnic group in each of the regions have also come to be used as designates for each of the regions. Accordingly, the north is largely referred to as the land of the Hausa-Fulani, the west as Yorùbá land and the east as Ibo land. One must be quick to add that these designations do not reflect the true constitution of those regions, as there are numerous other ethnic groups in the various regions, each with its peculiar language and civilization. For instance, while other tribes as Kanuris, Tivs, Igalas, Nupes, and so on are also found in the supposed land of the Hausa-Fulanis in the northern part of the country, the supposed Ibo east has large presence of Efiks, Ibibios and Ijaws. The same goes for the so-called west (designated as the Yorùbá region) where there are also Edos, Igarras, and Binis. Similarly, there are various languages and different cultures among the dominant groups in parts of the different regions. In fact, the recent *Ethnologue Report* claims that Nigeria has 527 languages¹¹ spoken across its six geopolitical zones.¹²

10 See Appendix A: Map of Nigeria Showing major ethnic groups in the country.

11 Of these, 520 are living and 7 are extinct. Of the living languages, 510 are indigenous and 10 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 20 are institutional, 78 are developing, 351 are vigorous, 27 are in trouble, and 44 are dying." Cf. M. Paul Lewis, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds., "Ethnologue: Languages of the World," *SIL International* (Dallas, Texas, USA, 2016), <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

12 The geopolitical zones are **North Central** (loosely known as Middle Belt): Benue. Kogi. Kwara. Nasarawa. Niger. Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory. The **North East** comprises Adamawa. Bauchi. Borno. Gombe. Taraba and Yobe. **North West** include Jigawa. Kaduna. Kano. Katsina. Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. While the **South East** comprises Abia. Anambra. Ebonyi. Enugu. Imo; the **South South** spans over Akwa Ibom. Cross River. Bayelsa. Rivers. Delta and Edo; the **South West** is comprised of Ekiti. Lagos. Ogun. Ondo. Osun and Oyo.

The people that made up the geopolitical entity now known as Nigeria lived in separate flourishing kingdoms before the advent of foreign conquerors who subsequently became colonialists. For instance, the Yorùbás had flourishing civilization with central cities as Ede, Ife, Oyo and so on. The same narrative is correct about people of other parts of the country including kingdoms as Nok in central Nigeria, Kanem-Borno in the North east, Nri, and Igbo-Ukwu kingdoms in the east.¹³ The annexation of Lagos as a Crown Colony in 1861 was a game changer that left indelible mark on the history and people of Nigeria.¹⁴ In fact, the name Nigeria originated with the British administration but the territorial confines of the country were not established until 1914 when the northern and the southern protectorates were amalgamated into one unified colonial state.

The diverse pre-colonial states in the country retained some of their administrative structures during the colonial rule but such controls were subject to the British colonial administrators. The system was referred to as “indirect rule.” Despite the leverage to allow local authority to exercise power in their various jurisdictions, there were many instances of interference by the British administrators due to misunderstanding of the traditional political institutions.¹⁵ The recognition of a traditional ruler by the British depended very much on the services accruable from such individual. Hence, if an “indirect ruler” displeased the British, he will not be the local authority for

13 A concise history of Nigeria and its people with a chronology of important events from 9000 BCE to 2007, and brief biography of “notable people in Nigeria history” are documented in Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). The source provides information on early Nigerian states and societies and other interesting topics on the country and its people.

14 This event was not necessarily the first encounter of the Europeans on Nigeria soil. There had been earlier contacts dating back to mid-15th century.

15 See Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 7

long, regardless of the ‘traditional’ basis of his authority.”¹⁶ The same parameter of a ruler’s usefulness to the British interest also underlay the desire to raise a small class of English speaking, educated Nigerians to hold lower-level positions in the government and in European businesses.¹⁷ Ironically, this elite group eventually formed the nucleus of the emergent group that moved for self-governance and an end to colonial rule in the country in 1960.

Since independence, Nigeria has witnessed long intermittent military dictatorship and spasmodic civilian administrations. The current political dispensation, which began in 1999, has been a successive story of transition from one civilian government to another. However, the road to the present civilian administration has been rough, and is characterized by various political maneuvers with ethnic and religious accentuations. Ethnic and religious issues have played major roles in the self-definition of the country as a political entity. There have been tense occasions in interreligious and inter-ethnic relations. Such occasions have resulted in riots and crises in parts of the country.

1.3 Nigeria Religious landscape

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the 7th largest country in the world.¹⁸ In addition to its 500 ethno-linguistic groups, wide range of religious interests and the presence of churches and mosques as well as worship centers of traditional

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 The United States CIA in its July 2016 “World Facts Book” places Nigeria as the 7th most populous country in the world with a population of 186,053,386. Cf. Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook” (Washington, DC, 2016), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html> Refer to an earlier comment on Nigeria’s population under the section on “Geography and people of Nigeria.”

religious adherents, Nigerians have earned the sobriquet of being deeply religious. Although, diversification of religious practices is a common feature in the country, the religious demography of the country is highly modulated by regional and ethnic distinctions. Falola and Oyeniyi observe that these accentuations of regional and ethnic index to religious demography in the country showcase Islam as dominating the northern part of the country, while Christianity dominates the southern part.¹⁹ Of course, there is Muslim presence in the south, just as there is Christian presence in the north. In fact, “in both regions, bodies of Christians do exist in the north, especially in central Nigeria... [and] a large body of Muslims exists in the South, especially among the Yorùbá people.”²⁰ Unfortunately, harnessing the beauty of diverse religious presence in a huge country as Nigeria has been quite elusive. The reason for this is not far-fetched. According to Falola and Oyeniyi, “an in-depth look at the religious demography of the country reveals a tense religious situation that portends religious war in the future of Nigeria.”²¹ Obviously, this is not a pleasant prediction, but to a large extent, the conclusion is rightly deducible from antecedents of tense interreligious relations in the country.

The relationship of adherents of both Christianity and Islam has continued to be soured by ethnic and religious tensions in the country. Several cases of religious violence resulting from religious complications have occurred in various parts of the country.²²

19 Toyin Falola and Bukola Adeyemi Oyeniyi, *Africa in Focus: Nigeria* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LCC, 2015) 156.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Instances of such crises have been researched and documented in several books. Some of the more recent and well-documented works include the seven-volume of Jan H Boer on

These experiences are not tied to recent history of Nigeria alone, there were many cases of religious violence resulting in loss of lives and properties in the 1980s and the 1990s.²³ There are varied reasons proffered for the causes of these crises. For example, Isaac Terwase Sampson proposed a connection between religious and social issues and attempts at political manipulation as possible causes.²⁴

There are instances when ethnic groups have taken the opportunity of their religious distribution in their part of the country to flex political muscles in the affair of the government.²⁵ This relationship of religion and politics in Nigeria seems to have a background in the history of Nigeria's traditional societies. For instance, Matz notes that Ife, one of the ancient cities in the southern part of Nigeria, was the center of as many as 400 religious cults whose traditions were manipulated for political advantage by the king

Studies in Christian –Muslim Relations; *Nigeria's Decades of Blood: 1980 – 2002*. 2003; *Muslims: Why the Violence?* 2004; *Christians: Why the Violence?* 2004; *Muslims: Why We Reject Secularism*. 2005; *Christians: Secularism - Yes and No*. 2006; *Muslims: Why Muslim Sharia Law*. 2007; *Christians: Why We Reject Muslim Law*. 2008, and A. Christian Van Gorder's *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria* (Houston, TX: African Diaspora Press, 2012).

23 Ali Arazeem Abdullahi and L Saka, "Ethno-Religious and Political Conflicts: Threat to Nigeria Nascent Democracy," *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 9, no. 3 (2007): 21–36 have summarized some major political, religious and ethnic violence since May 1999 – 2005 in this article. Other highlights of recent cases of religious crises in Nigeria can also be accessed in Jan Boer and Van Gorder's work respectively. See Van Gorder, *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria*, and Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood: 1980 - 2002* (Belleville, Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003).

24 Isaac Terwase Sampson, "Religion and the Nigerian State: Situating the *de facto* and *de jure* Frontiers of State–Religion Relations and Its Implications for National Security," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 3, no. 3 (2014): 311–39. See also Isaac Terwase Sampson, "Religious violence in Nigeria : Causal diagnoses and strategic recommendations to the state and religious communities," *Africa Journals Online*, issued 2014.

25 While states in the north would often file for government presence on the platform of Muslim presence, the south would often argue that southerners are not well represented in government because there are fewer Christian representation

in the days of the kingdom's greatness.²⁶ The practice, in the history of Nigeria, is not peculiar to the Yorùbá people. In many other parts of Nigeria, leadership in the traditional context was closely associated with religious authority which was in turn made to reflect in the governance and politics of the land. The same mindset still seems to be holding sway in the psych of many Nigerians who attribute religious character to political offices.

1.4 The Advent of Islam and Christianity into Nigeria's Religious and Political Landscape

1.4.1 Islam

The introduction of Islam precedes the establishment of Christianity in the pre-amalgamated Nigeria. According to Timothy Njoku, the first contact of Islam with Nigeria was through the Arabs and Berber traders who came to the northern part of Nigeria through Egypt about the 9th century.²⁷ However, "the more substantial introduction of Islam to Nigeria came through Fulani Muslims who migrated into Nigeria following the fall of the ancient kingdom of Songhay in the 15th century."²⁸ Islam remained a minority religion in the northern part of Nigeria for a while, but by the 19th century, the religion had grown to become the dominant religion in the North. Between the 17th and 18th century it gradually made its way into other parts of Nigeria especially among the southwest Yorùbá people.

26 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Nigeria: A Country Study*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/nigeria/>. 7

27 Timothy Njoku, "Christians and Muslims in Nigeria," *Vincentiana* 39, no. 3 (1995): 1.

28 Timothy Njoku, "Christians and Muslims in Nigeria," *Vincentiana* 39, no. 3 (1995) 1. For further details on the advent of Islam to Northern Nigeria, see Babatunde Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, Revised ed (Ibadan, Nigeria: NPS Education Publishers Limited, 1995), 45-48.

The successful jihad of Usman Dan Fodio in 19th century marked the height of Islam's influence in parts of the country. For the most part of that religious revival, the spread of Islam was limited to the northern part of the country and parts of the Yorùbá land in the Southwest. The presence of Islam in these parts of the country was bolstered by the British colonial rule. The British colonial officers prioritized the Muslims over Western educated Nigerians who were mostly Christians for political reasons, and gave Muslims some advantages over followers of traditional religions. In fact, they considered the Muslims as “more intelligent and civilized than adherents to traditional religions.”²⁹

According to Falola,

Although the Muslim elite was originally hostile to the British, especially in the North, where it was worried about losing its political hold, there is not much truth to the assertion that the British authority was hostile. British colonial officers were ambivalent in their attitude to Islam, but consistent in a belief that irrational treatment of Muslims would stand in the way of colonial objectives. It was not necessarily to persuade colonial officers of the importance of Islam's role; what they wanted was to tap its advantages for their own benefit through a policy of paternalism. Muslims were regarded as more intelligent and civilized than adherents to traditional religions. Ironically, the Muslim elite was also preferred over Western-educated Nigerians, who came to be regarded as arrogant and impatient. Indeed, the British found it useful to minimize the influence of the Western-oriented elite by promoting the cause of Islam and its own elite.³⁰

Muslims consolidated on the advantage offered by British concessions and made series of political and commercial gains in terms of control of areas where their presence were found. This religio-political advantage gave an edge to the northern emirs “power over granting access to the Christian missionaries who evangelized and resided in their

29 Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 27.

30 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 27.

areas.”³¹ Nevertheless, the cordial relationship of the Muslims with the British colonial officers does not imply that all was smooth and good *ab initio*.³² On the flip side of the cordiality, and in relation to the theme of this research, is the lopsided Islamic curriculum that dominated the Islamic education system. The British were careful not to introduce “any policy expected to displease the Muslims and that had little connection to colonial objectives.”³³ Thus, neither a general introduction of western education, nor the teaching of English language in particular, had a place in the education system of the pre-independence north.

At independence, the political muscle of the north remained strong and well vested in Islamic garb. The Northern People’s Congress controlled the federal government with “Ahmadu Bello, *Sardauna* of Sokoto and the head of the party, [was] committed to the spread of Islam and the identification of Nigeria as a member of the Muslim world.”³⁴ The conversion of Christians to Islam was also high on the Muslims’ agenda. Shobana Shankar reported that Ahmadu Bello, who “held both the traditional title of *Sardauna* and the constitutional title of Premier of Northern Nigeria in the 1950s, set out to convert to Islam entire Christian communities *en masse*, including just recently

31 Ibid., 28

32 For a history of forceful annexation of parts of northern Nigeria by the British see Adamu Mohammed Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule:1882-1940* (Oxford University Press, 1978), and William MN Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule (1927)* (Routledge, 2013).

33 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 28.

34 Ibid., 30

converted ‘pagans,’ who, before the colonial period, lived beyond the limits of dar-al-Islam.”³⁵

Expectedly, the Muslim is deeply convinced of his religion and its precepts, he takes his religion to be coherent and capable of aiding its adherents in navigating the world that is stained with “moral decadence, corrosion brought about by industrialization, and political errors.”³⁶ The Christian sees his religion and its precepts in the same light and is always on his guard to defend its fold from the marauding agenda of non-Christian evangelizers. A relation built on this exclusive claim of mutual religious rightness cannot but degenerate into mutual suspicion and a jealous guarding of religious creeds at the expense of other religions in the same vicinity.

1.4.2 Christianity

Christianity made its first appearance on Nigeria’s religious landscape through the Portuguese traders in the 15th century. This initial contact with Christianity through the Portuguese was tangential since the primary interest of those individuals was commerce. Their port of entry was Lagos in 1472, and subsequently the arrival of Ruy de Sequeira in Benin in the same year.³⁷ However, it was only in 1486 with the arrival of Jao Afonso d’ Aveiro to Benin, during the reign of Oba Ozolua, that trade deal between the people and the Portuguese gained prominence. According to Ediagbonya, Ohen-Okun, the chief of Ughoton in Benin kingdom had later accompanied Afonso d’ Aveiro to Portugal, as

35 Shobana Shankar, *Who Shall Enter Paradise? : Christian Origins in Muslim Northern Nigeria, C. 1890-1975* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014), 34.

36 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 31.

37 Michael Ediagbonya, “A Study of the Portuguese-Benin Trade Relations: Ughoton as a Benin Port (1485 -1506),” *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* 2, no. 206–221 (2015).

Benin Ambassador, to learn more about Portugal and its way of life, the Portuguese traders “realized that if the Africans were to be good customers they must have some rudiments of education and accept Christianity.”³⁸ Hence, the initial desire to introduce the Western form of education, and Christianity was to facilitate better communication between the trade partners, and perhaps pave way for conversion of Benin people to Christianity.

By 1515, the Catholic missionaries had recorded their initial presence in the Lagos area, but it was not until 1842, in what is considered the second missionary endeavor in Nigeria, that the first English-speaking Christian mission was established in Badagry. Between 1842 and 1860 the South West area of Nigeria witnessed progressive emergence of western education courtesy of various Christian missions such as the Wesleyan Methodist, the Church Missionary Society, the Baptist, the Church of Scotland (the United Presbyterian) and the Roman Catholic. The attention of these Christian missions was focused on converting “the ‘heathen’ or the benighted African to Christianity via education.”³⁹ Hence, outside the trade interest of the sponsors of the Christian missionaries, evangelization was at the heart of the Christian missionary exploits. Expectedly, the educational programs of the missionaries were accordingly focused, and built around the theme of evangelization. The claim by Babs Fafunwa that the missionaries were highly focused on the conversion of the Africans from “heathenism” is instructive to the extent that such attitudes of the missionaries demonstrate a clear pejorative stance against the people and their religion. The

38 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, 71.

39 Ibid., 80

missionaries exhibited an obvious sense of religious arrogance, intolerance, and an exclusivist approach to the religious other. It is therefore not a surprise that the missionaries established their schools on the premise that the Africans “had no system of ethics, and no principle of conduct.”⁴⁰

This brief history of the advent of Christianity and Islam unto the religious and political landscape of Nigeria proves that neither of the two religions was positively disposed to engage the religion of the people they met on equal footing. Rather, both religions were exclusive in their approach towards the religions and the adherents of those religions that they met on arrival. This outlandish religious intolerance and focus on exclusive propagation of religious beliefs subsequently polarized most parts of the country along differentiated religious identity. With time, the schools that these religious bodies established in areas where they were dominant became synonymous to the religions they professed. The desire of their harbingers to transmit their religious worldviews in their various strongholds found expression in the kind of curricula they executed in the various schools they founded.

1.5 From religious interest to political finagling

The official state-religion relation since Nigeria’s political independence from the British colonialists in 1960 is describable as secularity.⁴¹ The Constitution made that

40 The quotation that the Africans have “no system of ethics and no principle of conduct” is ascribed to Fredrich Lugard, the first Governor-General of Nigeria (1914–1919), in his work *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* quoted in Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, 80.

41 Although the word “secularity” is not used in any part of Nigeria Constitution, the term is used here to refer to a non-preferential recognition of any particular religion by the Constitution of the Federal Republic. The use of the word is apt as it captures the sense of related parts of the Constitution, which emphasize freedom of worship and religious expression without any preference for any religion in the country. Cf. Federal Republic of Nigeria, “Constitution of

point quite clear with emphasis on toleration as part of Nigeria's national ethics.⁴² However, since "the study of religion is about the study of society and of the values that underpin it, and [how] these values are usually articulated by and reflected in the patterns and dynamics of power relations within the society,"⁴³ it is often quite easy to blur the distinction between religion and politics. Despite the Constitutional provision that limits religious jurisdiction to religious affairs, the correlation of religion and politics in Nigeria is quite intense. Many religious leaders have argued for the necessity to correlate religion with governance and politics in the country. For instance, Abubakar Gumi, an influential radical Islamic teacher in Nigeria argued, "by divorcing our government from God we are at once encouraging selfishness and unfounded ambitions."⁴⁴ Going further, Gumi emphasized,

I have made several appeals before for a government founded on religion. Man is not a mindless animal whose only object in life is to eat, mate, sleep and die. Secularism, therefore, as the policy of operating government outside God's control, is alien to civilized human existence. We cannot expect to succeed in our affairs without abiding by the wishes of God, in spirit and in form.⁴⁵

While the view of Gumi is quite prominent among the Muslim elites in the country, Christians have been often divided on the extent to which Christians may participate in politics (especially the church leaders). In recent times, however, that

the Federal Republic of Nigeria," Section 15, Paragraph 2, last modified 1999, accessed January 20, 2016, www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Nigeria/constitution2.pdf. See also Section 38, par. 1-4.

42 Ibid. Section #23

43 Simeon O. Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State* (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, 1999), xiii.

44 Gumi was quoted in Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 128.

45 Ibid., 129

position seems to have taken new perspective as many Christians are no longer in doubt that religious interest is very much at stake in governance as the provision of social amenities and due representation in governance.

The story of religious influences in political affairs in Nigeria, and political infiltration of religious matters (for example, education), exemplify the complexity of the relationship between religious convictions and social and political realities in the country. The introduction and spread of Islam and Christianity through their various confessional education curricula have had strong influence on the way their followers reason through issues. Therefore, it is common to many Nigerians to perceive issues from the prism of religion and ethnicity despite the secular posture of the Constitution.

While the sense of the country's Constitution remains secular, a definitive extent to which secularity is maintained in governance remains obscure. There have been accusations of unofficial religious leaning by government officials at local, state, and federal levels in religious nepotism. For instance, newspaper headlines such as, "Buhari's appointment has favored Hausas, Fulanis, Muslims more than Christians – CAN,"⁴⁶ or as in the previous administration, "President Jonathan marginalized Muslims in ministerial and other appointments"⁴⁷ are quite common. What started out as mere religious distinction and attention to protecting the religious interests of wards and religious

46 Danladi Yarima, "Buhari's Appointment Has Favoured Hausas, Fulanis, Muslims More than Christians - CAN," *Daily Post*, June 28, 2016, <http://dailypost.ng/2016/06/28/buharis-appointment-has-favoured-hausas-fulanis-muslims-more-than-christians-can/>.

47 Beth Hart, "Jonathan Doesn't Deserve To Be Peace Ambassador - MURIC," *Naij.com*, May 27, 2015, <https://politics.naij.com/447335-jonathan-doesnt-deserve-to-be-peace-ambassador-muric.html>.

followers with no outright territorial overtures, has gradually acquired strong political interest whereby even the corporate existence of the country has now been threatened.

Understandably, both Christianity and Islam are religions that accord priority of place to mission *ad extra*. On the one hand, the Christians hold the Gospel of Mark chapter 16, verse 15⁴⁸ as imperative and compelling, while on the other hand, the Muslims consider the Qur'an chapter 16 verse 125⁴⁹ to be obligatory in the practice of their religion. The sustenance of missionary activities for the Christians and the *da'wah* for the Muslims explain the significance of tilting the religious curriculum of both religions to evangelism with high religious flavor. Holding the rein of power thus becomes a good opportunity to manipulate the state political mechanism for religious interest. In Nigeria, this conviction has played significant role in the struggle for religious investment in politics. Christians in Nigeria, as well as Muslims have now constituted themselves into assemblages that are not only bounded by religious interests but also by political agenda.

As noted earlier the religious demography of Nigeria is accentuated by political and regional divide that identified the East as a Christian zone and the North as the

48 "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."

49 "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided." Allama Abdullah Yusu 'Ali, trans., *The Holy Qur'an: Arabic Text, English Translation & Commentary* (Lahore-Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 2001). According to the E-Da'wah Committee Sites, the word "da'wah" and its derivatives are used in different contexts several times in the Qur'an. While such verses imply inviting people to Islam, it does not advocate doing so by force. Some of the verses as found in the pages of the Qur'an include, 2:186, 2:221, 3:104, 7:193, 10:25, 10:106, 12:108, 13:36, 14:22, 14:44, 16:125, 17:52, 21:45, 22:67, 23:73, 26:72, 27:80, 28:87, 35:14, 40:10, 40:41–43, 41:33, 42:15, 70:17, 71:5–8, etc. These verses are cited as examples in E-Da'wah Committee Sites, "Da'wah in Qur'an and Sunnah," accessed December 5, 2016, <http://www.dawahskills.com/abcs-of-dawah/dawah-quran-sunnah/>.

Muslim domicile.⁵⁰ Considering the territorial interest of the adherents of these religions it is expected that incursion by either side on the claimed territories of the other would necessarily attract resistance. For example, shortly before and after Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule, the Muslim north was not comfortable with the growth of the Christian population in the north and took steps to curb the growth of such religious presence. The Christians in the north subsequently reacted. Habila Aladeino in Peter Tanko observes that the National Christian Association was formed in Northern Nigeria as a protest reaction against such steps especially as typified in Sardauna's anti-Christian proliferation policies.⁵¹ To Enwerem, the Muslims in the north had to respond to the numerical growth of Christianity, especially in areas in the North long considered to be an Islamic stronghold in protection of their religious interests.⁵² The rise of Islamic militancy in the north is not unconnected to this interest, where first, Muslim felt the need to liberate themselves from what they considered "the yoke of Euro-Christian values" imposed on the Muslim Ummah (community) through the mediation of Western colonialism.⁵³ Secondly, according to Enwerem, "Islamic militancy submits that the bane of Nigeria's development is the lack of the centralization of an Islamic worldview such as existed during the time of Usman Dan Fodio."⁵⁴ The latter reason has been given

50 See details of this religious divide in Falola and Oyeniya, *Africa in Focus: Nigeria*, 156.

51 Peter Bauna Tanko, *The Christian Association of Nigeria and the Challenge of Ecumenical Imperative* (Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria: Fab Anieh Nig. Ltd, 1993), 120

52 Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria* (Ibadan, Oyo State: IFRA Publication, 1995), <http://books.openedition.org/ifra/400>.

53 Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria* (Ibadan, Oyo State: IFRA Publication, 1995).

54 Ibid.

expression in various religious uprisings in northern Nigeria, with the most recent being the *Boko Haram* insurgence.⁵⁵

The Christians are not left out of the political finagling. In recent times, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has become more politically conscious and has interjected ideas that are influenced by political interest in the process of governance in the country. The original objectives of the association are,

1. To serve as a basis of response to the unity of the church especially as contained in our Lord's pastoral prayer that they all may be one - John 17:21.
2. To promote understanding, peace and unity among the various people and strata of society in Nigeria through the propagation of the gospel.
3. To act as a liaison committee by means of which its member – Churches can consult together and when necessary make common statement and take common actions.
4. To act as watch person of the spiritual and moral welfare of the Nation.⁵⁶

These objectives isolate CAN as a religious body with little or no political interest. However, in recent time the association has been quite involved in the secular politics in the country. According to Enwerem, there are three external factors that have

⁵⁵ Details of the development and politics of Islamic and Christian politization of their religious organizations could be read in Enwerem's *A Dangerous Awakening*. However, it must be said that some Muslims have always contest the Islamization of the country as a reason for some of these upheavals in the northern Nigeria. For instance, the Maitasine uprising and the recent *Boko Haram* insurgence have been described as more of reaction against the socio-economic conditions in the country rather than of any sinister religious motives.

⁵⁶ Christian Association of Nigeria, "The Objectives of Christian Association of Nigeria," *National Christian Centre*, accessed February 5, 2017, <http://cannigeria.org/objectives/>.

propelled CAN's trend towards politicization. The factors are, first, the consolidation of the military in politics, where CAN gradually assume the role of an unofficial and increasingly powerful opposition to the government. The second factor is the perception of discrimination by the government against Christians; and the third is the Muslim aspiration for an Islamic theocratic order for the country.⁵⁷ The latter factor sparked much constitutional debate when a proposal to have a one Nigeria with two legal codes was initiated – the other being the Muslim *Shari'a* legal code. These events apparently sensitized the Christian towards political activism to the extent that church leadership now admonish their members to participate in the mainstream politics of the land. A ready example is the participation of the current vice President of the country, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, in active politics. He was the Pastor-in-Charge of Redeem Christian Church of God, Lagos Province 48, and has recently insisted that he remains the pastor of the church.⁵⁸

Political finagling of religious institutions is normal in every society since values typified by religions are reflected in the activities of politically active human beings. However, the basis for religious interest in political matters in Nigeria tends to border on protection of religious matters that divide religious followers rather than protecting religious values that may promote unity and social integration in the country. The differences in religious opinions, which are entangled in political manipulations for religious interest, have bred and continue to feather the nest of mutual suspicion and

⁵⁷ See Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*, 135-169.

⁵⁸ Sylvester Ugwuanyi, "Osinbajo Denies Resigning as RCCG Pastor, Vows to Continue Honouring God's Call," *Daily Post*, April 20, 2016.

religious acrimony among religious adherents in the country. It has displayed the deep-rooted intolerance between the Christians and the Muslims in the country. As it is, the means to reconcile the interests of both religions that are at each other's jugular is of utmost importance to the peaceful coexistence of all citizens in the country.

1.6 Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria: A story of tension and toleration

The background to the story of religious tension and continued negotiation for religious pluralism in Nigeria took central stage with the unsettled details of the nation's amalgamation in 1914. The amalgamation defined the new entity now known as Nigeria without adequate integrative programs. What was uppermost in the arrangement was the economic interest of the British colonial administration and the need to establish a trade facility between the north and the south.

The conquest of the Islamic religious caliphate of Sokoto by the British troops in 1902, and of the mostly Christian south by 1906, left not much time for socio-religious negotiation before the amalgamation that emerged eight years later. Similarly, the indirect rule policy of the British administrator left much of the local administrative structure mostly unobstructed, thereby keeping both regions politically and religiously apart. Fundamental creeds of the two main religions - Islam and Christianity, which have defined and permeated the lives of the various devotees were left unattended. In this regard, Ilesanmi observes,

by drawing peoples of different faith traditions into one geographical orbit, colonialism accentuated and broadened the provincialized pluralism that was already present in Nigerian society. Missionary Christianity, which conceded to the state the uninhibited right to define political questions, was brought into conjunction with an all-encompassing and integralist Islamic faith within the same territorial framework. Each of these world religions has often claimed to be the main bastion of

civilization and has perceived the other to be religiously inferior and a danger to the integrity and unity of the state.⁵⁹

Nigeria's experiences of the tension between the rival religious "bastion of civilization" have left no one in doubt of the consequences of interreligious suspicion and violence. The common front for one united people of Nigeria was sacrificed on the platform of legal entity and political interest at the amalgamation. Thus Egwu argues, "the constant political, ethnic and religious violence that characterized the Nigerian state is attributable to the history and processes inherent in the state formation during the colonial and postcolonial era."⁶⁰ Reiterating Egwu, Abdullahi and Saka argue that the colonial state was "the foundation upon which the post-colonial state was built therefore the process of ethnic identity formation and the political use to which such identity is put were determined by this process."⁶¹ As such, the present Nigerian state "is a violent institution and to a large extent a crisis generating mechanism because the development of a bourgeois nation-state based on respect for human rights, the rule of law, and the institutionalization of democratic order and governance was not the priority of the colonialists in building the Nigerian state."⁶² There was no firm effort to bring the various ethno-religious groups together, rather there was the separate colony of Lagos, and the Northern and Southern Protectorates. The Clifford Constitution of 1922, and the later Richard Constitution of 1946, which divided the country into regions with focus on

59 Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State*. xx

60 Egwu's view is quoted in Ali Azaeem Abdullahi and L. Saka, "Ethno-Religious and Political Conflicts: Threat to Nigeria Nascent Democracy," *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 9, no. 3 (2007) 28.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

dominant ethnic majority, compounded the problem. Of course, the arrangement further heightened the politics of rivalry and polarization leading to the 1950 General Conference in Ibadan. The Conference was aimed at power distribution between the North and the South; it eventually formed the basis of the Macpherson Constitution of 1951. Nevertheless, the amendment did not do much good to the already polarized Islamic north, Christian east, and a mixed western region. The divide was deep to the extent that the late Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was reported to have said in a speech at the Northern House of Assembly, Kaduna, in 1952, “the Southern people who are swarming into this region daily in large numbers are really intruders. We don’t want them and they are not welcome here in the North.”⁶³

Subsequent political development in the country, from independence in 1960 does not show any departure from the disintegrated north – south relationship. In fact, there have been arguments that the first military coup in the country was no more than ethnic revolution, and a response to such statements as made by Alhaji Tafawa Balewa quoted above. The relationship between religion, regional allegiance, and crises in the country are, to a large extent, regulated by socio-religious equilibrium of individual identity in the country, thus Çanci and Odukoya observe, “Nigerians tend to define themselves in terms of ethnic and religious affinities as opposed to other identities.”⁶⁴ With references to survey conducted in Nigeria by Lewis and Bratton, and Osaghae and Suberu in 2000 and 2005 respectively, Çanci and Odukoya found that almost half of Nigerians (48.2%)

63 Adisa Adeleye, “Amalgamation of 1914: Was It a Mistake?” *Vanguard Newspaper*, May 18, 2012.

64 Haldun Çanci and Opeyemi Adedoyin Odukoya, “Ethnic and Religious Crises in Nigeria: A Specific Analysis upon Identities (1999-2013),” *African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes* 1 (2016), <http://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/ethnic-religious-crises-nigeria/#>.

labelled themselves with an ethnic identity compared to 28.4% who labelled themselves with respect to class and 21% who identified with a religious group.⁶⁵ According to the study, over 66% of Nigerians view themselves as members of an elemental ethnic or religious group. It is therefore logical to infer that religious and ethnic identities are major determinant variables in Nigerians' civil allegiance.

Religious affinity has been used as a common front for development in the country, however, the same yardstick has been the major albatross to national integration and unity. Because of the close connection between religious belonging and ethnic affinity in the country, distinction between what are purely ethnic crises, and what is mainly religious conflict have been difficult to make. Whereas the crises are seemingly ethnic, most of the time they quickly acquire a religious garb. Examples of such instances are well documented in Jan Boer's *Nigeria's Decades of Blood: 1980 – 2002*, and Van Gorder's *Violence in God's Name* respectively. Both authors took stock of constant tense moments that have continued to dot the relationship of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. While Boer notes that Nigeria inter religious experiences have mainly been that of a country where “fifty million Muslims face fifty million Christians” resulting in rivers of blood,⁶⁶ van Gorder observes that “for more than three decades, Nigeria’s Muslim and Christian relations have been marked by both amicable and violent encounters. More than 100,000 individuals have perished in increasing volatile and frequent interreligious riots.”⁶⁷

65 Ibid.

66 Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood: 1980 - 2002*. Cover page review.

67 Van Gorder, *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria*. Cover page review.

Whatever portrayal is used to describe the religio-ethnic crises in the country, the crises have unfortunately continued to characterise every aspect of the nation's life. In one single comprehensive work, Falola's *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, captures a wide spread of literature comprising varied views on the relation of religion to various aspects of the Nigeria polity. In the publication, Falola surmises that religious politics and secular ideologies have continued to underpin social relations in Nigeria. While acknowledging the role of religion as quite consequential in government affairs, he points at the tradition of militancy of the Muslim who is bent on jihad, and to whom coexistence and accommodation are unnecessary, and even unacceptable.⁶⁸

As in the case with Islam, there is also a great resurgence in Christian activities marked most notably by an increase in evangelization and the establishment of hundreds of small evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches. To Falola these churches have projected intra-religious disaffection and have reserved their worst criticism for the Muslims, whom they out-rightly, demonized.⁶⁹ One thing that is outstanding is that the Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria has been enmeshed in unhealthy rivalry that is largely informed by political manipulations, and quest to control the Nigeria' governance apparatus. That situation has continued to keep the country in the confines of tension; and in moments of peace, only mere transient toleration of one another.

68 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 46. Jan Boer seems to share the same view with Falola on the

69 Ibid., 48

1.6 Nigeria educational landscape

Whether education is defined as “the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools,” “the action or process of teaching someone especially in a school, college, or university,” or as “any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual,”⁷⁰ the transformation of knowledge and skills on aspects of life and individual formation for a smooth running of the society cannot be said to be lacking in Nigeria. In modern times, Nigeria has array of schools for various purposes which span over the humanities and sciences. The country runs a system of education that is referred to as the 6-3-3-4 system. The system translates into six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school, three years in senior secondary school, and four years in tertiary institution. Obviously, the 6-3-3-4 represent the minimum years expected to be spent in the process of acquiring corresponding certificates at each level.

With a population of about 180 million people, and an adult literacy rate of 15 years and above at 61.3%,⁷¹ Nigeria may not be considered as a country with little formal education. Similarly, considering the 47% ratio of Lower Secondary Enrollment, and a Secondary Gross Enrollment ratio of 44% in 2012 and 2010 respectively, acquisition of basic education is of primary importance in the country.⁷² Primary school pupils between ages 6-12 had a population of 20,682,000 in 2010, while the population of secondary

70 These phrases are the different ways by which the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* has defined “Education.” See “Education,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2017), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/education>.

71 See Figure 1 for details on Nigeria’s educational demography.

72 This statistical details and the subsequent ones in this paragraph are provided by Nick Clark and Caroline Ausukuya, “Education in Nigeria,” *World Education News and Reviews*, 2013, <http://wenr.wes.org/2013/07/an-overview-of-education-in-nigeria>.

school students between ages 12 and 17 was 9,0570,000 in 2010, tertiary enrollment was 1,700,000 in 2012.⁷³

The formal education index provided above is quite impressive, however the level of acquisition of educational certificates in the country does not seem to commensurately translate into economic and social development. Ordinarily, one would expect greater technological and scientific development with the ocean of certificates in various areas as spread across the country, but that does not seem to be the case. There is a yawning gap to be bridged between certificate acquisition and attaining the set objectives of an educational program. Thus, if education implies a cultivation of civility, understanding and peaceful coexistence of compatriots in Nigeria, a valid question would be to ask, “what is wrong with Nigeria’s system of education?” An answer to this question, especially with reference to religious education lies in the model of education curriculum that has been implemented across various educational levels in the country. The next few sections shall engage discussions around the indigenous education system preceding the education systems introduced by Islam and Christianity. Attempts shall be made to examine the pattern and curriculum of the indigenous educational system and its contribution to peaceful coexistence. Subsequently, attention shall be focused on the educational policies of Islam and Christianity and their discordant implications on peaceful coexistence in the country.

Indigenous education system and pluralistic religious worldview

Fafunwa rightly observes, “no study of the history of education in Africa is complete without adequate knowledge of the traditional or indigenous educational system

73 Ibid.

predominant in Africa before the arrival of Islam and Christianity.”⁷⁴ The same statement could be validly made about Nigeria. Indigenous Nigerian societies have their various ways of socializing and integrating members into their communities before the introduction of Islam and Christianity in the country. The aim of such civilization determines the content and method of the traditional education. Indigenous education does not make categorical distinction between formal, non-formal, or informal education as the Western form of education, rather there are specific modalities and defined mode of operations that are geared towards attainment of specific objectives. Similarly, even though Nigeria consists of many ethnic groups and societies each with its own culture and tradition, “they all have common educational aims and objectives.”⁷⁵ According to Fafunwa, the differences lie only in methods consequent on social, economic, and geographical imperatives.

Among the cardinal goals identified by Fafunwa as characterizing traditional African education system, which by implication is applicable to Nigerian societies, are the production of “an individual who is honest, respectable, skilled, co-operative and conforms to the social order of the day.”⁷⁶ Consequently, the educational objectives include developing the child’s latent physical skills and character, inculcation of respect for elders and those in position of authority, development of intellectual skills, acquisition of specific vocational training and developing healthy attitude towards honest labor. Other objectives include the development of a sense of belonging and participating actively in family and community affairs, and the understanding, appreciation, and

74 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 1

75 Ibid., 4

76 Ibid.

promotion of the cultural heritage of the community at large.⁷⁷ Clearly, indigenous education transmits values that are necessary to experience the fullness of life, and is useful for the cooperate existence of the society.

Indigenous education has helped individuals adjust to context and situation of the reality of an amalgamated Nigeria. Of course, there were inter-tribal crises in the pre-colonial traditional Nigerian society, but that does not necessarily dissipate what Uzuoku considers the abiding principle of relationality which has remained ontologically mediatory in the Africans' "being-in-the-world."⁷⁸ The principle recognizes the distinctive African pluralistic worldview, which prioritizes the significance of the other. David Ngong explains this as a worldview that "necessarily makes way for the other."⁷⁹ It is a worldview which Uzuoku in Ngong describes as a perspective "characterized by duality, flexibility, open-endedness, and the necessity of always seeking a 'second point of view,' of 'looking at everything twice' [because] 'something stands and something else stands beside it.'"⁸⁰

Interreligious relation in traditional Nigeria context is almost a given, and it is well transmitted via the traditional education system. No one traditional religion sees the

77 Ibid., 6 - 7

78 For an in-depth study of Uzuoku's exploration of the debate on identity and difference and his position on the "dynamic patterns of African thought that transcend particularity without ignoring the particular," see Chapter 2, "Impact of Openness to Duality or Plurality on the African Theology Debate" in Elochukwu E. Uzuoku, *God, Spirit, and Human Wholeness: Appropriating Faith and Culture in West African Style*. (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011). 23f.

79 David Ngong, "African Pentecostalism and Religious Pluralism," in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, ed. Clifton R. Clark, 6th ed. (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014) 116.

80 Ibid.

other as salvifically inefficacious. According to Ngong, an outcome of African pluralistic worldview is that,

African traditional contexts do not consider that worldviews are *a priori* salvific. Because the salvific character of a worldview is manifested in human and communal life, worldviews ought to show that they are salvific rather than claim that they are salvific. The arena in which worldviews are tested is in how they foster human life within a spiritualized, communal context. Therefore, any religion that necessitates violence is antithetical to the African religious imagination. That is also why traditional African societies are open to other views, even to other gods.⁸¹

However, with the coming of Islam, Christianity, and the western form of education, many traditional values were downplayed and some went into extinction. Inter and intra religious contest became more and more familiar; Catholics against Anglicans, Sunnis versus Shiites, or more prominently, Christians and Muslims face offs.⁸² With the gradual replacement of the heavily Europeanized curriculum in schools after independence, not much was done to aggressively introduce and enforce the basic beliefs and values of the traditional Nigerian societies. The agency of converts, teachers, organizers of curriculum of the various religious traditions were rather more interested in evangelization than perpetuating local values. They played significant roles in implanting and promoting the ideals of their religious interests. For instance, the Catholic catechists, lay missionaries, religious and priests embodied the evangelization agenda of the Catholic church and transmitted it as such. According to the *Catholic Policy on*

81 Ibid.

82 Note that Nigeria has a plethora of religious presence. While traditional religion presence is confined to its location of practice wherever it is found, Christianity has varied denominations which include, Anglican, Baptist, Catholics, Evangelical Church of West Africa, Jehovah's Witnesses, Aladura, Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial Church of Christ, and others. The same goes for the Islamic religions where there are sub groups such as Ahmadiyya, Sanusiyya, Tijanniyya, and Quadriyya.

Education in Nigeria, the Catholic church expects the implementation of curriculum in her schools to follow the required government curriculum, but in addition “have an expanded curriculum that will give appropriate moral and religious instruction that is based on Catholic doctrine and practice.”⁸³ Accordingly, and in sync with the prescription of the Canon Law (803.1), “formation and education in a Catholic school must be based on the principle of Catholic doctrine and the teachers must be outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.”⁸⁴

In addition to the religious and evangelization program by the agents of conversion in the country, Christians as well as Muslims,

the introduction of Western institutions by some colonial agencies, especially the Christian missionaries was ... calculated to undermine many aspects of African social structures and pave the way for their replacement. ... With achievement of independence for most African countries in the 1960s, little effort was devoted to considering whether the knowledge conveyed in the schools was of relevance for the young nations. ... Consequently, curriculum reform to reflect the relevance of the African setting did not take place. Western curricula values continued to be reinforced after independence.⁸⁵

Although the National Policy on Education in Nigeria has made attempts to stimulate patriotism, national unity, moral norms and values for national unity and integration through subjects as Social Studies, and Religious Studies,⁸⁶ studies in

⁸³ Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria. *The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria*. (Lagos, Nigeria: The Catholic Secretariat. 2005) 9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 21

⁸⁵ Daniel N. Sifuna, “Wither African Indigenous Knowledge? The Case of Primary Education in Africa: From Colonialism to Globalisation,” *TRANS. Internet-Zeitschrift Für Kulturwissenschaften* 17 (2008) 1

⁸⁶ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), <http://www.nerdc.ng/national-policy-on-education>. See Sec. 19, Par. a - f

Traditional Religion, as a *sui generis* course, has remained quite limited in spread, and constricted in content across the nation's Colleges of Education.

The absence of compulsory Traditional Religious Studies in the curriculum of teacher education in Nigeria is a minus in transmitting traditional values that are capable of building a consciousness of national unity and religious individuation. The situation is compounded by the absence of reflective history of the country with emphasis on traditional values that could promote religious pluralism and peaceful co-existence.⁸⁷ Thus, Ibukun and Aboluwodi argue that the practice of promoting the teaching of social studies and relegating the Nigeria's indigenous history would not bring about the much desired cohesion among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria.⁸⁸ They opine that the intensity in ethno-regional polarization after years of the introduction of social studies and civic education is an indication that different curricula strategies used by government to resolve ethno-regional problem and religious crises had had no effect.⁸⁹ While they recommend emphasis on the study of history in Nigeria's education system, it is our conviction that crises resulting from ethno-regional affiliation and religious crises must

87 A study by Elleni Tedla has established a relationship between religious and secular thoughts or values. He also recalls that John Mbiti has made the same conclusion from an earlier study of religion and the African values. See Elleni Tedla, "Indigenous African Education as a Means for Understanding the Fullness of Life: Amara Traditional Education," *Journal of Black Studies* 23, no. 1 (1992) 7. An education which emphasises attainment of traditional African values would inherently transmit religious pluralism as demonstrated in the correlation of Ngong and Uzuoku's thoughts on African principle of relationality. Cf. Ngong, "African Pentecostalism and Religious Pluralism" and Uzuoku, *God, Spirit, and Human Wholeness: Appropriating Faith and Culture in West African Style*.

88 W. O Ibukun and A. Aboluwodi, "Nigeria's National Policy on Education and the University Curriculum in History: Implication for Nation Building," *Journal of Education and Practice* 1, no. 2 (2010): 9.

89 Ibid.

be taken on board a curricula review that emphasizes pluralism as a highly cherished indigenous education.

1.7 Educational policies of Islam and Christianity

The history of formal education in Nigeria cannot be divorced from the Christian missionary efforts and the spread of Islam in the country. This historical background to formal education in the country is not necessarily synonymous to the history of colonialism in the country. Rather, the provision of education was a necessity for a functional evangelization strategy by these religious vanguards. The relation of formal education to religious interest is not peculiar to the Nigerian experience. The Princeton University Library has conducted a research into such relationship, and documents a link between western education and missionary activities across Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁹⁰ It is noteworthy that most prominent universities in many parts of the world were religious schools in mission or affiliation, or direct products of missionary activities in education, Harvard and Cambridge being of such origin. The former was founded by Christians (in 1636) to train clergy, while the influence of Christian clergy was quite prominent in the establishment and early running of the latter.

A common factor in the evangelization strategies of Christian missionaries and their Muslim counterparts in Nigeria was the interest in combining the spread of their religions with education. The Christian missionaries often locate their initial presence in rural areas where the combination of education and health care services go *pari-passu* with their evangelization agenda. Thus, irrespective of their denominational affiliation,

⁹⁰ See Princeton University Library. 2018. "Missions in Africa, Asia and Latin America - Religion: Primary Sources." *Library Services*. <https://libguides.princeton.edu/history/religion>. Retrieved 26 March, 2018.

provision of education and healthcare services mark the Christian presence in most localities. The arrangement of combining evangelization with education ensures largely, the control of what goes into the education curriculum⁹¹ of the people being evangelized. The method implies sharing the views and beliefs of the Christian education providers in the process of acquiring the western form of education. Obviously, the arrangement had several social, political, and religious implications on the citizens of Nigeria; but that was the case until the government takeover of schools from churches and private agencies in the early 1970s.⁹²

The educational policies of the Christians and Muslims evangelists were oriented towards the philosophies that guard their worldviews. Such policies underpin their religious interests and were conveyed via various education curricula. Expectedly, such philosophies are characterized by logical and systematic thinking about God, morality and values as conceived by the various religions. They were meant to secure the faith and religious discipline of the youth in accordance to the dictates of their parents' religions. It is no wonder then that in line with the educational policies of the religious stakeholders in both Christianity and Islam, interest in schools' religious curricula is of utmost

91 A more detailed discussion of the concept of curriculum shall be engaged in chapter three of this work. For the immediate reference to what is meant by curriculum, it is understood as a program of planned activities for pupils and people within a formal condition of learning. It is embellished with specified set objectives and their implications. By implication is meant an understanding of the needs of the learner, teaching prerequisites of the teacher, the steps, procedure, and frequency of engagement in the teaching-learning process.

92 Government takeover of schools that were originally initiated by private religious organization was highly debated in the country. The Christians who for various reasons, including children's discipline and the control of what goes into the curriculum felt the schools should remain in the control of the churches. However, for Hauwa Imam, the takeover of schools was consequent on the government decision that "education was regarded as a huge government venture and no longer a private enterprise." Cf. Hauwa Imam, "Educational Policy in Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Post-Independence Period," *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education* 1 (2012): 188.

importance.⁹³ As pointed out below, these objectives are clearly integrated in the aim and contents of both the Islamic and Christian religious education right from their introduction in the country.

1.8.1 *Aims and contents of Islamic Education*

Islam made an early entry into what is now known as Nigeria. According to Magnus Bassey, by the 15th century, “Islam had become a state religion in much of northern Nigeria.”⁹⁴ As “a religion of the book,” it is not a surprise that it acted according to its tradition in introducing “the reading of the Qur’an, the writing of Arabic, and the study of Arabic grammar and literature” as its educational curriculum in the region.⁹⁵ Although Bassey characterizes Islamic education in Nigeria at the time as “irregular and poorly organized,”⁹⁶ and he may be right given the context of introducing a non-traditional mode of education at that time, it must be noted that Islamic education had made considerably great impact on world civilization and culture.⁹⁷ It greatly influenced the rejuvenation of education especially in the sciences, philology, and establishment of

93 Details of the issues involved in this struggle shall be discussed further under the section on “Violence and the advancement of religions’ interests in Nigeria higher institutions.” However, for further reading on the topic, the following books are quite detailed on the issues: Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 171-172, and Chapters 1 and 2 of Anthony Ikechukwu Chimaka, *Formal Education: A Catalyst to Nation Building: A Case Study of Nigeria*, ed. Gerhard Droesser and Chibueze Udeani, *African Theological Studies*, Peter Lang, vol. 6 (New York: Peter Lang, 2014).

94 Magnus O. Bassey, *Missionary Rivalry and Educational Expansion in Nigeria 1885 - 1945*, Vol. 15 (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1999). xiii

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Fafunwa in *History of Education in Nigeria* narrates the role of Islam in contributing substantially to world civilization and culture. He notes that it was through the Arabs and not the Romans that the modern world achieves “light and power through science.” According to him, many universities which began as religious schools located in mosques, and later developed into universities, were established as early as the 10th century (42).

higher schools of learning. In the northern part of Nigeria, the tradition of spreading Islam alongside the attainment of set educational goals was also experienced.

One major Islamic tradition as stated in the *hadith*, and the basis for Islamic education is that the learning and teaching of the Qur'an is a measure of true Islamic followership.⁹⁸ Islamic education envisages a connection between what is read in the Qur'an with what is practiced in daily activities. Thus, "one who treads a path in search of knowledge has his path to Paradise made easy by Allah..."⁹⁹ It aims at a holistic development of an individual and the group. Its objectives are not meant to produce superficial adherence to some set of abstract moral principles, but complete integration of every aspect of life in compliance with the dictates of the Qur'an.¹⁰⁰ According to Abdullah, the major aim of Islamic education is "to build the individual who will act as Allah's Khalifa (representatives on earth) or at least put on the part that leads to such an end."¹⁰¹ Raising such individuals necessitates a curriculum that emphasizes high moral standards in accordance with the Qur'an and the Hadith.¹⁰² Nonetheless, the emphasis on

98 See Imam Abu Dawood Sulaiman bin Ash'ath. *Sunan Abu Dawood* (Dar-Us-Salam Publications. Houston, TX: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 2008), Book 19, Hadith Number 3634.

99 Imam An-Nawawi. *Riyad Us-Saliheem: The Paradise of the Pious*. Vol. 1. (Houston, TX: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 2017), 245.

100 An articulation of Islamic education as holistic and focused on developing personal relation with Allah is well projected in the work of H. Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

101 A. S. Abdullah, *Educational Theory: A Qur'anic Outlook* (Saudi Arabia: Umm-Al-Qura University, Makkah, 1982).

102 The Qur'an and the Hadith are sources of Islamic religion. The former is believed to have been divinely dictated to Mohammed, the holy prophet of Islam. The Hadith are the sayings of Mohammed in relation to everyday concerns of Muslims. Note that the prophetic origin of the Hadith is not a generally accepted notion to all Muslims; hence Umar Abd-Allah Whymann-Landgraf wrote that the Hadith "constitute transmitted textual narratives which generally but not always go back to Prophetic authority." Cf. Umar F. Abd-Allah Whymann-Landgraf, *Malik and*

the Qur'an and the Hadith does not imply a lack of interest in the study of other aspects of education, such as the sciences and the arts, from the contents of Islamic education.

In translating its education objectives into study activities, Islamic education adopts methods that range from storytelling to the use of questioning and metaphorical expressions.¹⁰³ Its educational strategy includes repetition, illustrations, demonstration, field trips, punishment and rewards among others.¹⁰⁴ Among these methods is the Qur'anic recitation. Islamic education lays emphasis on Arabic syntax and morphology with the aim of protecting the Qur'an from ungrammatical utterances by foreign speakers.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, audible recitation of the Qur'an is fundamental to Islamic education at some level; just as the concepts of *Tafsir* and *Tajwid* are central to Islamic study curriculum.¹⁰⁶

In Nigeria, the principle of Islamic education is not different from the overall intent of Islamic education. According to Lemu, the Islamic studies curriculum in Nigeria is tailored towards what a young Muslim should know about Islam in order to live as a

Medina: Islamic Legal Reasoning in the Formative Year, ed. Sebastian Gunther and Wadad Kadi, vol. 101, *Islamic History and Civilization* (Boston: Brill, 2013) 65.

103 National Open University of Nigeria, *History of Education in Nigeria*, ed. Akanbi G. O., EDU 704. (Abuja, 2006) 30.

104 Ibid.

105 R Abduttawwab, "Fusulūm Fī Fīḡh Al-Arabiyyah," in *History of Education in Nigeria* (Abuja: National Open University of Nigeria, 2006), 29.

106 These terms are related to the art of Qur'anic recitation. According to Abduttawwab, "Tasfir, which stands for commentary on, and interpretation of the Qur'an, evolved to facilitate its comprehension. Tajwid, the art of reading the Qur'an aloud, according to established rules of pronunciation and intonation, was introduced to facilitate its recitation; and Arabic lexicography developed so as to define and clarify specific vocabulary and expressive of the Qur'an." Cf. R Abduttawwab, "Fusulūm Fī Fīḡh Al-Arabiyyah," in *History of Education in Nigeria*, 29.

Muslim when he leaves school.¹⁰⁷ Thus, just as Christians are expected to be like Christ,¹⁰⁸ the Muslims are also expected to model their lives on the dictates of God as laid out in the Qur'an and the hadith. However, while Christianity and Islam are religions which advocate monotheism, details of their creeds and practices differ. For example, while the Christians believe in God as Trinity, the Muslims profess Allah as one God beside whom there is no other, and Mohammed is his prophet. The differences between the two religions often account for the need to protect the sanctity of religious doctrines acquired in the process of education of children. To the Muslims, the regular recitation of the Qur'an as a means to jealously guard the sanctity of the Qur'an and the tenets of the religion of Islam, constitutes a major part of Islamic education.

1.8.2 Aims and contents of Christian Religious Education

The aim of Christian religious education profoundly resonates with the idea of becoming Christ-like.¹⁰⁹ The contents of Christian education would therefore, be expected to re-echo Jesus' words, teachings and activities. As with the Islamic religious education, and in fact with any other religion, "religious education does not intend to acquaint the pupil with the ever-changing aspects of secular knowledge but to give him a

107 Bridget Aisha Lemu, "Teaching for Tolerance: Towards a Curriculum on Relations with People of Other Religions," in *Learning about the Other and Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies* (Istanbul, Turkey, 2005), 222. See also Appendix E for sample of Islamic Studies curriculum approved by NCCE for Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

108 1 John 2:6.

109 Becoming 'Christ-like' is a term that describes an attitude where Christians hold Jesus Christ as the primary model of life. The philosophy of life requires being like Christ in every aspects of life as measurable by the standard established by Jesus' own life in the Gospels. As Richard Foster, quoting apostle Paul (Gal. 4:19) says, "the goal is that "Christ be formed in you." Cf. Richard J. Foster, "Becoming Like Christ," *Christianity Today* 40, no. 2 (1996), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1996/february5/6t2026.html>.

perception of a truth believed by the faithful to be eternal and to involve his salvation.”¹¹⁰ The introduction and pursuit of formal education by Christian missionaries in Nigeria was anchored on these ideals of religious education. The guiding principle being “the advantage it brought to the faith.”¹¹¹ Hence, *The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria* states unambiguously that the “immediate and specific purpose of Christian Education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian to express and form Christ Himself in those who have been regenerated by Baptism.”¹¹² In the preface to the policy, the Bishops admonish, “all those entrusted with catholic education at all stages and levels to study the policy clearly and implement it faithfully.”¹¹³

The Christian missionaries first introduced Christian religious education in Nigeria as a form of western education. According to Fafunwa, the form of religious education introduced by the Western missionaries in Nigeria was religiously biased.¹¹⁴ This is understandably so, first for the identity which the missionaries bear as Christians, and secondly for the purposes of attaining the aim and objectives of the missionary endeavors. What this means is that the content and aim of Christian religious education introduced in parts of Nigeria by the Christian missionaries was highly flavored by Christian ideals of human development and social integration. The aims and contents

¹¹⁰ Robert Ulich, *A History of Religious Education: Documents and Interpretations from the Judeo-Christian Tradition* (New York: New York University Press, 1968). 254

¹¹¹ Cf. Boyd in Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*.70

¹¹² Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria. *The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria*. The Education Committee of the Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria. (Lagos, Nigeria: The Catholic Secretariat. 2005) 2.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, *Preface*.

¹¹⁴ Boyd in Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 70

were based on the New Testament which cannot be understood without the Old Testament.¹¹⁵ In this connection, it is important to note that the attainment of salvation defined on the basis of individual's relationship with fellow human beings, the environment, and with God as laid out in the Bible, constitute the larger part of issues at stake in Christian religious education.

While there could be similarities and common grounds between Christianity and Islam, the differences between details in their religious practices, doctrines and the teachings of their peculiar scriptures, find expression in their varied religious education policies. The contents of the Qur'an remain foundational to the teachings and beliefs as well as the curriculum of the Islamic religious education. The same could also be said of Christianity; the Christians have the Bible as authoritative in matters of temporal and divine knowledge, and they reflect same in their education curriculum.

Generally, and as Lemu acknowledges, "the way of teaching Islam and Christianity in Nigeria is expected to be confessional, that is, students are taught how to practice their religion as well as being taught about their religion."¹¹⁶ This overall intent of religious education has deep effect on interreligious interests and relationships in Nigeria's ivory towers.

115 The understanding that Christian religious education is based on the New Testament and the Old Testament forms the sense and opening remark of Robert Ulich's *A History of Religious Education: Documents and Interpretations from the Judeo-Christian Tradition* 3. Considering the fact that the religious principles which form the contents of Christian religious education syllabi are derived from the old and the New Testament and the hermeneutics thereof, I should think that Robert submission is right.

116 Lemu, "Teaching for Tolerance: Towards a Curriculum on Relations with People of Other Religions." 222

1.8 Violence and the Advancement of Religions' Interests in Nigeria Higher Institutions

1.8.1 Advancement of religions' interests in schools

The Nigerian education sector is “a microcosm of wider religion-state relations” in the country.¹¹⁷ The religio-political discord between the Christians and the Muslims in the country has not only infiltrated the classrooms in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, but has been deliberately perpetuated through students' activism and official schools' policies.¹¹⁸ The situation could however not have been otherwise as the control of schools' curricula for religious purposes have been one of the major areas of interest for both Christian and Muslim in the country.

The control of religious studies curriculum in Nigeria has been an area of conflicting interest in the country since independence.¹¹⁹ Although Christian agencies have owned and operated schools since the advent of Christian missionaries in the 19th century, the dominance of Christian agents in the ownership and running of schools by the 1970s was seen by the Muslims as a ploy to advance the spread of Christianity in the country. According to Falola, a notable Islamic scholar had expressed concern over the

117 Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria.” 558

118 An example of divisive school policies is the recent published Memo of Umaru Yar'Ádua University, Katsina, on “Registration of Students Clubs/Association.” The document reiterates the ‘Management’s resolution at its 59th meeting held on 10th January, 2017’ that “Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) is the only religious association allowed to operate in the University.” Cf. Chika Jones, “Why We Said Only Muslim Students Association Is Allowed - Umaru Yar'Ádua University,” *www.naij*, January 22, 2017. The rule on religious exclusion of other religious bodes on campus was made in spite of indigenous Christians presence, as well as the presence of other Nigerian Christians and non-Muslims from other parts of the country, who work and/or study in the institution.

119 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 171.

Christian owned and controlled schools in the country, seeing such schools “as breeding grounds for Christians, and enemies of Islam.”¹²⁰ It was therefore not a surprise when the Muslims argued against the continued ownership and control of schools by Christians, and urged the federal government to take over the schools. Subsequently, schools funded and maintained by Christian missionaries, and other Christian agents, were eventually taken over by the government, and many of such schools in the North were renamed after Islamic figures despite their Christian origin and background. The Christians were not happy with that development.

The struggle over the control of religious studies curriculum by the Christians and the Muslim stakeholders took another dimension in the 1976 struggle over how the content of education in schools should be modelled. To the Muslims, “western education that did not teach Arabic and Islamic religious knowledge” should be rejected.¹²¹ Notably, the Christians did not infer the same conclusion between the Christian religious knowledge and western education. The Muslims did not only reject western education on grounds of not teaching Islamic Religious Knowledge, and being non-compliant with Arabic lexis, they went further to demand that the Hausa language be the medium of instruction in schools. The Muslims’ agenda for education in the country eventually succeeded in minimizing the teaching of Christian religious knowledge in northern

120 Falola, *ibid.*

121 *Ibid.* 172. Another literary source by Hackett affirms that the British officers had, as far back as the 1880s, sought to accommodate the demands of Muslim by separating the teaching of English from the regular Christian schools’ curriculum. According to her, in spite of the accommodation and the provision of Government Muslim Schools, and facilitation of an early model of coexistence of western education and Islam, the Muslim communities still challenged the government over its Christian bias. Cf. Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria.” 541.

schools, and accounts for the removal of African traditional religions from many schools' curricula.¹²²

The mêlée for the soul of Nigeria education sector has since remained crucial to both Christians and Muslim stakeholders; from school proprietors, government agencies, through administrators to students. While the Christians who were the harbinger of western education in the country prefer to see their schools and the system thrive, and continue to serve their evangelization interests, the Muslims who needed to catch up with the Christians in the western education sector, have classified the Christian founded schools as platforms for 'taking the youths away from Islam.'¹²³ Therefore, they "sought to put an end completely to Christian domination of the educational system."¹²⁴ The National Council of Muslim Youth Organization of Nigeria (NACOMYO) has been the vanguard of this agitation.¹²⁵ Their demand is clear, "the teaching of Islam in all schools, more funding for Islamic schools, and better representation of Muslims in the management of schools."¹²⁶

1.8.2 Students religious activism and religious conflicts in Nigeria's tertiary institutions

Nigeria public and private tertiary schools have continued to reflect the tense religious climate in the country. Sadly, rather than being academic think-tanks where

122 Details of these narratives can be accessed in Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, 171 – 172. According to Hackett, as it currently stands, "when African traditional religions are treated in the literature, it is often as an appendage to Christian or Islamic religious studies." Cf. Hackett, "Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria." 541.

123 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

conflict management strategies may be developed and demonstrated, most of the institutions have remained breeding grounds for religious intolerance in the country. The schools are now, unfortunately, locations that provide concrete study situations for “ways in which educational institutions - whether primary, secondary, or tertiary - have been connected on the growth of religious conflict in Nigeria.”¹²⁷ In Hackett’s opinion, Nigeria educational institutions are double-edged sites that could provide opportunities for “generating or countering religious intolerance.”¹²⁸ Nevertheless, prevailing history of mutual religious suspicion between Christians and Muslims, as well as the struggle for the control of the nation’s education sector has lent more weight to bigotry and religious narrow-mindedness.

The struggle between the Muslims and the Christians in Nigeria to utilize education as a tool for evangelization, and as a source for moral and social instruction tends to favor the Christians who were able to establish a link between Christianity and western education. The link between religion and western education was to the disadvantage of the Muslims who resented any such connection. The Christians were disposed towards the connection and advantage of the system, thus making western education almost synonymous with Christian education. The Christian education, especially in the Western part of the country became prominent with an added advantage of career opportunities on the bases of its form of education. Again, that was to the disadvantage of the Muslims who had seen no relevance of an education that is devoid of Arabic language and Islamic religious knowledge.

127 Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria.” 537

128 Ibid.

Attempts by the Muslims to take advantage of the Christian schools while maintaining their views of what should constitute the content of education in Nigeria met stringent conditions that was interpreted by the Muslims as attempt to either Christianize them or indoctrinate them. Effectively, while the Muslims see the Christian schools as “potential centers of political unrest, in which the Christians were engaged in clandestine political activities ... the Christians, saw the hindrances to evangelism as ‘part of the overall Fulani policy of suppressing the Christians and favoring the expansion of Islam.’”¹²⁹

As early as 1923, Muslim communities according to Hackett, began requesting for the kind of schools that would meet their standard, they challenged the government over what they considered “its Christian bias,” and subsequently formed groups to advance their interests.¹³⁰ For example, the Young Ansar-Ud-Din was formed in 1923 for this purpose. Other groups include, the Society for Promoting Muslim Knowledge formed in 1947 and the Muslim Congress of Nigeria formed in 1948. However, according to Hackett, the pressure became more pronounced in the 1950s “when the promises of the Western Region government to accommodate the educational needs of the Muslim constituency failed to materialize.”¹³¹ Groups like the United Muslim Party, founded by Mustapha Adamu Animashaun who, though he was born in Kano, a Muslim dominated Northern Nigeria, became a prominent Islamic scholar in Lagos, emerged and demanded equal educational footing with the Christians. Animashaun party’s demands witnessed one of the very early introduction of religious politics into Nigeria’s ivory

129 Ibid. 546

130 Ibid. 542

131 Ibid.

towers. According to Danmole, they did not only press for better academic training in Islamic law, but requested for a Chair of Islamic Studies to be created in the University College, Ibadan (which was then a branch of the University of London).¹³²

With time, instances of non-religious altercation have been witnessed to lead to major religious crises in schools. Minor issues ranging from matters such as whether Christian girls should wear uniforms that are associated with Muslim girls, or whether a Christian student prefect may impose disciplinary actions on a Muslim student or not, became possible reasons for religious riots.¹³³ Gradually, pressure groups were formed with religious intent in tertiary schools. Many of such groups were manipulated by political figures in the country, and by religious leaders for various purposes.

Among the most prominent religious groups that emerged in the tertiary schools are, the Fellowship of Christian Students, and the Muslim Students' Society, founded in 1957 and 1954 respectively. According to Hackett in her study of the problems associated with integrating religions and education, the former is a radical, inter-denominational Christian movement aimed at defending the religious rights of Christian students in a Muslim environment. The group finds sympathy and support from sympathetic Christian teaching staff of the Universities, and has become the vanguard of political nationalism in the middle belt region of Nigeria. They utilize the print media as a form of self-expression and proselytization. Its counterpart, the Muslim Students' Society was formed

132 H. O. Danmole, "Islam and Party Politics in Lagos: A Study of the United Muslim Party 1953 - 1966," *J. Inst. Muslim Minority Aff.*, 338-42., no. July (1990), 339 in Hackett, "Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria." 542.

133 Many of such instances of minor altercation leading to major regional or even national crisis have been documented in the work of Hackett, *Ibid.* 545 – 548.

to counter the perceived indoctrination of Muslim children in Christian dominated schools. Its target was to promote and strengthen Islam among students. It avails itself of conferences, religious instructions, literary media and gets funding from other parts of the Muslim world for its programs.¹³⁴ These groups have had strong influences in government policies.

The country has witnessed many instances of major religious upheavals resulting from the activities of these religious groups within the campuses and beyond. Unfortunately, they have become malleable tools for political manipulation by disgruntled political figures within and outside the country.¹³⁵ Such manipulation and confessional interest have affected the integration of the country. In the words of Hackett, “the formation and growth of students’ association in Nigerian schools and universities has contributed to the Muslim-Christian tension and the problems associated with integrating religion and education.”¹³⁶ Unfortunately, the university lecturers seem not to be helping much in promoting interreligious relations. In fact, there are many instances where religious studies lecturers use the classrooms as sites for proselytization with an underlying argument that “if we do not capture these young minds, the opposition will.”¹³⁷

The drift in Nigeria’s unity on the basis of religious differences, as demonstrated in preceding paragraphs and sections of this chapter, has obviously infiltrated the key

134 Ibid., 552

135 For example, Hackett observes that there is a widespread allegation that the Iranians trained some of the MSS leaders in Iran and supplied propaganda literature to challenge Nigeria secular state. Cf. Hackett, *Conflict in the Classroom*, 552.

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid., 554

sectors of the nation's life. The education sector, which otherwise, could have been the best platform to redress the problem is, unfortunately, also infected. Nevertheless, the federal government has not rested on its oars in attempting to restore and sustain peaceful co-existence among citizens. The government has availed itself of various means to facilitate peace in the country; among its efforts is the use of national education policy for national unity. We shall examine this medium, its sub-divisions, and its effects in the following paragraphs.

1.9 The National Policy on Education and the Search for National Unity

The need for unity of all citizens irrespective of religious affiliation, and an eye on the acceptance of people despite their religious belief are matters of concern to the government and well-meaning Nigerians. Hence, one of the radical ways the government set out to address the problem was through education. The National Policy on Education (NPE) provides detailed roadmap on how that objective would be achieved.

The NPE is "a statement of intentions, expectations, goals, prescriptions, standards and requirements for quality education delivery in Nigeria... It is the national guideline for the effective administration, management and implementation of education at all tiers of government."¹³⁸ The document is expected to "help the nation align its education system with her current developmental goals and that of the emergent global village."¹³⁹ Mostly, the document provides guidelines for correlating the educational goals of the nation to the contents and relevance of the various levels of education in the

¹³⁸ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013) ii.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

country. The policy allows accredited universities and specialized Colleges in the country to provide training for would-be teachers before or during their educational services.

The NPE provides terms of reference for the pivotal role of quality teachers in the service of education at all levels in the country. It lays emphasis on the importance of making teachers relevant and committed to the goals of the nation. Categorically, the policy states among its goals, “teacher education shall be to help teachers fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.”¹⁴⁰ One of such goals for which tertiary education is instituted in Nigeria, among which are the COEs, is to “forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction.”¹⁴¹ The goal is further reiterated in the philosophy of Nigeria’s education, which envisioned the citizens “living in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic, and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice; and promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding.”¹⁴²

This philosophy of the national policy is founded on the belief that “education is an instrument for national development and social change; and for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria.”¹⁴³ As such, the various levels of the nation’s education system are purposely designed to promote and facilitate the national goals, which are focused on democracy, equality of all citizens, and harmonious living. Substantially, the rating of the country as developed or otherwise, as with any other nation will depend on

140 Ibid., 28

141 Ibid., 26.

142 Ibid., 1

143 Ibid.

the attainment of these goals. According to Nwana, a developed country can be said to be one, which, having clearly articulated its national objectives, has achieved, all or most of them within a reasonable time frame.”¹⁴⁴ In the case of Nigeria, there is no doubt that it has identified and set out its goals in clear terms, and continues to strive towards achieving them. Thus, the nation’s education objectives are for,

- a. development of the individual into a morally sound and effective citizen;
- b. total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- c. provision of equal access to quality teachers and educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system;
- d. inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity; and
- e. development of appropriate skill, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.¹⁴⁵

The national education objectives summarily aim at inculcation of national consciousness and unity alongside the inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society. Therefore, the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, as well as the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mentally and physically, as tools for the individual to live in, and contribute to the development of the society are paramount. These human and social ideals are basic to the teaching profession, hence the

144 O. C. Nwana, “Relevance of the Aims and Objectives of Nigerian Education to National Development,” in *Vision and Mission of Education in Nigeria: The Challenges of T He 21st Century*, ed. Kabiru Isyaku et al. (Kaduna: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 1998), 14–34. 15

145 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. 1-2

government's investment in teacher education for interreligious peacebuilding and national integration.

1.10 The history, development, and importance of teacher education in Nigeria

The emergence and development of structured training of people dedicated to the teaching profession in Nigeria cannot be complete without the tales of the Christian missionaries' efforts, and the interest of the colonial administration.¹⁴⁶ To both institutions, that is, the Christian missionaries and the colonial administrators, the need for educated followership was of utmost importance. To the Christian missionaries, according to Fafunwa, the need for local clergy, catechists, lay readers, and pious or godly teachers who would minister to the need of their own people was central to their mission.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, the colonialists were interested in producing "low level manpower that could be cheaply used as interpreters, messengers, artisans and clerks" among other reasons.¹⁴⁸ These professions are clerical in nature and necessarily warrant professional training that will take on board skills in personnel management and preparing people for the purpose intended by the missionaries and the colonial administrators. Towards this

146 There seems to be a consensus among historians that the history of missionaries' interest in education in Nigeria does not seem to have lagged in providing education as a strategic means to achieving their evangelization agenda. However, *ab initio*, the colonial administrators had no intention to educate the people. The reason for the latter's laxity has been situated in their fear of exposing their subjects to tools that could be used in disposing them in the long run. Nevertheless, the pressure to ease the cost of their activities through provision of local manpower eventually tilted that initial orientation. Discussions on the gradual development of interest in the education sector by the colonialists could be found in Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, and Maigida Yusuf Abdulrahman, "Historical Development of Universities in Nigeria: Chronology and the Journey so Far," *African Journal of Higher Education Studies and Development* 1, no. 2 (2013): 54–72, https://www.academia.edu/12809180/HISTORICAL_DEVELOPMENT_OF_UNIVERSITIES_IN_NIGERIA_CHRONOLOGY_AND_THE_JOURNEY_SO_FAR.

147 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 80

148 National Open University of Nigeria, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 46

end, the need for teachers assumed priority of interest to both institutions, and so was the need for teacher education.¹⁴⁹

The interest of the early missionaries and colonial administrators in teacher education is an indicator that “the success of an educational enterprise particularly in terms of quality depends to a large extent, on the regular supply of teachers in adequate quantity and quality.”¹⁵⁰ According to Jekayinfa, it is with this understanding of the need for adequate quantity and quality of teachers in the country that the federal government’s national policy on education asserts “no nation can achieve economic, social and technological progress and self-sufficiency without a good system of education to sustain its achievements.”¹⁵¹ Going further, Jekayinfa quotes Fafunwa’s emphasis on the dependency of manpower training and development on teachers.¹⁵² Obviously, the relevance of teacher education in the developmental plan of any government on the political, economic, social, and religious activities of the nation cannot be over emphasized. While reasonable number of teachers, sufficient to meet the growing

149 By teacher education is meant structured policies and programs designed to attain professionalism in the art of teaching and learning. Emmanuel Kayode Ogunyinka, et al, rightly define it as “professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work, in accordance with the need of a given society at any point in time. It includes training and or education occurring before commencement of service (pre-service) and during service (in-service or on-the-job).” Emmanuel Kayode Ogunyinka, Tochukwu Innocent Okeke, and Ronke Charity Adedoyin, “Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria: An Analysis of Reforms, Challenges and Prospects,” *Education Journal* 4, no. 3 (2015): 111.

150 A. A. Jekayinfa, “Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria,” *West Africa Journal of Educational Research* 3, no. 3 (n.d.): 1.

151 This assertion on the need for quantity and quality of teachers in the NPE is related here as quoted by Jekayinfa, *Ibid.*

152 *Ibid.*

population is important, there is no doubt that the quality of teachers produced would greatly determine the quality of outcomes on the education sector.

1.10.1 Early teacher training system in Nigeria

The history of teacher education in Nigeria is intricately linked with the history of formal education in the country. From 1843 when the first known school was established in Badagry by Mr. and Mrs. De Graft of the Methodist mission, to 1926 when the code to curb the indiscriminate opening of schools was established, the training and quality assurance of teachers were located within the purview of Christian church missionaries. The initial effort of the missionaries in the training of teachers was through the “pupil-teacher system.”¹⁵³

The “pupil-teacher system” operated a master-apprentice training format. The system is usually for a period of two years during which the student teacher resides or attends the school that is typically situated within the premises of the missionary teacher. It was an apprenticeship system where “homeless boys and children of converted village heads lived with the missionaries and were taught to become pupil teachers and catechists.”¹⁵⁴

Teacher education took a more formal dimension with the establishment of the first teacher training college by the Church Missionary Society in Abeokuta in 1859. The school was later relocated to Lagos, and then to Oyo where it was established as a Grade

153 Ibid.

154 Ibid.

II Teacher's College in 1896.¹⁵⁵ In 1892, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland introduced a unique institution (Hope Waddell Training Institute) in Calabar for the purpose of training young primary school leaders for trade management as well as for teachers and preachers.¹⁵⁶ Subsequently, the Baptist Mission founded another training school, named Baptist Training College, at Ogbomosho in 1897, and in 1905 the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society also had a teacher and catechist training college opened in Ibadan.¹⁵⁷ In 1909, the then director of education for Northern Nigeria, Hanns Vischer, established the Nassarawa School in the Northern part of the country under the British government education intervention. Fafunwa notes that by 1926 there were thirteen teacher-training colleges in the country with a total population of 290 men and 30 women.¹⁵⁸

Admission into these teacher-training colleges was generally through fulfilling a pre-requisite qualification of standard IV. The candidate was also expected to have served as a pupil-teacher for two years, and passed the pupil-teacher's certificate examination. It is only after the fulfillment of these requirements the candidate would then qualify to act as an assistant teacher before starting another two-year training course

155 The movement of the school from Abeokuta to Lagos was due to the expulsion of the missionaries from that locality in 1886. According to Ogunyinka, et al, the expulsion of the missionaries and the movement to Lagos was perhaps "due to some disagreements between the missionaries and the local population/authorities most of whom were not very receptive to the new religion and the form of education being introduced by the missionaries. Perhaps, the preponderance of British presence and security assurances in Lagos influenced the decision to relocate to Lagos." Cf. Emmanuel Kayode Ogunyinka, Tochukwu Innocent Okeke, and Ronke Charity Adedoyin, "Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria: An Analysis of Reforms, Challenges and Prospects," *Education Journal* 4, no. 3 (2015): 113.

156 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 212

157 Detailed discussions on the emergence and development of teacher education in Nigeria may be further assessed in the works of Ogunyinka, Okeke, and Adedoyin, "Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria: An Analysis of Reforms, Challenges and Prospects" 111 - 122; Jekayinfa, "Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria" 129 – 133; and Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* 211-218.

158 Ibid. 212

in a teacher training institution.¹⁵⁹ Upon a successful completion of the two-year training, the candidate becomes a certified teacher.

The teacher training curriculum of these early training institutes “combined theology with teaching methods as would-be catechists would also have to teach some classes and those who were trained as teachers were also expected to serve as evangelists or catechists.”¹⁶⁰ It is obvious that a proper execution of this curriculum must necessarily feature an intense Christian content. Hence, Fafunwa reported that the syllabus comprised “the New Testament criticism, Christian Faith, schools’ method and management, preaching and theology, hygiene, geography, history, English, geometry, arithmetic, local language, carpentry, and masonry.”¹⁶¹ Both the pupil-teacher system and the teacher training institutes were nuanced with Christian emphasis. Nevertheless, the system continued until 1922 when it was criticized by the Phelps-Stokes report.¹⁶² The report acknowledged the place of practical experiences in teacher education but noted that adequate facilities for such experience must be facilitated. According to the report,

‘Learning by doing’ is as vital in the training of teachers as in the preparation of any other group of workers. Practice teaching under careful

159 See Ogunyinka, Okeke, and Adedoyin, “Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria: An Analysis of Reforms, Challenges and Prospects,” 2015. 113

160 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 212

161 Ibid.

162 The Phelps-Stokes report designates the outcome of the Phelps Stokes commission that was set up in 1920 by an American philanthropic organization interested in Africa—the Phelps Stokes fund. The commission was set up to study the situation of education in West, South and equatorial Africa, especially regarding increasing and indiscriminate numbers of schools begun by different missionaries in different parts of Africa. The report of the commission was ready by 1922 and was entitled *Education in Africa*. A full text of the report is accessible at Thomas Jesse Jones, “Education in Africa; a Study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Foreign Mission Societies of North America and Europe,” *African Education Commission* (New York, 1922), https://archive.org/stream/educationinafric00afriuoft/educationinafric00afriuoft_djvu.txt.

supervision is an essential part of a teacher's education. This practice should be done under conditions that are as real as the facilities will permit. Enough time should be devoted to the practice to enable the pupil-teacher to have some appreciation of the variety of teaching experiences.¹⁶³

The report considered the pupil-teacher system of education as primarily unsatisfactory because, “the pupil-teacher was overworked and underpaid, and... the curriculum was poorly conceived, the supervisory system was inadequate, and the mission did not understand the purpose of African education.”¹⁶⁴ Details of the reforms recommended by the Phelps-Stokes report and the Colonial Advisory Committee on Native Education were embarked upon from 1929.

According to Fafunwa the reports of Phelps-Stokes and the Colonial Advisory Committee on Native Education on the task of the reorientation and the reorganization of the educational system recommended, (a) The Elementary Training College (ETC), for lower primary school teachers, and (b) The Higher Elementary Training College (HETC), for higher primary school teachers.¹⁶⁵ Both programs were designed to last for a period of two years each. While the ETC program warrants a two-year pupil teacher pre-requisite for admission leading to Grade III Teacher Certificate, the HETC admission requires another teaching experience for the two-year Grade II program. The development was a marked departure from the Christian mission training approach.

163 Thomas Jesse Jones, “Education in Africa; a Study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Foreign Mission Societies of North America and Europe,” *African Education Commission* (New York, 1922). 69

164 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 212

165 Ibid.

1.10.2 Emergence of Nigeria tertiary schools and the training of teachers

In 1930, the then first Nigeria's Director of Education, Sir Eric R. J. Hussey, made a proposal to the Nigerian parliament on the need to structure Nigerian education into three levels namely: the primary level, the secondary level, and vocational higher education level.¹⁶⁶ His proposal led to the establishment of the Yaba Higher College, which subsequently introduced a three-year diploma of education course for teachers in 1932. The progressive development of teacher education in the country had a setback after the Yaba higher College was merged with the University College of Ibadan in 1948. Consequent on the merger, the diploma course was discontinued in 1950 and there was no provision for an alternative scheme for the training of teachers at this level.¹⁶⁷ However, a commission¹⁶⁸ preceding this discontinuity had in 1945 recommended a two-year teacher training course for proposed institutes of education. This plan came to fruition in the 1957-8 session of the University College Ibadan. It should be noted that at this period, the need to review some of the policies of the University College was been

166 Maigida Yusuf Abdulrahman, "Historical Development of Universities in Nigeria: Chronology and the Journey so Far," *African Journal of Higher Education Studies and Development* 1, no. 2 (2013): 54–72. gives a detailed explanation of this proposal noting that the Primary level was proposed to be for six (6) years, with local language as the medium of instruction. The curriculum was to include Agriculture, Hygiene, handicraft, and interest in the local environment. The Secondary level was also designed to last for six (6) years, after which successful candidates may search for employment in any fields. The Vocational higher education level was designed to provide vocational skills and to ultimately grow to the British standard of university.

167 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 214.

168 The Commission was called the Eliot Commission. It was constituted alongside Asquith commission in 1943. The Commissions were set up to review the continued agitation for a University Education by the Nationalists who argued that the Yaba Higher College does not meet the commensurate educational need of the nation as those in London. According to Furley and Watson (1978:305) in Abdulrahman, "Historical Development of Universities in Nigeria: Chronology and the Journey so Far," 2013. The nationalists advocated "for fully comprehensive universities with good research facilities, able to drop the London external degree and substitute their own degrees before very long."

agitated. Among the reasons for the policy review was the Nigeria political Action Party's claim that priority was accorded "certain faculties... [and] certain courses in relation to others."¹⁶⁹ For instance, "while Christian Religious Knowledge was introduced right from the beginning, Islamic and Arabic Studies were not offered. Arts, pure Science, Agricultural Science and Medicine were allocated high priorities while it took the college eight years to introduce education..."¹⁷⁰ These contentions and other related issues were to be addressed by the Sir Eric Ashby Commission¹⁷¹ set up by the British colonial government in 1959.

The Sir Eric Ashby Commission, popularly referred to as the Ashby commission, had significant impact on the nation's education sector. The commission was mandated to investigate and determine the extent of manpower needs of the country especially within the education sector, with an eye on the future.¹⁷² It was to design an education roadmap for the emerging nation. The commission acknowledged the importance of education as the most viable tool in advancing the country's social and economic concerns. Nevertheless, it noted that there was a "gravely inadequate supply of trained and educated

169 Abdulrahman quoted Okafor (1971:93-97) that between 1948 and 1949 the university had forty expatriates and seven Africans, and from 1949 to 1953, there were eighty-one expatriates with a stagnated number of Africans at six people. Cf. Abdulrahman," 9.

170 Ibid. 4

171 The Sir Eric Ashby Commission was a nine-man commission set up by the Federal Minister of Education in 1959. According to Abdulrahman, its mandate was to investigate and make recommendations to the government, among others, on the needs for higher education in Nigeria, (cf. Abdulrahman, "Historical Development of Universities in Nigeria. 10). It was the first Nigerian Commission with its components comprising three members each from Nigeria, Britain and America (Ibid). The commission turned in a report that became a watershed in the history of Nigerian education sector. Its recommendations were far reaching as its implementation has left remarkable impact on the Nigerian education landmark.

172 Ogunyinka, Okeke, and Adedoyin, "Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria: An Analysis of Reforms, Challenges and Prospects," 2015. 114.

teachers in Nigerian secondary grammar schools, as opposed to the increase in demand for more of this category of education institutions.”¹⁷³ Towards rectifying this imbalance, the commission recommended the establishment of five universities in the country. The recommendation led to the establishment of university of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1962), University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, (1962), University of Lagos, Lagos (1962) and University of Ibadan, first established as University College, Ibadan in 1948.

Following the landmark impact of the Ashby commission on the Nigeria education tapestry, and subsequent emergence of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, the University conveyed a conference financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in February 1961. The conference invited participants, which represented various interest groups in the education sector, they included principals of schools, professors, voluntary education agencies, as well as government education officers. The representatives were gathered to deliberate the theme ‘Teacher Education in Nigeria.’ Fafunwa notes that the conference agreed on the unsatisfactory method of preparation of graduate teachers, as well as frowned on the lack of dedication and professional attitude of the graduates who saw teaching profession as a “stepping stone to something else.”¹⁷⁴ The conference recommended, “*inter alia*, a three-year bachelor of arts and science combined honors degree in education - that is B.A. and B.Sc. (Education).”¹⁷⁵ Thereafter, the University of Nigeria Nsukka subsequently made a break with the older tradition in teacher education by launching the new program of education. The university graduated the first batch of

173 Ibid.

174 Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. 216

175 Ibid.

students in the new program in 1964. Fafunwa reported that between 1961 and 1966 Nsukka produced 210 graduate teachers with B.A. and B.Sc. (Education).¹⁷⁶ Other Nigerian Universities from the other two regions – University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University followed suit in 1963 and 1964 respectively.

Efforts at improving teacher education, and meeting the dearth of dedicated teachers in the country continued, and did find expression once again in a further implementation of the Ashby commission report. The commission had recommended that the various regional governments should bear the cost of training teachers; thus, the interest of the regional government – in the Eastern, Western and Northern parts of the country, and the support of the federal government, and the UNESCO led to the establishment of five specialized colleges of education in the country in 1962. These colleges named Advance Teacher Training Colleges (ATTCs) were to provide non-graduate teachers needed to strengthen the secondary and elementary educational levels. Students from these institutions were awarded certificates ranging from Grade 1 teaching certificate, to Nigeria Certificate of Education (N.C.E) at the completion of their study period. The ATTCs eventually merged with universities within their proximity, with some metamorphosing into what are now known as Colleges of Education in the country.

1.11 Emergence, mission, and objectives of Colleges of Education

It must be stated from the outset of this section that the Nigeria COEs emerged in response to the need for improved teacher education in the country. In the preceding section, it was established that the Christian churches were greatly influential in the development of formal education system in the country. The contents and provision of

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

the educational system the missionaries offered was naturally and understandably evangelical. However, with the emergence of Nigeria as an independent nation with multiple presence of religion, there was the need to ventilate the system to accommodate emerging realities.¹⁷⁷ Consequently, the government was drawn to map out means to facilitate quality assurance and an education that would speak to the need of the nation in general. Among the numerous recommendations of different commissions on education, the Phelps-Stokes and the Ashby reports stand out in proffering an educational roadmap for sustainable social and economic development in the country.¹⁷⁸ Specifically, teacher education was one of the primary means to facilitate the country's national goals.¹⁷⁹

The Ashby Commission had reported that there was a “gravely inadequate supply of trained and educated teachers”¹⁸⁰ in the secondary level of education in the country. Its recommendations towards revamping this dearth of teachers were met with opening of more institutions that award degrees in education and the training of more teachers. Subsequently, a National Curriculum Conference, convened in Lagos in 1969 under the auspices of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC),

177 The period before the commissioning of the Ashby Commission in April 1959 and the emergent new Nigeria (in 1960) at independence witnessed a highly inflected Christian curriculum education in the country. With the administrative change and end to colonial rule, the need to make education serve the national need also arose. Consequently, there was a need to make education curriculum and administration reflective of the multi-religious status of the country.

178 A categorical declaration of the important place of education in the nation's development was established in both Phelps-Stokes and Ashby commissions' reports respectively. The relevance and direct implication of teacher education on the various aspect of the nation's development have been discussed extensively by various researches including, Ogunyinka, Okeke, and Adedoyin, “Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria: An Analysis of Reforms, Challenges and Prospects” 114f; Jekayinfa, “Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria” 1; and Akpan, “The Role of Higher Education in National Integration in Nigeria.”

179 Jekayinfa, “Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria.”131

180 Ibid.

came up with a report that spelled out the need for specialized teachers' training. The conference proceedings eventually formed the basis for the National Policy on Education with emphases on professionalism. Part of the efforts to strengthen the teacher education resulted in strengthening existing structures of teacher education, and the opening of new ones.

In 1982, the federal government directed that seven Colleges of Education be set up with effect from 1987 as part of the measures to ensure that qualified teachers are available to the nation's educational institutions.¹⁸¹ The Colleges established were located in Abraka, Kano, Ondo, Owerri, Port Harcourt, Uyo and Zaria. They were established by the Federal Colleges of Education Act of 1986, No. 4.¹⁸² The Act provides in Chapter 8 that the colleges, among other things "shall be to provide full-time courses of teaching, instruction and training in technology, applied science, commerce, arts, social sciences, humanities, and management and to carry out research in the development and adaptation of techniques."¹⁸³ The functions of the Colleges according to the enabling Act are:

- a. to provide full-time courses in teaching, instruction and training—

181 Cf. John Adeboye Adeyemo, "The Demand for Higher Education and Employment Opportunities in Nigeria," in *The Dilemma of Post-Colonial Universities: Elite Formation and the Restructuring of Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Yann Lebeau and Mobolaji Ogunsanya, Dynamiques. (Ibadan, Nigeria: Institut français de recherche en Afrique, 2000), 244.

182 Cf. http://resources.lawscopeonline.com/LFN/FEDERAL_COLLEGES_OF_EDUCATION_ACT_CAP_129_L.F.N._1990_ACT_CAP_F8_L.F.N._2004.htm. The Act has subsequently been amended to suit different needs of the Colleges with time. Thus, there is the Federal Colleges of Education Act Cap. 129 L.F.N. 1990, Act Cap. F8 L.F.N. 2004 Amended by Federal Colleges of Education (Amendment) Decree No. 12 1991, and Federal Colleges of Education (Amendment) (No. 2) Decree 34 1993; Federal Colleges of Education (Amendment) (No. 2) Decree 6 1993.

183 Federal Government of Nigeria, *Federal College of Education Act*, 1986, http://resources.lawscopeonline.com/LFN/FEDERAL_COLLEGES_OF_EDUCATION_ACT_CAP_129_L.F.N._1990_ACT_CAP_F8_L.F.N._2004.htm.

- i. in technology, applied science, commerce, arts, social science, humanities and management; and
 - ii. in such other fields of applied learning relevant to the needs of the development of Nigeria in the areas of industrial and agricultural production and distribution and for research in the development and adaptation of techniques as the Council may from time to time determine;
- b. to conduct courses in education for qualified teachers;
 - c. to arrange conferences, seminars and workshops relative to the fields of learning specified in paragraph (a) of this section; and
 - d. to perform such other functions as in the opinion of the Council may serve to promote the objectives of the College.¹⁸⁴

Currently there are one hundred and fifty-two (152) Colleges of Education/NCE awarding institutions in the country.¹⁸⁵ Of this figure, the Federal government owns 21 of the Colleges, while 47 are State Colleges, and 61 are privately owned. In addition, there are 9 Polytechnics that offer NCE and 14 other N.C.E-awarding institutions.¹⁸⁶

The COEs are under the control of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in the country. The NCCE was established by Decree (now Act) 13 of 17th January, 1989 (Amended Act 12 of 1993) for the oversight purpose of smooth

184 Federal Government of Nigeria, *Federal College of Education Act*, 1986.

185 National Commission for Colleges of Education, "Welcome to National Commission for Colleges of Education," *NCCE on Line*, 2016, <http://www.ncconline.edu.ng/>.

186 National Commission for Colleges of Education, "Welcome to National Commission for Colleges of Education," *NCCE on Line*, 2016.

running of the COEs.¹⁸⁷ Since its formation, the Commission has identified itself with the goals of Nigeria education, and has subsequently performed its role in the regular review of the curriculum of the Colleges in meeting the set goals. Towards this end, the Commission states,

For over one and a half decade of its existence, the commission had ensured that teacher education contributed immeasurably into national development. In pursuit of its objectives, the commission had standardized and continuously reviewed the curriculum of the Colleges of Education. This constant review of the curriculum had strengthened the capacity of Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) graduates. After the laying down of minimum requirements for the Colleges of Education, the Commission had gone ahead to accredit their courses. The accreditation of the courses is carried out once in five years.¹⁸⁸

Among the courses outlined by NCCE as minimum requirement¹⁸⁹ for the School of Arts in COEs is Christian Religious Studies (CRS). The course is expected to contribute positively towards the attainment of the philosophy and goals of the Arts and Social Sciences in the COEs. It is noteworthy to state that the NCE Arts and Social Sciences programs seek to draw the teacher and his student into mutual dialogue about their collective realities.¹⁹⁰ An important aspect of common reality in Nigeria is outlined by the federal government in the NPE as the unity of the citizens. Thus, one of the goals of the Arts and Social Sciences programs is to produce NCE teachers who are capable of

187 Details on the history of the Commission are quite sketchy on its official website. However, the website offers some insight into its mission and objectives, and the contribution it has been making towards the attainment of its mandate. Cf. Ibid.

188 Ibid.

189 The NCCE defines what it means by minimum standard as “the minimum the educators should know and be able to do as well as their expected minimum dispositions towards their work, if they are to remain/progress in their career” Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for General Education*, 2012th ed. (Garki, Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012) v.

190 Ibid. 1

contributing meaningfully to the production of teachers who possess knowledge and values needed to enhance the quality of student lives in the life of the nation.¹⁹¹ The focus of this dissertation on the attainment of peaceful coexistence in the country resonates with the national education goal on unity of all the citizens, as well as the goals set out by the Arts and Social Sciences education in the COEs. The target is to be pursued through a re-examination of the CRS curriculum as outlined in the NCE minimum standards for Arts and Social Sciences education.

1.11.1 Aim, philosophy, and objectives of the current CRS program in COEs

The aim of CRS program in Nigeria COEs is to provide instruction that would orientate the student teacher towards the acquisition of “moral and spiritual values requisite for smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations.”¹⁹² This aim is underscored by the outlined philosophy and objectives of the program. The program’s philosophy envisions an education that is,

geared towards the production of teachers who possess full awareness of God’s relationship with man and whose personal character and discipline reflect authentic Christian values and virtues, such that they would be able to function effectively as custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities, particularly in their interaction with young learners in the Basic Schools.¹⁹³

The philosophy of the CRS program in Nigeria COEs resonates with the aim of the missionaries’ ambition of cultivating an individual that is totally dedicated to

191 Ibid.

192 Ibid., 1

193 Ibid.

Christian moral principles, and teachers that would live by the dictates of Christianity.¹⁹⁴ The orientation suggests an educational policy that highlights a confessional adherence to the content and practice of Christianity, as well as prepares the teachers for a dissemination of same to students in their custody. The philosophy emphatically states that the teachers of CRS would “possess full awareness of God’s relationship with man” on the one hand, and his or her “personal character and discipline [should] reflect authentic Christian values and virtues,” on the other hand.¹⁹⁵ The emphasis is obviously on the formative content of the program. The CRS student is expected to be formed in molds that project Christian principles. The reason for this formative philosophy is immediately made clear when the document states that such dispositions are necessary for the teachers to “be able to function effectively as custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities, particularly in their interaction with young learners in the Basic Schools.”¹⁹⁶ The younger learners referred to are pupils in elementary schools, and students in secondary schools. Obviously, a religious studies educator other than a Christian would ordinarily not be allowed to teach CRS in the COEs. Additionally, the Christian faith and morals of the student-teachers are expected to be adequately galvanized in the interest of the younger learners in elementary and secondary schools where their services would be required.

Consequent on this philosophy, it is expected that at the end of the three-year program, the CRS students would graduate and be well equipped to:

¹⁹⁴ The same idea cuts across the Philosophy, Aims and Objectives of *The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria*. (Lagos, Nigeria: The Catholic Secretariat. 2005).

¹⁹⁵ See the indented citation in the preceding paragraph, footnote #193.

¹⁹⁶ See “Philosophy of Christian Religious Studies” *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standard*, Ibid.

- i. Demonstrate professional proficiency for teaching Christian Religious Studies in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools.
- ii. Demonstrate sound knowledge and appreciation of the moral values needed to live as a Christian and the various stages of growth and development.
- iii. Explore the place and significance of religion in life and so make a distinctive contribution to one's search for a faith by which to live.
- iv. Express accurate knowledge of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit needed to live as a Christian in the community.
- v. Radiate attitudes and values which are typical of a mature and responsible member of the Christian community such as love, respect, honesty and service.
- vi. Express satisfactory intellectual capacity to benefit from further education in Christian Religious Studies.¹⁹⁷

The objectives of CRS program in COEs as highlighted above are characteristically non-academically inclined. It would be right to say that the objectives are more focused on proselytization than emphasis on knowledge. By that fact, the extent of its curriculum coverage stands a good chance of producing a pastoral personality as an end result. The overall aim of such curriculum prioritizes Christian livelihood over and above cognitive aim of religious studies. Hence, the CRS students-teachers' formation in COEs exclusively typify Christian values with what it refers to as "accurate knowledge of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit *as what is* needed to live as a Christian in the community."¹⁹⁸ The study of CRS in any COEs is expected to result in the cultivation of

197 The objectives of CRS outlined here are directly copied as stated in the official document of the NCCE: *Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for General Education*, 1.

198 See Objective #4, italicized words are mine

habits and attitudes of the Christlike living. Prof. Joseph Ilori,¹⁹⁹ one of Nigeria's foremost CRS educators considers the following statement as "compact and comprehensive statement of the aim or scope of Christian education,"²⁰⁰

religious education in the Christian sense includes all efforts at processes which help to bring children and adults into a vital and saving experience of God revealed in Christ; to quicken the sense of God as a living reality, so that communion with Him in prayer and worship becomes a natural habit and principle of life; meaning of their growing experience values, to establish attitudes and habits of Christlike living, human relations; and to enlarge and deepen the understanding of the historic facts on which Christianity rests, and of the rich content of Christian experience, belief, and doctrine.²⁰¹

Although Ilori argues that the aim and scope of Christian education must be described in terms no less inclusive than those in which we speak to describe the aim and scope of democracy and education,²⁰² his disposition and the philosophy of CRS that he upholds can only at best be described as an inclusivist religious disposition. His argument is that Jesus came so that people may have life and have it abundantly.²⁰³ The position of the Catholic Church in Nigeria similarly follows the same thought pattern. In the Catholic Church's *Policy on Education in Nigeria*, the church defines her interest in formal education "as part and parcel of the Church's divine mandate to preach the Good News to

199 Joseph Ilori was a pastor of several Baptist churches in Nigeria. He served in several CRS departments across Nigeria especially in Colleges of Education, and the Education Institute of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. He was a Consultant to International Institution for Christian Studies, and regularly works with Nigeria Ministry of Education at both state and federal levels in conducting seminars for teachers of Christian Religious Knowledge in both primary and secondary schools across the country. He was a president of National Association of Bible Knowledge Teachers of Nigeria.

200 Joseph A. Ilori, *Philosophy of Christian Education* (Kaduna: Baraka Press and Publishers Limited, 2002). 101-102.

201 Ibid., 102

202 Ibid., 102

203 Ibid.

all creation. The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria is thus integral to its overall Pastoral plan of Evangelization.”²⁰⁴ The emphasis on the faith of Christianity and the need to invite other religious adherents to Christianity is paramount to both the evangelicals and the orthodox Christian churches. Christianity remains the way to salvation, but followers of other faiths may have access to salvation through Christ. Similarly, the aim and objectives of CRS curriculum, which is meant to inculcate “sound knowledge and appreciation of the moral values needed to live as a Christian and the various stages of growth and development,” resonate with the Catholic Church’s philosophy, aims and objectives of Catholic education to form “the whole person, so that all may attain eternal salvation in Christ....”²⁰⁵ In plain words, this objective would only at best breed religious educators that are oriented towards religious inclusivism.

1.11.2 The Nature of CRS curriculum for NCE program

The curriculum of the CRS program in Nigeria COEs is approved by the NCCE as the minimum standard for the award of NCE nationwide. The program is expected to last for a period of three years, and may be studied in combination with Social Studies, Yorùbá language, Hausa language, Igbo language, French, Theater Arts, Music, Fine Arts, or with Cultural and Creative Arts. The curriculum is designed to expose the students to theory and practice of education methods and administration. The student is also expected to take courses in General Studies, and course credits in the art of Teaching (Teaching Practice). Overall, at the end of the three-year program, the student is expected to have acquired a minimum of 118 credits required for graduation in the following areas:

²⁰⁴ The Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria, *The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria*, 2.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 1

A	Education courses	30 Credits
B	General Studies courses	18 Credits
C	Teaching Practice	6 Credits
D	C.R.S. courses	32 Credits
E	Second teaching subject	32 Credits

Table 1. Distribution of minimum credits required for NCE graduation

During the three-year program, the students are expected to be instructed using variety of methods that includes lecture, inquiry, discussion, dramatization, demonstration, recitation, simulation, tutorial, and field trip. At the end of the three year-program, every student is required to write a guided research/ essay in either CRS or Education. The course contents for the CRS program across the nation are as follows:

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year I, First Semester			
CRS 111	Introduction to the study of religions	1	C
CRS 112	In the history and religion of Israel from Genesis to the Judges	2	C
CRS 113	Introduction to the Bible	1	C
CRS 114	Early church history	1	C
CRS 115	Introduction to the study of elementary Greek	1	E
CRS 116	Introduction to sociology of religion	1	E
CRS 117	African Traditional Religion	1	E

TOTAL

7²⁰⁶ Units

Table 2: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 1, First Semester

²⁰⁶ The 7 units totals the required units derived from 5 compulsory (C) courses and a choice of an elective (E) course.

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year I, Second Semester			
CRS 121	The life and teachings of Christ	2	C
CRS 122	Introduction to the study of the Pentateuch	1	C
CRS 123	From the Monarchy to the fall of Judah	2	C
CRS 124	Introduction to the study of elementary Hebrew	1	E
CRS 125	Introduction to the theology of the Old Testament	1	E
CRS 126	Introduction to the study of Islam	1	E
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 3: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 1, Second Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year II, First Semester			
CRS 211	Paul in his writings	1	C
CRS 212	Methodology of Christian Religious Studies	2	C
CRS 213	Research methods	1	C
CRS 214	Biblical world of the Old Testament	1	E
CRS 215	The church from the Reformation to the Evangelical revival of the 18 th century	2	C
CRS 216	Christian doctrine	1	C
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 4: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 2, First Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year II, Second Semester			
CRS 221	The synoptic Gospels	2	C
CRS 222	Introduction to Biblical ethics	1	C
CRS 223	Exilic and post-exilic Judaism	1	E
CRS 224	Biblical world of the New Testament	1	E
CRS 225	The history of Christianity in West Africa to the 19 th century	1	C
CRS 226	African Independence Church Movement	1	C
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 5: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 2, Second Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year III, First Semester			
EDUC 324	Teaching practice	6	C
EDUC 323	Project	3	C
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 6: List of courses, course code and credit designation for NCE 3, First Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year III, Second Semester			
CRS 321	Sent John's Gospel	1	C
CRS 322	The prophets of Israel	2	C
CRS 323	Ecumenism and religious dialogue	1	C
CRS 324	Acts of the Apostles	1	C
CRS 325	Philosophy of religion	2	C
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 7: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 3, Second Semester

From the tables displayed above, a CRS student is expected to take a compulsory ten credits in the first year with five elective credits, twelve credits with an optional three credits in the second year, and a compulsory seven credits in the final year excluding the writing of a research work combined with a semester long teaching practice.

1.12 The confessional-centric nature of the NCE / CRS curriculum

The distinctive constitution of the NCE CRS curriculum is the fact that by nature the courses are streamlined to reflect the confessional objectives of the program. Of the thirty available courses for the program, there are technically, only four courses that may be taken as having the potential to introduce the students to the existence of other

religions. However, two of the courses that involve an exclusive introduction to the content of the religions are made optional for the students.

In the first year, students are expected to take a one-hour per week credit that introduces them to other world religions. In the same semester, they have the option of taking a course in African Traditional Religion. Still at the introductory part of their teacher-education, they have the option of taking a course that is designed to introduce them to the study of Islam; however, the course is an elective that they are at liberty to take or opt for other courses. Another possible instance of exposition to other religion is in the final year. In the second semester of the third year, the students are expected to take a compulsory course titled: Ecumenism and religious dialogue. Obviously, the design of the curriculum in this manner is to sustain the basic boundaries of distinctive Christian principles to which the students are expected to adhere.

The NCE CRS philosophy provides a viewpoint of a CRS curriculum that is oriented on Christian moral and spiritual values. Since the curriculum is essentially conditioned by the program's philosophic beliefs, invariably the contents and objectives are intentionally confessional. The curriculum is aimed at producing teachers who are conscious of their Christian heritage and are ready to make Christianity foundational in their relationship with other human beings. One of the objectives of the curriculum is to inculcate in the personal character and discipline of the would-be teacher, convictions and practices that are reflective of authentic Christian values and virtues, in order to function effectively as a custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities. Thus, adaptation to the curriculum is not just a theoretical academic exercise, rather its behavioral objectives are meant to be performative, and are preparatory of the individual

for navigating the vicissitudes of life. They are meant to produce lifelong ethical and moral guidelines, and the same attitude is expected to be handed on by the teacher in his or her interaction with the young learners in elementary schools.

A common denominator between the current NCE CRS curriculum and the missionary curriculum between 1842 and 1882 is their confessional centric nature. It is interesting to note what one of Nigeria's foremost consultants to the ministry of education at both state and federal levels on CRS, and a director in several CRS departments in education institutions, considers part of the central problems of Christian education institutions in the country. According to him, "many of the teachers are not Spirit-filled," and "though there are church services, religious classes, and a religious atmosphere, neither the curriculum content, the methodology, nor the teachers themselves are Christians."²⁰⁷ He expects that the role of the CRS teacher be tantamount to a ministerial and pastoral function. Hence, he notes that the function of the Christian education is to restore a balanced image of God in students, as education is a redemptive act. According to him, it is by maintaining a ministerial and pastoral personality that the Christian teacher can lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.²⁰⁸ Ilori further finds the distinction between the conventional pastor and a CRS teacher to be merely a difference of convenience in division of labor; to him, the CRS teacher may be seen as one who pastors in the school context, whereas the pastor is one who teaches in the larger religious community.²⁰⁹ He ultimately concludes, "it should consciously be

207 Joseph A. Ilori, *Philosophy of Christian Education*, 125.

208 Ibid.

209 Ibid., 126

realized that the function of teacher and pastor are essentially the same even though by today's definition they are in charge of different divisions of the Lord's vineyard."²¹⁰

Ilori is not a lone voice in conceiving and canvassing that the CRS curriculum and its implementation should be confessional. The Catholic Church expects the implementation of curriculum in her schools to "give appropriate moral and religious instruction that is based on Catholic doctrine and practice,"²¹¹ and "teachers must be outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life."²¹² Accordingly, for Colleges of Education, "the nature and characteristics of the Colleges will be such as to produce teachers well trained according to Catholic ideals."²¹³ For the Evangelicals an in-depth Christian conviction is a prerequisite sine qua non for CRS teachers. For example, J. B. Sambo, another seasoned CRS luminary in a northern COE argues that a CRS teacher must be "born again." Being born again is a descriptive of one who lives by the dictates of John 3:1-21. Sambo emphasize,

the CRS teacher must be born again. This is very important because for any CRS teacher to be effective, he must be a real Christian. He/She must be the one that is always led by the spirit, in his teaching. The secret of our success is solely based on the Holy Spirit that is the Teacher of teachers. If you are not a Christian, there is no way you can teach effectively.... The CRS teacher must also: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: You must accept the fact that Jesus is Lord, and God, without which you can do nothing. The content of the Bible or the theme of the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, a CRS teacher must be the one who believes in the Lord and depends solely upon Him.²¹⁴

210 Ibid.

211 Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria, *The Catholic Church Policy on Education in Nigeria*, 9

212 Ibid, 21

213 Ibid.

214 J.B. Sambo Donga, *Methodology of Christian Religious Studies* (Zaria, Nigeria: Faith Printers International, 2007). 8

The views of these luminaries of CRS in Nigeria Education Institutes portend the general expectations in curricula implementation of religious education in education institutions. The provisions and structure of the CRS curriculum provides the fertile opportunity to place emphasis on an exclusive religious interpretation of its contents.

1.13 A Theology of the current NCE CRS curriculum

From the background of the nature, philosophy, and objectives of the current NCE CRS curriculum of COEs, this section focuses on the question of the kind of theology that underlies the type of CRS curriculum been projected and executed in the COEs. Notably, the philosophy and objectives of NCE CRS program hinge on,

the production of teachers who possesses full awareness of God's relationship with man and whose personal character and discipline reflect authentic Christian values and virtues, such that they will be able to function effectively as custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities, particularly in their interaction with young learners in the basic schools."²¹⁵

The philosophy and objectives of the program as highlighted above presents three distinctive understandings that are expected to guide the theological disposition of both the CRS teachers and the teachers in making;

1. full awareness of God's relationship with man
2. personal character and discipline that reflect authentic Christian values and virtues
3. effective custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education* (Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012). 1

²¹⁶ Ibid.

While the details of the curriculum do not spell out precisely what it means by “full awareness of God’s relationship with man,” the personal character and discipline expected to be developed are unequivocally to be Christian oriented. In like manner, the authentic Christian values and virtues are expected to be well guarded and transmitted to the younger generation. The understanding of the first point is significant to the extent that it is a hub on which the other two points rotate. In other words, the Christian discipline, virtues and values of which the teacher is expected to be a custodian, revolves around what he or she understands God’s relationship with man ought to be.

Details of the planned curriculum place high priority on Christianity as the religion of concern through which the teacher may become fully aware of God’s relationship with human beings. It presents the other two main religions in Nigeria, namely African traditional religion and Islam, as study areas that are in the margin of the students’ career formation. While the curriculum does not specifically state that Christianity remains the only way to moral and spiritual qualities, it recognizes authentic Christian values and virtues as “sound” moral and spiritual qualities. A basic question, which begs for an answer, is how the students are expected to grapple with the followers of other existing religions that they encounter in classrooms, on school campuses, and outside the academic environment. If Christianity as projected by the curriculum is the only way that matters through which the teacher becomes fully aware of God’s relationship with human beings, how should the students conceive, and relate with adherents of other religions and their religion which by the way are accorded only an optional value in their study curriculum?

The NCE CRS curriculum is not completely quiet on the need for interreligious dialogue in the country. The second semester of the third year features a one-hour compulsory exposition of the students to “Ecumenism and Religious Dialogue.” The content of the course examines,

what ecumenism is, the need for ecumenical movements and the history of ecumenism among Christian bodies. The World Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostal Churches, and Aladura Churches, the Christian Association of Nigeria [CAN] and the Christian Council of Nigeria [CCN]. The course also examines the effect of divisions among Christians in Nigeria. The need for dialogue between Traditionalists, Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.²¹⁷

It is important to note, that the placement of the need for dialogue between Traditionalists, Muslims and Christians in Nigeria comes as codicil to the 11 items to be covered in the one hour a week course. The major focus of the course is on the history, need, and effect of religious dialogue among Christians. The “need for dialogue between Traditionalists, Muslims and Christians in Nigeria” is neither preceded by what these religions teach, nor the history and effects of interreligious animosity in the country, rather the tension existing between the three is downplayed for a discussion on the need for dialogue between them. The understanding of “religious dialogue” in the curriculum is primarily “ecumenical” with a transient attention to the Traditionalists and the Muslims in the country.

An understanding of God as evident in the details of the curriculum betrays a considerable sympathy to God’s relationship with human beings through Christianity. Christianity becomes the prism through which God’s relationship with human beings is

217 Ibid., 12

accessible. While Christian religious educators are expected to be civic in their relationship with other human beings the inclusive theology which underscores “all efforts and processes which help to bring children and adults into a vitality and saving experience of God revealed in Christ”²¹⁸ is not lost on the overall sense of the CRS program. The program is potentially set on a theology where the religious categories of other religions find salvific relevance only in the parameters of Christians’ dogmata.

A theology of inclusive religious pluralism is not impossible for CRS curriculum given the fertile disposition of the Nigeria Policy on Education for interreligious relation. An enriching scriptural exegesis that would lend credence to better understanding of the others’ religions, and encourage mutual interdependence in religious matters for robust peace building efforts is what is required. The Christian Bible does not seem to discourage such an inclusive pluralistic theology, as would be argued in the next chapter. Thus, the need for mutual education on each other’s beliefs and practices would only promote social and religious harmony, better understanding, and growth in the truth, and sustainable peaceful coexistence.

1.14 The weaknesses of COEs’ CRS curriculum for catechetical purposes and for religious pluralism

Although the CRS curriculum in Nigeria’s COEs is pastoral and catechetical in orientation,²¹⁹ the question of adequacy and validity of such orientation even for the level

218 Ilori, *Philosophy of Christian Education*. 102

219 The pastoral and catechetical composition of the CRS curriculum has not been disputed. This work has argued in that regards. Recent works has also confirmed that thesis, for instance, Anthony Bature argues in his recent researched work that the country’s religious education system is “faith-based,” see Chapter Two of Anthony Bature, *Promoting Peace Education in Nigeria: A Case Study on Building a Paradigm for Peace*, 2015.

of education for which it is designed is questionable. In other words, how well equipped is the would-be CRS teacher for the task of nurturing and guiding the tender faith of the child in trust towards a blossoming authentic Christian values and virtues as identified in the philosophy and objectives of the CRS curriculum? With direct attention to the interest of this project, does the curriculum dispose the student-teacher in right orientation towards openness to other religious followers – given the current status of the CRS curriculum?

A consideration of the stages of faith formation and development is significant to CRS curriculum drafting, as well as the teaching and learning of the course. If the exercise is to be relevant to national and individual development, the correlation between ideal and practice in the overall activities of CRS must be taken seriously. It is in the light of this correlation that this section raises and examines questions on the adequacy of the curriculum for the level for which it is designed.

Nigerian certificate in education minimum standards for CRS provides that instruction of CRS students “should be oriented to, among others, moral and spiritual values requisite for smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations.”²²⁰ By that fact, the minimum standard stipulates the study of philosophy of CRS to be “geared towards the production of teachers who possess full awareness of God’s relationship with man and whose personal character and discipline reflect authentic Christian values and virtues.”²²¹ The target of the training is for the student to “function effectively as

220 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education* (Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012), <http://www.ncceonline.edu.ng/NCCE-Digitization/base.html>. 1

221 Ibid.

custodian of sound moral and spiritual qualities, particularly in their interaction with young learners in the basic schools.”²²² Since the bottom line of attaining interreligious peace and national integration speaks to the faith stages involved at the varied levels of religious instructions, attainment of the listed objectives suggests a need for some familiarity with the stages of development of the would-be teacher and the target pupils.

The celebrated works of James Fowler²²³ suggest that the earlier stages in faith development relate to learning and relationship which provides foundations on which subsequent faith development builds. From the outset of Fowler’s work, he made a very important distinction between faith and religion while also pointing out some aspects of their relation.²²⁴ This distinction is important to the critique of the faith-based approach to religious education in COEs. In Nigeria COEs, the study of CRS is almost synonymous to catechesis. Hence, the distinction between religion and faith is often overlooked in drafting the objectives of studies in religion as against the nurturing of faith. According to Fowler, faith is “a way of knowing and seeing the conditions of our lives in relation to more or less conscious images of an ultimate environment.”²²⁵ Such definition of faith could trigger confusion in defining the scope of what constitutes a study of religion, and effort at developing one’s faith. However, to Fowler, the movements or dimensions of

222 Ibid.

223 See James W. Fowler, “Faith and the Structuring of Meaning,” in *Towards Moral and Religious Maturity: The First International Conference on Moral and Religious Development*, ed. Christiane Brusselemans (Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Company, 1980), 52–85; James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publisher Inc, 1981).

224 See Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. chapters 12 and 13: “date [should the word “date” be here?] Dynamic triad of faith” and “structural-developmental theories and faith.” 91-116.

225 Ibid., 92

faith are part of the same complex action of religion, which play critical roles in shaping actions and reactions in life. As such, the movements and dimensions of faith form human initiatives, responses, interpretations, and guiding goals. To that extent, the philosophy and objective of CRS curriculum in COEs is nothing less than structures and activities meant to safeguard Christian initiatives, responses, interpretations, and guiding goals within the confines of Christianity. In other words, the current CRS curriculum is catechetical-based under the cloak of academic study of Christian religion. Therefore, the current curriculum does not provide any balance between CRS as a field of research into religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions, and as a vehicle for internalizing Christian values and virtues.

Similarly, in reputable studies on faith development as obtainable in the works of John Westerhoff²²⁶ and in James Fowler's stages of faith development, the NCE CRS students' age bracket of 18 and above is outside the puberty inclined "affiliative ring" (Westerhoff),²²⁷ and "Mythic-Literal" (Fowler)²²⁸ stages of faith. The designated curriculum for that level of religious education shows that it is overly skewed in favor of

226 John H Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976); John Westerhoff, *A Journey Together in Faith, Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, Inc., 1980).

227 This is the first of Westerhoff's three stages theory which comprise of the "affiliative faith", "searching faith", and "mature faith" stages. At this stage, the faith is affiliative in nature and dependent on moderators such as parents. Subsequently, affiliative faith becomes searching faith by which maturity is developed at the "mature faith" stage. Cf. Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 94.

228 This is the second phase of Fowler's stages of faith where the "Mythic-Literal girl or boy works hard and effectively at sorting out the real from the make-believe. Within the range of his or her ability to investigate and test, this youngster will insist on demonstration or proof for claims of fact." Cf. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, 135. The ability to think logically and make a distinction between the real and fantasy at this stage underscores the capability to make some meanings of religious narratives and stories.

faith-based exploration of the religion. The students are expected to identify with, and participate in expressing the beliefs and values of Christianity with little room for contextual application. Emphases are laid on cognitive retention of religious concepts with no sufficient opportunity to engage in active personal reflection for possible application, especially in relation to other religions.

The age bracket of students of CRS at the NCE level of study in COEs warrants an engagement with a curriculum that would help the student in the search for meaning and value of their religion in ways that correspond with their stage of faith development. While Westerhoff identifies this level as the “searching faith” stage, the experience dangles between “Synthetic-Conventional faith” and “Individuative-Reflective faith” in Fowler’s categories.²²⁹ It is the point when the individual prepares to “own” his religion through examination of concept, beliefs, and practices that have been hitherto unexamined. In Westerhoff’s view, it is the time of probing into “accepted” religious views like whether the Muslim God is different from the Christian God. However, the present CRS curriculum does not seem to meet up the corresponding challenges of this stage of faith formation. For example, questions such as border on the presence of other religions in the society vis-à-vis their religious beliefs, are not ventilated by the curriculum’s provisions. While CRS 325, “Philosophy of Religion,”²³⁰ provides the students an opportunity to engage existential questions such as the existence of God, and the problem of evil in the world created by a good God, it does not expose them to

229 *See Ibid.*, 150-151.

230 CRS 311 is a one hour credit subject in the three-year NCE program in Nigeria’s COEs.

possible challenges that may arise from their engagement with other religions and their practitioners in the society on related dogmatic differences.

Similarly, granted that the students are being prepared as instructors to pupils at the affiliative stage, a proper and adequate attention to the student-teachers' own stage of faith development is as important to them as to the children they are being prepared to teach. A disoriented instrument might not be good enough to achieve success in the process of its usage. Thus, one may agree with Westerhoff that,

it matters what we believe. It matters how we believe. It matters what values we hold. It matters what vision has captured our imaginations. It matters why we live and for what we live. To live our own lives faithfully day by day in the world is the best and most important gift we can give our adolescent to arm them in their struggles with the Christian faith.”²³¹

The same trend of curriculum inadequacy for the faith stage of CRS students in COEs is observable in correlating Fowler's stages with the current CRS curriculum. As noted earlier, the ages of COEs' students fall mostly within the category of Fowler's third stage of faith development and the fourth. However, the content of the curriculum that is accessible to the CRS students at this stage is characteristically catechetical. The influences of instructors build upon the *mythic-literal faith* stage and leave no significant room for proper resolution of conflict in Christian narratives, or issues of dissimilarities in interreligious relations. Therefore, an examined inter-religious understanding of other religions is hampered. While students may be struggling with the natural demands commensurate with their faith development, the contents of their curriculum inhibit a free

231 Westerhoff, *A Journey Together in Faith*. 67

flow of such expression. Ironically, it is the very “Synthetic-conventional”²³² and “Individuative-Reflective”²³³ inclination corresponding to their faith stage at this moment that is being denied them by the curriculum. Thus, rather than a progressive realization of the objectives of the curriculum, a breakdown between expectations and actualization may be experienced.

According to Fowler, among the factors that could contribute to such breakdown are,

serious clashes or contradictions between valued authority sources; marked changes, by officially sanctioned leaders, or policies or practices previously deemed sacred and unbreachable; the encounter with experiences or perspectives that leads to critical reflection on how one’s beliefs and values have formed and changed, and on how relative they are to one’s particular group or background. Frequently the experience of ‘leaving home’ - emotionally or physically, or both - precipitates the kind of examination of self, background, and life guiding values that gives rise to stage transition at this point.²³⁴

Fowler’s observation is apt as it directly addresses the scenario of the young Christian students, with limited CRS curriculum in multi-religious school environment. On entrance into a Federal institution with high human representation from across the country and religions, the CRS student must cope, not only with the physically plural

²³² This stage begins about the age of 13 and goes until around 18. The stage is characterized by ability to think abstractly, and correlate stories with morals and Christian values in ways that are not previously comprehended.

²³³ At this stage, the student becomes more comfortable with his/her faith, and attune with the importance of community in faith development. Importantly, people at this stage of faith formation are more open to positive perceptions on other people’s faith.

²³⁴ Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*.

community, but with the challenges of other faith adherents whose religious spaces demand equal respect and authority.

Furthermore, the COEs' environments present challenging environments to the faith of the CRS students whose curriculum shields from responsibly meeting the challenges of multiple religious presence and dialogue on equal footing. He or she is therefore inadequately prepared to meet the challenges of his/her profession as a religious education teacher in a pluralistic environment. The beauty of a curriculum that speaks to the consciousness of the student in identifying with his or her religion while being open to the existence of the others' religion within its own full potentials is the exposure it offers through opportunities to reason through one's creedal concepts.

Summarily, the implication of the stages of faith and its psychology in human development does not seem to have been appropriately considered in the CRS curriculum that is expected to generate a sense of peaceful coexistence in the would-be teachers. This much is evident in the present CRS curriculum, which focuses, and outrightly attempts to confine the study scope of the CRS students within the limits of what James Fowler explains as the "Mythic-Literal stage," or at best, the "Synthetic-Conventional stage" of faith. In its present form, the CRS curriculum does not encourage the questioning of basic exclusive faith traditions and assumptions that deter interreligious engagements.

In conclusion, rather than sync the aim and objective of CRS in COEs with commensurate stages of faith formation of its students, the content of the curriculum consolidates on predominant affiliative, mythical-literal features corresponding to the

category requiring some sort of authority for guidance. The curriculum jealously guard and protect the fragile faith of the student teacher in formation against exposure to other religious presence. By so doing, attainment of matured faith resulting from introspection and adequate interaction with the religious others is most likely going to be difficult. The same mindset of closing up on unexamined creedal values and traditions would most likely be transmitted in the process of their teaching at the primary and secondary school levels, since no one gives what he/she does not have.

1.15 Performance assessment of Religious Education in COEs

Nigeria's philosophy of education is partly based on the belief that education is an instrument for national development and social change.²³⁵ It further holds education to be vital to the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria;²³⁶ as such, educational programs offered during formal education are expected to address the national goals. In this respect, the philosophy and objectives of religious education in COEs are, implicitly expected to replicate the principles of the national goals.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) is not by any means ambiguous in stating the national interest in investing in education. It emphasizes unity and national integration as underscoring the philosophy and goals of education, and the constitution of the federal republic. The goals anticipate a free society, that is democratic in governance where the rule of law operates, and people are treated as equals irrespective of ethnic, language, or religious affiliation.²³⁷ These goals are high in standard and necessarily

235 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*. Sec. 1 par. 3a

236 Ibid., Sec. 1 par. 3b

237 Ibid., Sec. 1 par. 5

warrant a consciousness and mental disposition that resonate with such expectations. It is therefore understandable that the NPE categorically states that the quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be oriented towards inculcating certain values that are carefully crafted to attain the set objectives:

- a. respect for the worth and dignity of the individual
- b. faith in man's ability to make rational decisions;
- c. moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations;
- d. shared responsibility for the common good of society;
- e. promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children; and
- f. acquisition of functional skills and competencies necessary for self-reliance.²³⁸

The outlined values present the end to which the formation of student teachers is expected to be oriented in Nigeria. The formation is expected to positively influence the life and attitude of the trained teacher. In the light of such orientation, Nwana has attempted a classification of Nigeria's educational aims and objectives into three broad behavioral groups of cognition, affective, and psychomotor domain of learning. By his classification, the inculcation of national consciousness and unity, inculcation of right values and attitudes, and the training of the mind in understanding the world, fell within

238 Ibid., Sec. 1 par. 9

the affective behavioral domain.²³⁹ It is this area of study that religious education in the country's COEs tends to pride itself.²⁴⁰

Details of the philosophy of religious education in COEs (CRS and Islamic studies) as contained in the minimum standard for arts and social sciences education aim at inculcating and sustaining moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations. For example, the philosophy of CRS aims at providing “moral and spiritual values requisite for smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations,”²⁴¹ while Islamic Religious Studies (IRS) is directed “towards the development of a balanced personality that is socially accommodating, intellectually alert, morally sound, and spiritually dedicated to the cause of Allah.”²⁴² Both the CRS and IRS position themselves as midwives to moral and spiritual delivery in government efforts to mediate development via education.

The ideal of national unity and integration is of key importance to Nigerian national objectives and goals for education. According to Nwana, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) presented the national objectives to a gathering of Nigerian teacher-educators in 1995, and asked them to assess the nation in terms of how it had fared on each of the objectives. An analysis of the results shows that the mean rating of 1.73 for a “united” nation where citizens care for each other and live

239 Nwana, “Relevance of the Aims and Objectives of Nigerian Education to National Development.” 18

240 This claim is in line with Eleanor Pierre and John Oughton observation that “values and attitudes are rooted in belief systems, which are built on cultural, religious and moral learning.” cf. “The Affective Domain: Undiscovered Country,” *College Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2007).

241 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*, 2012. 1

242 Ibid., 13

together in peace indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.²⁴³ By the result and the result of other objectives that are also rated low, the Nigeria of 1995 may be said to be low on the achievements of her development objectives. Naturally, with the interest of the government in the education sector as elixir to its developmental issues, one wonders what might have, or could be going wrong in that sector. In the religious education subdivision, it is interesting but quite curious to note that neither the philosophy and objectives of CRS, nor the objectives and philosophy of IRS in COEs' minimum standard has the goal of unity and national integration on its agenda.

Although, the IRS education philosophy is partly focused on “the achievement of social solidarity, ethical harmony, human equality, and brotherhood in the society, particularly in the Nigerian society,” one of its objectives is “to prepare the students to understand Islam as a culture and civilization.”²⁴⁴ Preparing the IRS student to understand Islam as a culture and civilization, places Islam at par with Nigeria as an entity. Similarly, the document went further to identify “instilling in the students the spirit of God consciousness, to lead them to appreciate and uphold the values and teachings of Islam, and to live by it,”²⁴⁵ as one of its objectives. These ideals in themselves are good and project the desire of the curriculum designers to pass on to the students, teachings that would acquaint them with the “broad outlines of Islam.”²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the existence of people of other religions and their stake in the Nigerian

243 Cf. Nwana, “Relevance of the Aims and Objectives of Nigerian Education to National Development.” 16-17.

244 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education*, 2012.

245 Ibid.

246 Ibid.

project is not well ventilated. By that fact, IRS in COEs does not adequately echo the ideals of the government's interest in unity and integration of all citizens, irrespective of ethnicity and religious affiliation.

Similarly, whereas the philosophy of CRS aims at correlating CRS with “smooth and stable interpersonal and human relations”²⁴⁷ in the country, its objectives among others is aimed at grooming students to “demonstrate sound knowledge and appreciation of the moral values needed to live as a Christian at the various stages of growth and development.”²⁴⁸ Furthermore, the curriculum hopes to produce students that will “express accurate knowledge of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit needed to live as a Christian in the community.”²⁴⁹ Again, like the IRS curriculum, there is nothing wrong in identifying with one's religion and projecting objectives that would help guard and guide the teacher in living as a Christian in the society, nevertheless, the curriculum is inward looking with less consideration of the national goal on unity and integration of all citizens. Like the IRS curriculum, the focus is on passing on the unflinching torch of the faith, irrespective of religious views and affiliation of other Nigerians.

Generally, while religious education in Nigeria COEs may be said to have a role to play in the attainment of the national goals, its focus on national integration is at best contingent on the dictates of the creed of Islam and Christianity. Both religions, Christianity and Islam, the only two religions that have distinctive recognition as departments in Nigeria COEs, are primarily concerned with inculcating values by which their respective adherents may define their religious location within the larger Nigerian

247 Ibid., 1

248 Ibid.

249 Ibid., 1

society. While concepts as values and attitudes to which CRS and IRS expand their tentacles could be difficult to define when considered on a larger scale of operation in a country as multidimensional as Nigeria, one cannot help but ask the place of a faith-based religious education curriculum in the multi religious society of Nigeria. This is especially so when one considers the fact that doctrinal emphasis of one religion, differs from that of another. Thus, when an IRS student is groomed with an understanding that Islam is a “culture and civilization,” and the CRS student toes the same path in his or her religious education formation, what is left is a disposition that excludes the religious other from the definition of a religion.

One must be quick to note that religious differences in any given society, including Nigeria, are welcome and healthy developments. However, biased distinctions which relegate other religions to an almost non-existing status, or at best an inferior religious quality, may inadvertently degenerate into fallacious stereotyping that gets increasingly difficult to modify by means of structured religious educational platforms. Coupled with this is the fact that the teaching of values from the point of view of particular religion, and independent of other variables that are contingent on the existence of the wider society, may hinder openness and social integration. In this regard, the observation of Nwana is apt, that the teaching of precepts, which has been the tradition of most religious educational interventions, has not had the desired impact in contributing to the promotion of the right values and attitude in the Nigeria community.²⁵⁰ To correct this

²⁵⁰ Such teachings are transmitted in the popular subjects called moral instruction, religious instruction and so on, and are prominent in the tradition of preaching in churches and mosques. Despite the prominence of the instructions in religious circles, Nwana said that it is difficult to say in view of the obvious general adverse behavior, that precept interventions of schools and colleges as well as those of the churches and mosques are yielding the desired

discrepancy, Nwana recommends a reorganization of the educational system to employ “example” as strategy in achieving the national education objectives.²⁵¹ While a blend of the affective and the psychomotor domain of learning need be emphasized as Nwana suggestion inclined, a cognitive and affective perusal of the interreligious themes of the religions to which the students are exposed need be explored for better hands-on interaction.

1.16 Interreligious potentials of the current CRS curriculum

The NCE CRS curriculum is confessional in nature with flaccid inclusive religious dialogical theology. The curriculum is almost exclusively Christian except for the pockets of other religious presence with elective status, and one course on introduction to other religions. Among its specific objectives, the program expects that graduating students should imbibe Christian values and spirituality through which the younger generation in elementary and secondary schools are to be guided. The curriculum does not sufficiently offer students an opportunity to significantly learn about other religions, especially in ways that could promote interreligious dialogue, and peaceful coexistence in the country. Such a curriculum similarly lacks the potentials for good relational knowledge to engage adherents of other religions. Thus, Byimui Umaru argues,

the curriculum for Islamic/Christian religious knowledge in both primary and secondary schools is exclusively Islamic or Christian with no interreligious knowledge...; in most cases the formation is religiously stereotyped or without reference to the other. The method of imparting knowledge in the Qur’anic schools and Christian Sunday schools excludes

positive intent. Cf. Nwana, “Relevance of the Aims and Objectives of Nigerian Education to National Development.”

251 Ibid.

even the basic tenets of the other faith tradition. Hence, it can be said that the so-called religious unrest in northern Nigeria is partly due to ignorance about other faiths and the spiritual values that Christianity and Islam have in common.²⁵²

The current CRS curriculum, like those observed by Umaru does not possess the potential to effect any significant interreligious engagement that could facilitate religious harmony in the country. This argument is further strengthened by the fact that basic curricula requirements for religious dialogue as outlined by Adam Lefstein are significantly missing in the current CRS curriculum.²⁵³

According to Lefstein, five core aspects are common to most theories of dialogue in the study of religions in schools.²⁵⁴ These core aspects include: dialogue as a communicative pattern, dialogue as a means of learning, dialogue as an epistemological stance, dialogue as an orientation toward content and, dialogue as a relation.²⁵⁵ The NCE CRS curriculum as discussed in previous sections of this work does not provide an encouraging opportunity to engage other religions in ways that will advance dialogue as a communicative pattern, or as a means of learning. The knowledge of the CRS students on other religions is limited to the compulsory exposition to other religions as offered in the introductory course on the study of religion. Furthermore, the contents of the course have

252 Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration* (Bloomington IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2013), <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=KYF-AAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP1>. 205

253 See Adam Lefstein, "Dialogue in Schools: Towards a Pragmatic Approach," *Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies* (London, 2006), <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/education/research/Centres/lcd/publications/workingpapers/the-papers/33.pdf>. Research-

254 See Ibid.

255 Ibid.

13 topics with eight world religions and five topics which center on religion and its relationship with culture and politics. This thematic walk-through of religion at NCE level of study only exposes the students to the knowledge of such religions without adequate interaction to engage them further. As such, the curriculum lacks modal content through which students may be trained in practical terms to relate with other religions. The effort to ensure adequate entry of themes that emphasize Christian values, morals, and spirituality outshine the potentials that an interreligious education curriculum could provide in such school environment.

There is no doubt, as demonstrated by Lefstein that with the right curriculum and strategies the school could provide a dialogical ideal condition that could positively facilitate dialogue in any given community.²⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the structure and details of the NCE CRS curriculum for Nigeria COEs is overladen with themes and topics that limits the orientation of the students almost exclusively to Christian ideals of virtues and morality. The CRS educator and the student-teacher, as well as the targeted elementary and secondary school students are expected to operate within the confines of Christian tenets. While this disposition has the advantage of establishing a clear religious identity for both the educator, the student teacher, and the end target, such curriculum is weak in projecting other religions as equal religious partners in human search for God, and in maintaining peaceful coexistence in the country. It neither encourages the religious educator to be enthusiastic in learning about other religions, nor emboldens the students to at least, academically engage other religions in ways that would challenge them to inquire further. Since dialogue in school environment according to Lefstein entails “a

256 Ibid., 7 - 10

back-and-forth movement, between my own and the Other's horizons,"²⁵⁷ any distance created by religious curriculum from ones' prejudice as the NCE CRS curriculum seems to be doing, would only suspend the prejudice, making the individuals involved to be only "politely listening,' but not truly engaged."²⁵⁸

The teaching of CRS must be distinguished from what McCabe refers to as "catechesis which promotes personal adherence to Christ, and growth in Christian life,"²⁵⁹ and a religious education "which is not just a neutral study of comparative religions, but which makes the school a true laboratory of culture and humanity in which the significant contribution of Christianity ... is recognized."²⁶⁰ McCabe position argues for a CRS that would ventilate a Christian identity, yet it should be a CRS that is with the consciousness of equipping the students to mature in their religious adherence while being open to learn from others and recognizing them on their own terms. The current curriculum does not have the capacity to do these.

1.17 Conclusion

This chapter argues that religious education is essential to peace building and its sustenance in Nigeria. It argues that the mode and spread of Christianity and Islam in the country, coupled with the unsettled regional and religious issues at the point of the country's amalgamation, are responsible for the intermittent unrest in the country. While

257 Ibid., 4

258 Ibid.

259 Paul McCabe, "Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: A Study Guide for Use by NSW Catholic Schools" (Diocese of Armidale, 2014), http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/db_uploads/Intercultural_Dialogue_Study_Guide_220714_Neals.pdf. 2

260 Ibid.

the intention of the government to correct and control religious suspicion and animosity among religions' followers is laudable, the chapter notes that curricula avenue to translate the policy into practical and effective tool has been hampered by the deep-rooted exclusive nature of the religious education curriculum operated in the country, especially, the Colleges of Education. The chapter concludes that the present CRS curriculum lacks the potentials to effect in any meaningful manner, an inclusive religious pluralism mindset as the basis on which peaceful coexistence of the followers of various religions may be promoted.

CHAPTER TWO

A THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MODELS IN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND NIGERIA CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CURRICULUM

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on analyzing the theological contents of the current CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs, as well as ascertaining its compliant level for interreligious dialogue. The primary question to be answered in the chapter is the justification of inclusive pluralism as the model for interreligious dialogue in addressing the problem of unity and peacebuilding in the restive Nigeria religious environment. The chapter begins with an examination of the difference in religious opinions and behaviors and how such attitudes have been classified. A background to the religious situation in Nigeria with an overview of instances of religious unrest, their causes, and the sustaining factors for such situations, as well as the various interlocutory interventions for peace, was made. These efforts lead to theological analyses of Christian thoughts on religious relation with other religious traditions spanning through the Old and New Testament, apostolic, modern and postmodern theories on interfaith dialogue, and Dupuis' theology of religions. The essence of the latter is to provide a theological basis for engaging the question of theological adequacy of the CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs for interreligious dialogue, unity and peacebuilding in the country. In the later parts of the chapter, the reasons for proposing Dupuis' form of religious pluralism as a viable model that is most favorably disposed to constructive interreligious relation for a peacebuilding curriculum is tabled and argued. Generally, the chapter demonstrates that inclusive pluralism recognizes religious plurality and an allowance for individual's commitment to personal religious

beliefs. It is not opposed to Christian theology of religions, and as such it could be made a model principle for crafting an interreligious curriculum of CRS in Nigeria COEs.

2.2 Nomenclatures for interreligious attitudes

Variations in religious opinions and behaviors are perhaps as old as the history of human religious beliefs and practices. Expectedly, every religious group develops lenses from which to see other religious followers. They develop religious attitudes that create and perpetuate spaces or walls which separate believers from unbelievers and on which relationships are defined. Such boundaries describe relationship with followers of other religions, and in many cases where such are not positive, the expressions are not only derogatory, but could be polemic or portend inequality between the more prominent religions, and the subtle presence of others. The more polemic expressions usually convey uncompromising attitudes that project others as inferior, resistant to truth, or salvifically impotent. Mahmoud Sadr refers to such expressions as “buffer beliefs” capable of limiting “communication between religions to territorial or polemical turf battles whose fallout rains on all sides, fostering suspicion of others and doubt of one’s own spiritual heritage.”¹ Such buffers are built on doctrines and theologies, which perpetuate them. Nevertheless, there have also been deliberate efforts to create modicum of religious acceptance in the history of human interreligious relations. The resistant attitude and the more accepting approaches have been described with different terms. These terms are summarily classified into a tripolar typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism.

¹ Mahmoud Sadr, “From Irony to Inclusion: Early Models for Interfaith Dialogue,” *Interreligious Insight* 4, no. 1 (2006) 8.

Kenneth Ross has traced the typological nomenclature of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism to Alan Race, a onetime British Anglican chaplain in the University of Kent at Canterbury.² Although the religious typological nomenclatures have been closely associated with Race, he did not pretend to have originated the discourse on how religious attitudes towards other religions should be described. According to him, as at the time he wrote in 1982, the subject was still in its infancy, and “there is no consensus among theologians about the outcome.” However, he pointed out that there were literatures dealing with the subject among which the work of Owen C. Thomas’ *Attitude toward Other Religions* published in 1969 is a watershed. In the work, Owen classified the Christian response to religious pluralism under the following headings: rationalism, romanticism, relativism, exclusivism, dialectic, preconception, tolerance, dialogue, Catholicism, and presence.³ According to Race, Thomas’ method was to “gather together the writings of the individual theologians, each of whom were introduced with a brief commentary outlining the general position of the writer concerned.” Through his effort however, Thomas was able to “indicate the broad sweep of the approaches” to Christian attitudes towards other religions.⁴

There were subsequent efforts after Owen at articulating religious attitude towards other religions. Such work includes Carl F. Hallencreutz's *New Approaches to Men of*

2 Kenneth D. Rose, *Pluralism: The Future of Religion* (New York. London. New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2013). 18. Rose notes, “the categories of the now canonical tripolar typology can be traced back to Alan Race’s *Christians and Religious Pluralism*.”

3 Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1982) 7.

4 *Ibid.*, 7

Other Faiths (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC, 1970)⁵ and Eric J. Sharpe's *Faith Meets Faith* (London: SCM Press, 1977).⁶ According to Race, both authors were more focused on the historical and theoretical plot in the changing nature of Christians theorizing about other faiths within the period that they wrote. What Race did differently was to move a step forward through historical and analytic method to articulate what other authors have described historically and theoretically, by adopting certain "headings,"⁷ namely, Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism to categorize the various thoughts. These nomenclatures have come to mark the different ways in which religious attitudes are now branded. The categories shall be further discussed under models of interreligious relations in later parts of this chapter. Suffice it to say in the interim that religious exclusivism does just what the nomenclature says. It excludes other religions and their followers from what its definition of authentic religion entails. It teaches that only one particular religion or belief system is true. While religious pluralism upholds equal rights of all religions, and rejects any absolute claim of religious truth by any particular religion, religious inclusivism delineates "lines between the Christian faith and the interreligious dynamism of the other faiths."⁸ It sets parameters within which particular religions may be

5 Carl F. Hallencreutz, *New Approaches to Men of Other Faiths* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC, 1970)

6 Eric J. Sharpe, *Faith Meets Faith* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

7 Race refers to his "broad typological framework within which most of the current Christian theologies of religions can be placed" as headings. Cf. Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions*.

8 Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism*, 38. According to him, the model accepts the spiritual power and depth manifested in other religions, so that "they can properly be called a locus of divine presence," while it also rejects other religions as not being sufficient for salvation apart from Christ, for Christ alone is Savior."

considered normative. To Race, inclusivism is “both an acceptance and a rejection of the other faiths, a dialectical ‘yes’ and ‘no.’”⁹

2.3 Dignity of religious differences among Nigerians

Religious differences and their varied responses in terms that depict exclusivism or otherwise are neither uncommon in Nigeria, nor did such begin with Nigerian religious adherents. Ordinarily, religious diversity in any given society ought to be a thing of beauty. The experience could facilitate diversity of opinions and enrich the society in variety of exposures. In many cases where religious tensions have deluded the citizens of the fruits of religious and ethnic diversity, the need to formulate an appropriate theological response to the presence of other religious bodies becomes imperative. The Nigeria Constitution did a similar thing in recognizing and responding to the multiplicity of religious presence in the country. The Constitution recognizes the differences and advocates “religious tolerance,”¹⁰ and freedom of “thoughts, conscience, and religion, including freedom to change [...] religion or belief.”¹¹ This, of course, is in recognition of religious differences among the citizens in the country, and the need to maintain peaceful coexistence. Nevertheless, having a constitutional provision and abiding by the demands of the Constitution on the part of the citizens, and the willingness to enforce the dictates of the Constitution, on the part of the government, are different things. In the following paragraph, the issue of dignity of religious differences among Nigerians vis-à-

9 Ibid., 38.

10 Federal Republic of Nigeria, “Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,” 1999, <http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Nigeria/constitution2.pdf>. Art. 23.

11 Ibid., Art. 1.

vis the willingness to be abided by the dictates of the Constitution in that regard shall be engaged.

2.3.1 A Constitutional imperative

Section 38 of the Nigeria Constitution states as follows,

- (1) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
- (2) No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own, or religion not approved by his parent or guardian.
- (3) No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination.¹²

Article 4 of the Section (38) however exclude religious activities that are reflective of clandestine and secret cult activities. Hence, the provisions do not “entitle any person to form, take part in the activity, or be a member of a secret society.”¹³ While this provision is recognized as lawful, it is arguable that such exclusion raises questions of meaningful religious activities that are consistent with traditional religion on the one hand, and with religious practices that? are secret but inimical to peace and recognition of the rights of other citizens. Having said that, the question of what Nigeria status is, in relation to religious freedom, arises.

12 Ibid. The first of these provisions is reflective of United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art 18.

13 Federal Republic of Nigeria. Sec. 38, Art. 4.

The fact that the Constitution does not recognize any specific religion as a state religion,¹⁴ and gives recognition to freedom of religious association,¹⁵ might make a person to conclude that the religious status of Nigeria is a secular one. However, going by article 3, Section 17 of the 1999 Constitution, that conclusion is difficult to derive from the Constitution. The provision of the section states, “The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that... conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious, and cultural life.”¹⁶ The responsibility of the state towards making provision for religious life has been inferred as sufficient basis for government interference in the religious life of its citizens. As such, the states-religious separation cannot be made in clear-cut sense. It is the case that the Nigerian government at federal, state, and local government levels has been quite involved in the religious affairs of the citizens at the expense of the taxpayers’ money. For example, individuals and groups are sponsored on religious pilgrimages on the account of the federal, state, or local government. Similarly, section 262 of the same Constitution empowers federated states to establish Shari’a (religious) courts of appeal, although with limited jurisdiction to Islamic personal law.

Arguably, while the religious status of Nigeria may not adequately be describable as secular, the country may not also be rightly described as a religious Republic. However, since the provision grants the government the power and responsibility to promote religious affairs, Nigeria has witnessed the introduction of certain laws and

14 Chapter 1, Pt. II, art 10 of the 1979 states, “The government of the federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as state religion.”

15 See Sec 38, Art 1 of the 1999 Constitution cited in footnote 9 above.

16 Federal Republic of Nigeria. 17(3) b.

religious activities sponsored by state government, which stands at par with the right of the religious other to exercise freedom of religious expression in the country. An example of this is the introduction of the Shari'a law in some northern states where many Christians reside. The general sense of the Constitution on the seeming contradictory status, which favors a secular status, at the same time, negates same, is not inconsistent with the constitutional attempt at protecting the dignity of religious differences in the country. This mode of secularity of course differs from the American model of secularism where the state is totally separated from religion. However, the Nigeria model where the freedom of religion is facilitated by government while providing supports for individual and groups' religious practices, does not necessarily deny the secularity of the state. As Osita Nnamani Ogbu argues, "While some secular states may rigidly not intervene in religious affairs, a state is no less secular because it provides facilities for religious life without discrimination in favor or against any religion."¹⁷

Regardless of abuses in the implementation and enforcement processes, the Constitution of the country places high premium on freedom of religious association and dignity of religious differences among Nigerians. It recognizes the plurality of religious presence in the country, and creates windows of support for the religious concerns of the citizen. Nevertheless, religious adherents who would rather see their religion as superior to others' have abused this opportunity. Such religious followers have created "buffer beliefs" that perpetuate the negative impact of religious differences, and institutionalize the myth of religious superiority in the country.

¹⁷ Osita Nnamani Ogbu, "Is Nigeria a Secular State? Law, Human Rights and Religion in Context," *The Transnational Human Rights Review* 1 (2014): 11.

2.3.2 *The myth of religious superiority and differences*

The demand for freedom of religion, recognition of dignity of religious differences, and support for religious activities in Nigeria by the Constitution, is fraught with struggle for supremacy between Christians and Muslims in the country. The two religions represent the dominant religions in the country. Unfortunately, both religions have been on each other's jugular in attempt to outdo the other in recognition and domination. This competing situation somewhat constitutes part of the defining nature of both religions; they are both missionary religions, inclined to winning converts through proselytizing.¹⁸ Both religions perceive themselves as having something that is profoundly absent in the other, hence their adherents consider mission as opportunity to offer something better that the other does not possess. The struggle is evident in J. S. Trimingham's description of the confrontational and polemical approach to Islam by some Christian missionaries, as quoted by John Azumah,

[T]hey would admit nothing good [in Islam] and gave a dogmatic presentation of Christianity. They thought that it was their work to attack and break down the Islamic religious system, and their method was developed accordingly (sic). They sought to prove to the Muslim by argument and controversy that Christianity was better, and to force an intellectual assent.¹⁹

The Muslims have basic argument against Christians as they do concerning the Jews, a reason for which they would prefer the other two groups switch to the "true"

18 The missionary nature of Islam and Christianity was discussed in chapter one, *see also* footnote #49 and 50 of chapter One. Notably, while the Christians cite the Gospel of Mark chapter 16, verse 15, or Acts 11:47, as mission imperative, the Muslims consider the Qur'an chapter 16 verse 125 as similarly mission compelling.

19 John Azumah, "Mission among Muslims: Christian Mission and Islam," in *Witnessing to Christ in a Pluralistic World: Christian Mission among Other Faiths*, ed. Lalsangkima Pachuau and Knud Jorgensen (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011).123-124.

religion of Islam. According to William Watt, the Muslim argues from the Qur'an, that "The Jews say, The Christians have no basis (for belief); and the Christians say, The Jews have no basis, though both read the Book... God will judge between them on the day of resurrection about that in which they have been deferring (2:113)."²⁰ According to Watt, the criticism of the Jews and Christians made by the Muslim is based on the fact that neither would admit the prophethood of Mohammad, as well as their (Christians and Jews) exclusive claim to the truth. Thus, the Muslims say of Christians and Jews, "They say, Be Jews or Christians and you will be guided. Say (to them), No, but the Creed of Abraham as a *hanīf*; and he was not of the idolaters (2:135)."²¹ The word *hanīf* according to Watt is used in the Quran to denote a monotheist who is neither Jew nor Christian, and it is applied only to Abraham and to Mohammad and his followers.

The above background provides some insight into part of the basic religious anchor for the tension between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. It is imperative on both religious adherents to preach and win people to their sides. Such religious demands would necessarily generate tension and constantly make one religious adherent suspicious of the other especially in situations that may bring adherents of the different religions together, for example, school environments. By the same token, the situation explains why various religious leaders would always want to protect *their own*.

In Nigeria, the situation is no better as unhealthy rivalry has continued between both Muslims and Christians despite Constitutional provisions to the contrary. Matthews

²⁰ William Montgomery Watt, *Muslim-Christian Encounters (Routledge Revivals): Perceptions and Misperceptions*, 2014th ed. (New York: Routledge, 1991). 16

²¹ Ibid.

Ojo and Folaranmi Lateju note in this respect that religious pluralism in Nigeria has been disrupted by religiously-motivated conflicts.²² They cited colonial policies towards Muslim and Christian communities as responsible for institutionalized ethnic and religious differences—with far-reaching consequences before and after independence.²³ While this claim is true, the idea of Islam being the fulfilment of Christianity (supersessionism), and the counter perception of Islam as a religion that needs to see the light of Christianity remain basic their differences. Each of the divide claims greater religious authenticity, and superior acceptance in the sight of God, on the bases of their religions. To Umaru, “some Christians perceive Muslims as volatile, vicious, domineering, and violent, some Muslims see Christians as infidels, unbelievers (*Kafiri*), secular, and collaborators with the West which must be conquered and converted to the religion of Allah.”²⁴ These separating realities remain a major hindrance to the attainment of religious harmony that the nation’s Constitution envisions. Yet, much of the reasons inferred for such claims cannot be substantively defended on the primary texts of the religions. According to John Hick, a great deal of the mistake of religious superiority, and related myths, border on the religious advantages associated with the context and location of one’s birth. According to him, in the vast majority of cases people inherit their religion along with their nationality, language, and culture. For example, someone that is born into a Christian family in Italy, would, most probably become a Christian; just as the 12-

22 Matthews A. Ojo and Folaranmi T. Lateju, “Christian–Muslim Conflicts and Interfaith Bridge-Building Efforts in Nigeria,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2010): 1.

23 Similar idea has been expressed in Chapter One of this dissertation, *see* the section on. “Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria: A story of tension and toleration.”

24 Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration* (Bloomington IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2013) 129 -130.

year-old child that he cited, born into a Christian family in Cairo, notes, ““if I’d been born next-door I’d be a Muslim.””²⁵ The implication of this is that the associated advantages of the various circumstances and accruable advantages of one’s birth significantly contribute to the religious attitude that is put up by individuals. Hence,

most Christians assume, or are certainly supposed to assume because of the claim that has traditionally been made, that there is a significant religious advantage in being a Christian rather than a Jew or a Muslim or a Buddhist, etc. The strongest form of this is the belief that only Christians go to heaven, all the rest to hell... they still believe that there is a significant religious advantage in being a member of the Christian church.²⁶

Religious superiority is an assumption partly based on the contingency of birth. Subsequent exposure to the religion to which one is born into confines the follower to dogmatic adherence characterized by tenacious identification with religious “buffers.” However, the question of effective quality of the religion over other religious adherents remains paramount, and is often unanswered. By the evidence of human experiences, does mere membership of a religion necessarily make one a better human being over adherents of other religion? The answer makes more sense in the negative. Thus, Hick argues regarding Christianity,

If we take literally the traditional belief that in Christ we have an uniquely full revelation of God and an uniquely direct relationship with God, so that in the church we are members of the body of Christ, taking the divine life into our lives in the Eucharist, and living under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then surely this ought to produce some noticeable difference in our lives. Christians ought to be better human beings than those who lack

25 John Hick, “The Next Stage beyond Dialogue.” In *The Myth of Religious Superiority: Multifaith Explorations of Religious Pluralism*, ed. Paul F. Knitter, Faith Meets Faith (New York: Orbis Books, 2005). 7

26 Ibid., 7

these inestimable spiritual benefits. Or does the new situation inaugurated by the life and death of Jesus make no practical difference? But in that case, what is its value? So, we are stuck on the horns of a dilemma. We either have to claim, against the evidence of our experience, that as members of the body of Christ Christians in general are better human beings than non-Christians, or we are going to have to rethink those of our traditional doctrines that entail that.²⁷

The point in Hick's argument must be clearly retained. His position is pluralistic, and he does not necessarily allude to any form of inefficacy of a religion based on individual's life. Rather, his argument implies that individuals' religion is true to the extent that the individuals were born into it, they were formed and nourished by the religion, it speaks to them in its own image, in manners that followers of other religions would not experience in the same way. Thus, the religion fits them in ways that others probably would not.²⁸ Individual's identification with his or her religion is normal and okay, but the individual must realize that the same way in which his or her religion forms him/her, the same way are others formed by their religions.

While there might be arguments for ethical behavior as found in various human endeavor, that may not necessarily amount to good morals for the purpose of salvation, the Nigeria Constitution may however flourish on promoting such common values as may be found in the various religions. To do that, the measure of quality of religions ought not be weighted by the myth of religious superiority. Possible yardsticks for adjudging quality and relevance of religion to human interrelation would rather be better on valued principles for the common good of the society. For instance, virtues such as love, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, contentment, and related virtues are good

27 Ibid., 8

28 Ibid.

reference points. These are values taught by both Islam and Christianity. Hence, both Christianity and Islam have peculiar practices that are common to both.

On the basis that Christianity and Islam have, and teach common principles on which human and societal good may be promoted, claim of religious superiority by adherents of either of the religions may only amount to religious sophistry. For instance, if what Christianity says on love of neighbor is what Islam says of the same, both would either be true, or one is largely true while the other is largely false. But since both Islam and Christianity teach this ideal in their various religions' scriptures, the peaceful objectives of the nation's secular model in the Constitution is not utopic. While issues such as the nature of God might warrant a different approach, nevertheless, neither Christianity, nor Islam claim total knowledge of the nature and *beingness* of God, hence both religions can only suffice themselves with the finite knowledge of God that they possess. Ultimately, the basis for claim of religious superiority is feeble. The most likely submission one may make is that such attitude arises from doctrinal aberrations due to manners and modes of individual or groups' interpretations of religious doctrines that are often context bound. When such contextual hermeneutics are engaged, and generalized they could, unfortunately acquire a generalized ideal status.

In Nigeria, the ideal position, in line with the Constitution would be for Christians and Muslims in the country to get over myths that suspend peaceful co-existence of followers of both religions, shun the complex struggle in religious superiority, and recognize the equality of their respective religions. By joining hands as religious equals in the sight of God, they stand better chance to harness the spiritual resources of their various religions towards addressing the political, social and economic predicaments that

have continued to weigh the country down. In the same vein, in deconstructing the myth of religious superiority, there is a need to consolidate on the “spiritual life” which John Hick describes as “the inner response to the Ultimate.”²⁹ It is a response that “was originally communal before becoming individual.”³⁰--that is, the religious responses that are at the hearts of religions irrespective of religious institutions. It is the arrogation of such secondary religious institutions into, primary, and absolute authorities, that in turn makes them potentially dangerous centers of power.³¹ The religious experience of Nigeria is a product of institutionalized religious interplay. The experience has witnessed power play that pitches Sunnis against Shiites, or vice versa; the political uprising of the *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* (aka *Boko Haram*) against the rest of the country, or Christian denominations versus Muslim sects, etc.

When the wall of institutional religious divide is broken, advantages of religious diversity become more tenable; religions will no longer be “bounded entities set over against one another but more as spheres of spiritual influence, (where) one *can* live within two or more overlapping spheres of spiritual influences.”³² According to Hick, the result would be a “spirituality that has no tendency to divide people into opposing groups. (It would) indeed take characteristically different forms within the different traditions, but these differences are complementary rather than contradictory.”³³

29 Ibid., 5

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 6

33 Ibid.

2.4 Religious unrest and the need for interreligious dialogue in Nigeria

2.4.1 Background to religious unrest in the country

The history of religious unrest and intolerance in Nigeria goes beyond modern and recent account of religious relations among Nigerians. One may safely infer both historical and theological reasons for the evident religious unrest as intermittently witnessed in the country. Outside the fact that people of different religious affiliations and traditions were pulled into one geographical orbit without adequate exploration and provision for religious unity, bringing together two major proselytizing religions, Islam and Christianity that have always been entangled in superiority contest, also paved the way to the religious struggle evident in modern times.

While religious unrest and the struggle for religious superiority are not peculiar to Nigeria, “the aggressive, and sometimes destabilizing, manner in which these tendencies impinge themselves upon the public consciousness” is striking in the Nigerian case.³⁴ Public officers and political heads in the country make deliberate policies towards converting or attracting followers of other religions into the religion they profess. For example, during the colonial rule when the Christians enjoyed government support of their missions,³⁵ which helped to efface traditional religions, deliberate policies by the British colonial administrators were made to stop Christian missions’ activities in the northern part of the country. At that time, Christianity acquired major presence flavored

34 Simeon O. Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State* (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, 1999). xxii.

35 Simeon Ilesanmi reported, “When Lugard was accused by the Christian missionaries of privileging Islam at the expense of Christianity, he retorted that it would be unwise and unjust to force missions upon the Mohammedan population for it must be remembered that without the moral support of the government these missions would not be tolerated.” Cf. Simeon O. Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State*, 124.

with western education in parts of the country through the support of the colonial government.³⁶ The southeast part of the country consolidated on this antecedent so much so that Christianity became almost synonymous to their ethno-cultural identity. Similarly, the advantage of the non-incursion policy of Christianity in the North by the British administrators persisted beyond the nation's independence and was consolidated by *northernization* policies of the northern premier and the northern regional leadership respectively. According to Ilesanmi, while the Tafawa Balewa-led federal Government capitulated to the Northernization campaign by redeploying southerners working in the north then as federal civil servants, and effectively fencing off the southern incursion into the north, Ahmadu Bello, the regional premier and Sark of Sokoto, embarked on northern territorial religious conquest.³⁷ Ilesanmi notes that by the use of his royal, religious, ethnic and political resources as incorporative mechanisms, Ahmadu Bello became the vice president of the World Islamic Council at which Congress in 1964 he reported,

it will please you to hear, dear brothers, that in my endeavour to expand the religion of Islam I have, by the grace of Allah, been able to convert some 60,000 non-Muslims in my region to Islam within a period of five months, that is, from November 1963 to March 1964. Prior to this remarkable achievement, I have successfully been able to build several mosques in as many suitable centers as possible having regard to the resources at my disposal.³⁸

36 James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958). 96-97.

37 Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State*. 130-132.

38 Ilesanmi. 136.

The instances cited in the preceding paragraphs demonstrate occasions of early religious struggle between Muslims and Christians for the control of private and public lives of citizens of Nigeria. They were attempts at imposing institutional religious dominance in the country. Various means of control, including political manipulations and intemperate media control at the expense of the religious others were employed to gain prominence. The country has subsequently been highly inflected along religious modulations to an extent once described by Ahmadu Bello as “stronger than blood.”³⁹ The potentials of such disposition towards religious unrest and intolerance is almost a given; and are arguably the hub on which recent religiously informed conflicts in the country have built.

2.4.2 *Instances of religious unrest in Nigeria*

Various writers have compiled and published their findings on the long history of religious conflicts and violence in Nigeria, especially between 2000 and 2015.⁴⁰ Instances of religious conflicts and violence that had their origins in the nation’s institutions of learning also abound in the country. Hackett concur to this claim in her well researched article, “Conflict in the Classroom.” According to her, “the intensity of religious activity in university and college campuses in Nigeria, with its attendant factionalism and territoriality, has at times generated unrest which radiates beyond the boundaries of the

39 John N. Paden, *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986). Paden reported that the Sardauna had boasted that the northern Muslims are united and were impenetrable to external forces based on their religion, where “Islamic brotherhood is stronger than blood.” 285.

40 See *Appendix C: Some prominent cases of violent religious conflict in Nigeria, 2000–2015*. Details of some of the violent incidents are well articulated in A. Christian Van Gorder, *Violence in God’s Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria* (Houston, TX: African Diaspora Press, 2012), and Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria’s Decades of Blood: 1980 - 2002* (Belleville, Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003).

educational institutions themselves.”⁴¹ Obviously, behind such conflicts are radical religious ideologies or warped religious sentiments that provoke equal reaction from opposite religious followers. Thus, outside instances of impulsive burst of religious conflicts, there are instances that result from planned and articulated religious ideologies. A few such cases arising from organized religious interest include those reviewed below.

Nigeria went through a horrific civil war between 1967 and 1970. Although the incident was political, there have been insinuations of religious undertone concerning the experience.⁴² It was however not until the sharia debate in the constituent assembly between 1977 and 1978 that the first major conflict to polarize Nigeria along religious lines became definitive.⁴³ Although the incident was debated without resort to arms and violence, from early 1980s, instances of pronounced religious conflicts have assumed occurrences that are more violent prone. For instance, in 1980, a religious crisis of about the same violent intensity as the *Boko Haram* insurgence emerged in northern city of Kano. It was a revolt led by Muhammadu Marwa and popularly referred to as the *Maitasine* uprisings.⁴⁴ The revolt projected Islamic revivalism and a campaign against the

41 Rosalind I. J Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria,” *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2, no. 3 (1999). 555.

42 Claims of religious undertones of the civil war, the first in post-independent Africa has been alluded by Reference, “What Was the Cause of the Nigerian Civil War?,” *IAC Publishing, LLC*, 2017, <https://www.reference.com/history/cause-nigerian-civil-war-d74b0a502d50dae0#>. For a concise and varied opinion on the causes of the war, see also Abubakar A. Atofarati, “The Nigerian Civil War, Causes, Strategies, and Lessons Learnt,” US Marine Command & Staff College, accessed March 24, 2017, <http://www.africamasterweb.com/BiafranWarCauses.html>.

43 This claim was made by Abimbola O. Adesoji, “Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State,” *Africa Today* 57, no. 4 (2011): 100.

44 *Maitasine* according to Abinbola Adesoji is a Hausa word meaning ‘the one who damns.’ The word is “derived from the regular cursing or swearing of Marwa and alluded to his

Christians and Western technology.⁴⁵ It lasted for about five years spreading throughout the other parts of northern Nigeria, especially the North-Eastern Nigeria in 1984. During that crisis, hundreds of people were killed and properties worth millions of naira (Nigeria's currency) were destroyed. Another major religious crisis that witnessed loss of properties and lives in the northwestern Nigeria city of Kafanchan occurred in 1987. It was an incident that purportedly resulted from a Christian cleric quoting from the Holy Qur'an in a College of Education in the town. A spillover of the incident led to the killing of people and destruction of properties in the far away Zaria city where many Christians especially students were killed.

Similar incidents arising from dispute over religious symbols have also been reported in the South-Western part of the country. For example, Hackett cited an incident, which typified religious intolerance and violence at the University of Ibadan in 1985. The incident was a religious crisis that arose from what she labelled, "Crisis over the Cross."⁴⁶ A 42-year-old stone cross, sited at the front of the Chapel of Resurrection at the University of Ibadan was asked to be removed by the Muslims on the reason that they could "see the cross while worshipping." After much negotiation by the Vice Chancellor of the University, a screen was erected between the cross and the worship center of the Muslims. That intervention did not go down well with the angry Muslims who claimed

frequent, bitter public condemnation of the Nigerian state." Cf. Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram..." in *Africa Today* 57, no. 4 (2011)

45 Details of this uprising is documented in Isaac O Albert, "Kano: Religious Fundamentalism and Violence," in *Jeunes, Culture de La Rue et Violence Urbaine En Afrique*, ed. G. Herault and P Adesanm (Ibadan, Nigeria: IFRA & African Books Builders Ltd, 1997). See also Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 1998).

46 Hackett, "Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria." 555

that the cross was distracting them during prayers, and that the screen was closer to the chapel than it was to the cross.⁴⁷ By the following year, a wooden sculpture of the Risen Christ at the entrance to the Protestant Chapel was set alight. The intervention of the minister of education who purportedly called for the removal of the cross yielded not much success as many Muslims had already taken to the streets. Other Muslims from outside the University eventually joined the Muslims from the University, thereby leading to a wider protest, which turned out to engulf most parts of the city.

Similar incident at a College of Education in the northern city of Kafanchan was reported the following year after the Ibadan incident.⁴⁸ The incident was more serious in violent propensity than the occurrence in Ibadan. The fracas ensued from a contest over what was considered insensitivity to the other's religious space. The Muslim students had accused the Christian students of erecting a banner, which tagged the college campus as "Jesus' campus," and subsequently, invited a guest speaker, who at the Christian revival wrongfully quoted and misinterpreted the Holy Qur'an. The Muslim students thereafter went on rampage, "blocking roads around the Kafanchan campus and intimidating residents by forcing them to recite the *Shahada* or Muslim articles of belief."⁴⁹ The college town, which was predominantly Christian, was consequently brought to its knees following the higher rate of burning, and destruction of personal houses, commercial

47 Ibid.

48 See Ushe, "The Role of Christian Religious Education in Resolving Political Violence in the Northern States of Nigeria," A. Christian Van Gorder, *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria* (Houston, TX: African Diaspora Press, 2012), and Hackett, "Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria," 556.

49 Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria," 556.

properties, and worship centers. It was not long after, that neighboring towns and cities got engulfed resulting in the death of “nineteen people and eight animals..., 169 hotels and beer parlors destroyed, 152 private buildings, 152 churches, five mosques, and ninety-five vehicles damaged, all within the course of twenty-four hours.”⁵⁰ Significantly, this incident has left lingering acrimonious relationship between adherents of the two faiths in that part of the country.⁵¹

There have been series of other religious violence after the 1980s experiences. Many of such instances arise from insubstantial reasons such as publications of cartoons as happened in the 2002 religious crises relating to the hosting of “Miss Universe Pageant” in Kaduna, or attempt at preventing a preacher from another religion to preach in a particular region. The Zangon Kataf (a Local Government Area in Kaduna State of northern Nigeria) incident in 1992 is an example of crisis resulting from disagreement over the citing of a market place. While the 1991 North Western crises in Kano city was in reaction to Reihard Bonke (a German Christian preacher)’s intended visit to the city for evangelism. In 2002, the Federal College of Education, Zaria also witnessed fatal clash between the Christian and Muslim students. It was an incident which resulted from botched election of Student Union president. Similarly, Nwabudike and Osewe⁵² reported a squabble between Muslim and Christian girls by the water tank in the female hostel of a northern university (A.B.U, Zaria) almost resulting in a major religious fracas in 2006.

50 Ibid.

51 See Mohammed Usman, “Religion and Violence in Nigeria: 1980-2012,” *Bangladesh E-Journal of Sociology* 10, no. 2 (2913). 41

52 Quoted by Ushe Mike Ushe, “Religious Conflicts and Education in Nigeria : Implications for National Security,” *Journal of Education and Practice* 6, no. 2 (2015): 117–30. 120.

Unfortunately, even the high schools are not invulnerable to these incidents. Interreligious quibbles resulting into major fracas have been reported in some high schools in the country. For example, Ushe reported that, “In 2002, there was a struggle between Christian and Muslim girls in Queen Amina College Kaduna over an alleged case of the abuse of the Holy Quran.”⁵³ However, Hackett reports, “while the Queen Amina College conflict stemmed from religious issues, even a minor altercation of a nonreligious nature in a school setting may flare up into the clash with religious dimensions.”⁵⁴ She cited an instance in 1996 in which a Government Science Secondary School and Teachers College in Toro, Bauchi State (northeast Nigeria) experienced destruction of properties and a great threat of violence, resulting from a disciplinary incidents where a Christian prefect slapped a recalcitrant Muslim student.⁵⁵ In 2005, there was a similar uprising between Christian and Muslim students in Kufena College, Wusasa, Zaria; and in 2006, another similar uprising occurred in Technical School, Malali Kaduna, and so on.

What is disturbing in most of these cases is the reprisal attacks that usually erupt in other parts of the country because of killings and destruction of properties arising from the incidence of religious violence in reported areas. Such incidents and reprisal have led to mutual suspicion among Christians and Muslims and have consequently affected peaceful coexistence of the various followers of religions in the country. It must also

53 Ushe Mike Ushe, “Religious Conflicts and Education in Nigeria, 121. The school in question was originally a Catholic Church’s school known as Queen Amina College. It was taken over by the Government and renamed as such from what it used to be known: Queen of Apostles College

54 Hackett, “Conflict in the Classroom: Educational Institutions as Sites of Religious Tolerance/Intolerance in Nigeria.” 547

55 Ibid.

quickly be added that religious unrest and violence in the country have led to degeneration of economic prospects, casualties that affect families, and of course, political instability in various regions of the country. According to Ushe, “the general feeling of rejection by another religious group dominates the scene, leading to violent posture, aggression, killing and destruction from either side of the divide.”⁵⁶ Ushe is correct in his observation, and there is no doubt that there is a need to foster a means at reconciling aggrieved adherents of different religions in the country. In that respect, the most viable way to go would be by means of dialogue. Towards this end, there are different religious associations that have made moves towards peaceful initiatives in the country. The following paragraphs shall focus on the interlocutory roles of some of such associations.

2.5 Need for dialogue and the contributions of faith-based organizations in Nigeria

2.5.1 Christian Association of Nigeria

Since the pre-independent Nigeria, the northern non-Muslims, especially the Christians, under the leadership of Ahmadu Bello⁵⁷ had complained of variety of religious discriminations.⁵⁸ According to Ilesanmi, the Willink Commission set up in

⁵⁶ Ushe, “Religious Conflicts and Education in Nigeria: Implications for National Security.”

⁵⁷ The first Premier of Northern Nigeria from 1954

⁵⁸ The ChatAfrik Network presents a different perspective of Ahmadu Bello on religious tolerance. The publication notes that on Christmas Day 1959, Ahmadu Bello stated in a broadcast: “Here in the Northern Nigeria we have People of Many different races, tribes and religious who are knit together to common history, common interest and common ideas, the things that unite us are stronger than the things that divide us. I always remind people of our firmly rooted policy of religious tolerance. We have no intention of favoring one religion at the expense of another. Subject to the overriding need to preserve law and order, it is our determination that everyone should have absolute liberty to practice his belief according to the

1958 to look into the fears of the minorities and make recommendations to the government for incorporation into the Independence Constitution reported that the non-Muslims in the north alleged various forms of discrimination ranging from, “various restrictions imposed on Christians, such as denial of land to build churches, restriction in the circulation of Christian literature, freedom of worship, association etc., degrading treatment to traditional rulers for not being Muslims, and other forms of cultural domination.”⁵⁹

The northern Christians subsequently responded to the religious acrimony by forming the Northern Christian Association (NCA), which was later renamed Christian Association of the North,⁶⁰ in attempt to curb the excesses of the non-ending hostility of the majority Muslim northerners. According to Habila Aladeino, the Christian Association of the North developed as a “protest reaction against the Sardauna’s policies, especially his conversion campaigns in the North and their effects on our Christian faith.”⁶¹ In a more graphic detail of the event leading to the formation of the association, Rt. Rev. Peter Jatau, the Bishop emeritus of Kaduna narrates,

dictates of his conscience...” cf. ChatAfrik Network, “Biography of Ahmadu Bello,” 2012, <http://chatafrik.com/special/spotlight/biography/biography-of-ahmadu-bello#.Wg01zIWnHIV>. Similarly, the publication reiterates the Premier’s thoughts on the vision of a University that was named after him. According to the publication, Ahmadu Bello notes that the “cardinal principle upon which our University is founded is to impart knowledge and learning to men and women of all races without any distinction on the grounds of race, religious, or political beliefs.” ChatAfrik Network, “Biography of Ahmadu Bello.”

59 Federal Government of Nigeria, *Report on the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of the Minorities and the Means of Allaying Them* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1958). 36-46, quoted in Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State*,. 141.

60 Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria* (Ibadan, Oyo State: IFRA Publication, 1995). 77, see also 85.

61 Habila Aladeino in Peter Bauna Tanko, *The Christian Association of Nigeria and the Challenge of Ecumenical Imperative* (Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria: Fab Anieh Nig. Ltd, 1993) 120. See also the account of D. D. Dodo, formerly the pro tem Secretary of the Benue State Branch of

In 1965 or thereabout, the Sardauna of Sokoto, who was the premier of the northern region, went about trying to Islamize people, especially in the northern region. So, he became both a political as well as the religious leader. His effort at that particular time up to the time he was killed was geared towards converting people - be they Christian or pagan to Islam. So, he paid more attention to the conversion of the people to Islam than actually running the state, if one may like to put it that way. Many people were afraid to oppose him, else they lost their position or even their job. So, because of the prevailing circumstances, some Christian leaders in the north at that time thought it wise to come together and find ways and means by which they can fight against this kind of move to forcefully make people Muslims. That give birth to what we used to call in those days the Northern Christian Association (NCA), later changed to the Christian Association of the North. It was limited mainly to the north at that time.⁶²

However, Ajibola notes that Christians in other parts of the country shared the experiences of marginalization, and the fear of extinction of Christianity especially as experiences of indiscriminate, direct and indirect persecution of Christians nationwide became obvious by day.⁶³ His claim is substantiated by Tanko who reports some of the issues that raised the suspicions of the Christians nationwide to include “the taking over of schools, hospitals, suspicion over missionaries as agents of destabilization leading to the denial of visas to missionaries, the imposition of tax and import duties on gifts to the various churches from abroad which were initially tax-free, etc.”⁶⁴ It was the concern and sympathy of other Christians in the country for their Northern counterparts, coupled with

CAN, in Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*. According to Dodo “To a large extent, what is known today as CAN was started in the North by Christians who saw what the Sardauna was doing. He wanted to Islamize the North and the entire country. Therefore, Christians and even non-Christians in the North came together as a group to resist the Sardauna's mission.”

62 Iheanyi Enwerem's interview with Rt. Rev. Peter Jatau, Kaduna, November 20, 1990, reported in *A Dangerous Awakening*, 77.

63 Ilesanmi Ajibola, *Symmachus Unearthed: A Handbook on Ecumenism and Religious Dialogue* (Zaria: Faith Printers International, 2004) 75.

64 Tanko, *The Christian Association of Nigeria and the Challenge of Ecumenical Imperative*. 125

apparent agenda for Islamization of the country by Sardauna that underpins the groundwork for Christian unity nationwide.

The need for unity among Christians, which had gained momentum nationally, coincides with the government's desire to consult Christians on a common Christian platform, which up till that time, had not existed.⁶⁵ According to C.O. Williams (former secretary general of CAN) in Enwerem, "the Government was about to consult [the church leaders] on the '[National] Pledge' which was being recited in the schools and wanted to know [their] opinion."⁶⁶ The meeting was held and chaired by the then Chief of Army Staff (Brigadier Shehu Musa Yar'adua). The occasion provided an opportunity for self-examination for the church leaders towards national Christian unity. Thereafter, the Christian leaders charged themselves towards better ecumenical relation, a step that was further concretized in the formation of Christian Association of Nigeria, with the motto: That all may be One (John 17:21). Its aim was primarily, to "promote the glory of God, by encouraging the growth and unity of the Churches, and by helping them to lead the

65 Before the formation of CAN in 1976, there was no national platform, which demonstrates in practical terms, the unity of the Christians churches in the country. Of course, the Roman catholic church exercises some cohesive presence with national spread, however, that does not express joint interactions that could be taken as association of Christians churches in the country. The initial efforts by the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) towards nationally unified Christian presence during the colonial period had failed. According to Enwerem, that effort could not have succeeded because, "first, there was the absence of a commonly perceived national threat. Next, there was no sufficiently politicized religious leadership with a nationalist vision in any of the three Christian blocs (the CCN in the South, the Christian Movement in the North, and the Roman Catholicism). Furthermore, there were limitations imposed by the colonial administration on socio-cultural interaction among Nigerians from the South and the North." Cf. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*, 75

66 Ibid.

nation, and her people to partake of Christ's salvation, and all its fruits."⁶⁷ Her objectives are as follows: ⁶⁸

- (a.) To serve as a basis of response to the unity of the Church, especially as contained in our Lord's pastoral prayer: "That they all may be one" (John 17: 21).
- (b.) To promote understanding, peace and unity among the various people and strata of society in Nigeria, through the propagation of the Gospel.
- (c.) To act as a liaison committee, by means of which its member-churches can consult together and when necessary, make common statement and take common actions.
- (d.) To act as watch-man of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation.

The objective of promoting "understanding, peace and unity among the various people and strata of society in Nigeria" goes beyond intra religious relation. While the body often watches out for tell tales of religiously inflected government policies in favor of Muslims, as in the current struggle over exclusion of Christian Religious Knowledge in the reviewed curriculum for Secondary School education in the country,⁶⁹ it has also served as platform to dialogue with Muslims on common issues of religious significance in the country. For instance, policies such as one raised by the then Shagari government,

⁶⁷ See article 2 of the Constitution of CAN in Christian Association of Nigeria, "Constitution of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)," 2004, <http://canng.org/images/docs/can-constitution.pdf>.

⁶⁸ Christian Association of Nigeria, "The Objectives of Christian Association of Nigeria," *National Christian Centre*, accessed February 5, 2017, <http://cannigeria.org/objectives/>.

⁶⁹ See J. Agbakwuru and J. Erunke, "CRK Not Removed from Curriculum — Education Minister," *Vanguard Newspaper*, 2017, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/crk-not-removed-curriculum-education-minister/>.

in establishing a Bureau of Islamic Affairs in the President's office, was fought by CAN alongside the Catholic Bishops in the country.⁷⁰

2.5.2 *Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs*

It has been argued that the rise of religious movements often coincides with periods of great upheavals,⁷¹ as such the emergence of many religious movements in the post-war Nigeria is not out of place. The experience of the Muslims in Nigeria was no different. Aside the early formation of religious groups like the now very popular Muslim Students' Society (MSS) in April 1954, groups such as the 'World Assembly of Muslim Youth', and 'the people for the Removal of Innovation and the Erection of the Sunna' (Izala) emerged after the civil war. Although Enwerem has discussed details of these groups in chapter three of his well-researched work, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*, it is worthy of mention that the activities of the different groups vary in focus and intensity. For example, the latter group, the *Izala*, founded by a former military officer, Malam Isma'ila Idris, is characterized by opposition to moderate Muslims activities, and rejects the Constitution of Nigeria.⁷² The group,

70 Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*. 143.

71 Ibid.

72 Cf. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening*, 89. For details on the origin, spread and split in the *Izala* movement, See World Council of Churches, "Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies."150ff. Briefly, Amara notes that the *Izala* movement begun in Nigeria in the late 70s. Tracing the history and split of the movement in Nigeria, Ramzi Ben Amara notes that the movement, originally known as *Jama't Izalat al Bid'a Wa Iqamat as Sunna* (Society of Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of the Sunna), *Izala* or *Yan Izala*, was founded in 1978 by Sheikh Ismaila Idris in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. "The movement was anti-Sufi-movement established to fight what is conceived of as bid'a, innovation, practiced by the Sufi Brotherhoods (esp. Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya)." According to him, "today the *Izala* is one of the largest Islamic movements not only in Northern Nigeria, but also in the whole country and even in neighbouring countries (Niger, Tchad, etc). *Izala* is active in da'wa (propagation of Islam)

according to Enwerem, believes in the ultimate establishment of an Islamic state in Nigeria through a revolution like Iran's.⁷³ The intent of the MSS, on the other hand, is different, as it is well disposed towards the nation's federal government, and Constitution. The activities of these bodies and others are greatly moderated by the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). It is also an Islamic outfit that emerged after the Nigeria civil war as an umbrella body for the various Islamic groups in the country.

Like the Christian churches, which lack common national platform before 1976, "Nigerian Muslims, since the spread of Islam to the country in the thirteenth century, had continued to operate in disarray and were never known to have spoken in one voice until the founding of the NSCIA."⁷⁴ There was the Jamat-Nasri-Islam (JNI), which serves as the umbrella body for the northern Muslims, but the southwest lacks such platform. A request for a united front for interaction for all the Nigerian Muslims, notwithstanding the ethnic diversity of the country, was tabled by Abdul-Lateef Adegbite (who spearheaded the movement in the southwest), to the Sardauna of Sokoto in 1972.⁷⁵ The latter made a formation of a Southern umbrella body for the Muslims a condition for establishing a national joint body for Muslims. Consequently, the Western State Joint Muslim

and particularly in education." Today there is the Jos and the Kaduna factions in the country. cf. Amara, "The Izala-Movement in Nigeria" 55.

73 Cf. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria* (Ibadan, Oyo State: IFRA Publication, 1995). 89.

74 Saheed Ahmad Rufai, "The Politics of Islamic Leadership and Representation in Nigeria: A Historical Analytical Study on the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 8, no. 1 (2013): 1.

75 Saheed Ahmad Rufai, "The Muslim Minority of Southwestern Nigeria: WESTJOMO and the Challenge of Speaking with One Voice," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31, no. 2 (2011): 285.

Organization (WESJOMO), was formed in August 1972, and later became National Joint Muslim Organization (NAJOMO) in 1976.⁷⁶

The desire for common front to "act as a bridge between the various Muslim communities in Nigeria, and also to enable Muslims speak to the government of the day in one voice on matters concerning Islam,"⁷⁷ between the south and the western part of Nigeria was primarily the motivation for the formation of NSCIA. However, political interest, especially at galvanizing religious affiliation for political advantages was part of the reasons. For instance, when the parliamentary elections in the early stages of Nigeria's formative years in the southern part of the country did not favor the Muslims, "despite the fact that most of the electorates were Muslims,"⁷⁸ aggrieved Muslims found the experience unbearable and "resolved to transform the Muslim Congress of Nigeria and some other Muslim organizations into a Muslim party named National Muslim League (NML)."⁷⁹ There were further divisions, and realignments among the Muslims, leading to multiple fragmentation of the Muslim community in the south. However, like the Christians' experience at the meeting with the then Nigeria Chief of Army staff, the immediate contributory factor in the quick formulation of the NSCIA according to Rufai, was the Muslims' failure to speak with one voice at an international Islamic Conference in Libya. The conference, which was held earlier in the same year and to which various Islamic organizations were invited from Nigeria, exposed the lack of unified front of the

76 Ibid., 286

77 Rufai, "The Politics of Islamic Leadership and Representation in Nigeria: A Historical Analytical Study on the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)." 40

78 Rufai, "The Muslim Minority of Southwestern Nigeria: WESTJOMO and the Challenge of Speaking with One Voice." 287

79 Ibid.

Nigeria Muslims. On their return to the country, “a quick move was made towards the fulfillment of the need for a central Islamic body which was formally inaugurated as Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) in 1974.”⁸⁰ The main function of the association is to “debate, discuss, and state at the Federal level, their point of view on such matters as education and the law.”⁸¹ As a registered umbrella body of all Muslim Communities, organizations, and individuals in the country, the NSCIA remains a powerful medium for peace negotiation in the country.

The NSCIA has remained active in inter-religious efforts, as well as general religious matters in the country. The body was responsible for expunging the word “secular”⁸² from Nigeria’s Constitution. In the debate on inclusion of the establishment of Shari’a Court of appeal in the country, the Association made an appealing argument, which, taken out of immediate context, counts positively towards religious tolerance among the various religions in the country: “once two or more communities are united by political bonds sanctified by the constitution which is a fundamental treaty of permanent brotherhood, common action and destiny, it would not only be criminal but a grievous sin in Islam for the terms of the treaty to be violated by acts of discrimination and intolerance.”⁸³

80 Rufai, “The Politics of Islamic Leadership and Representation in Nigeria: A Historical Analytical Study on the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA).” 49.

81 See Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, in Rufai, “The Politics of Islamic Leadership and Representation in Nigeria.” 40

82 The various argument proffered by Association for the removal of the word from the Nigeria Constitution have been carefully articulated by Rufai, “The Politics of Islamic Leadership and Representation in Nigeria.” 43.

83 Ibid.

By her composure and official communications, the Association argues for equal opportunity for Muslim and Christians in the country. It was designated to work with Christians on the Advisory Council of Religious Affairs in resolving interreligious crises. The Advisory Council was set up by the Babangida regime in 1987, but the Council did not flourish, “‘not because of the question of the chairman, as we are told’, but rather because Christians have come to believe that ‘they are always disadvantaged whenever government interferes in religion.’”⁸⁴

Despite the difference in doctrinal and some emphasis on aspects of their varied religious traditions, Muslims and Christians’ bodies have continued to work together on areas of common interests. The two umbrella bodies, that is CAN and NSCIA have objectives which aim at maintaining some measure of working together for peaceful coexistence. Such objectives are explorable building blocks for peace and viable bases for inclusive religious pluralism.

2.5.3 *Nigeria Inter-Faith Action Association*

While peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria remains paramount to all citizens irrespective of religious affiliations, CAN and NSCIA have often heated up the polity in attempt to be loyal to their group’s religious interest. This is despite their concern for peace in the country. This doubletalk attitude might have resulted from the religious ambition of one to outdo the other in political control and sustenance of their confessional interest in the country. Nevertheless, a more confessionally neutral body, but faith based partnership known as Nigeria Interfaith Action Association (NIFAA), has continued to fly the flag of peaceful coexistence among

⁸⁴ Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*. 141.

Christians and Muslims, and promoting interreligious partnership in humanitarian programs across the country. Incidentally, the Association was established through the joint effort of the then presidents of CAN and NSCIA.

NIFAA was formally established by co-chairs of CAN and NSCIA on World Malaria Day in April 2009. The co-chairs of the two associations were Sultan Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar of Sokoto of the NSCIA, and Archbishop John Onaiyekan of CAN. The Association was established to “coordinate and resource Nigerian religious institutions to respond to common public problems, with the goal of increasing interfaith participation, cooperation, and action in national poverty reduction and disease campaigns.”⁸⁵ NIFAA has remained an umbrella which unites Christian and Muslim leaders in multi-sectorial effort to engage religious communities at various fronts that includes fight against poverty and diseases. In its website, the association claims uniqueness in “national reach and implementation,” and prides itself in being the “largest Muslim-Christian partnership in the world.”⁸⁶

With membership strength of over 25,000 faith leaders trained across Nigeria since 2009,⁸⁷ NIFAA has potential for high impact on peace negotiation between Muslims and Christians in the country. The association recognizes that “Nigeria is on the front lines of an emerging confrontation between extremist, violent minority actors and the larger Nigerian society, which is multi-religious, tolerant, and committed to social

85 Center for Interfaith Action, “Faiths United for Health Campaign: Evaluation Report,” Wise Solution LLC, 2011, <https://jliflc.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CIFA-NIFAA-Program-Evaluation-2011.pdf>. 9

86 Nigerian Interfaith Action Association, “Interfaith Model: Mission and Vision,” accessed May 14, 2017, <https://www.nigerianinterfaith.org/interfaith-model>.

87 Ibid.

cohesion.” It stands as a beacon and rallying point for religious leaders at all levels to demonstrate shared responsibility for the wellbeing of every Nigerian. By that fact, the Association could significantly strengthen cooperation among the various religions in the country towards peace, since it harnesses the influence and power of Nigeria’s faith leaders. This is more so since its role is not only towards combatting diseases, improve health outcomes, but also attending to “behavior change messaging,” and a “resilience force for peace and reconciliation as it helps Nigeria meet the gaps in its Sustainable Development Goal targets.”⁸⁸

Although the objectives of CAN, NSCIA, and NIFAA differ in content, they are all in principle, non-mutually exclusive. Although it is arguable that the practical details in implementing the general objectives of the associations may occasionally generate tense moments and even raised tension in the polity, the fundamental character of promoting justice and peace among citizens cannot be said to be ultimately lacking. The immediate past president of CAN, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, captures this sentiment at the 2013 “Interreligious Consultation for National Unity in Nigeria,” when he notes: “What makes the difference before God, what endears you to God and what makes you acceptable to God, is the degree of your goodness that has benefitted mankind.”⁸⁹ Oritsejafor cites the “teachings of the Holy Books” as the source of his inference. The following section shall explore biblical basis for interreligious relationship.

88 Ibid.

89 Global Peace Foundation, “GPF Hosts Inter-Religious Consultation for National Unity in Nigeria,” Hyun Jin Preston Moon: One Family Under God, 2013, <http://www.hyunjinmoon.com/gpf-hosts-inter-religious-consultation-for-national-unity-in-nigeria/>.

2.6 Thinking theologically about religious others

The multiple presence of religions in the world necessitates the need for Christians to establish principles of engagement with the theology and practices of adherents of these religions. Basic questions which border on the salvific potency and values of these religions, have occupied Christian theologians and opinion shapers in Christian thoughts. For instance, does the fact of structural and doctrinal differences between Christianity and other religions imply qualitative difference? Or, could the God proclaimed in Christianity be equally active in other religious traditions at the same operational level experienced in Christianity? Of what value is the mission of Christ to other religions? Do Christians possess any advantageous epistemic proximity to God from the mere fact of their belief in Christ? Simply stated, what is Christian theology of religions?

The need for interreligious dialogue is a world imperative. The world is fast becoming most closely knitted that what touches a part is almost felt immediately at other parts of the world; hence it is now said that the 'world is a global village.' The now popular expression of the world as a global village is due to globalization, improved communication media, and diverse migration, among other factors, and it seems the situation will most likely be so for a long time. With such factors as immigration and improved communication media, the world would continue to witness wider spread of religions' followers with attendant varied religious differences. To the Christians and the Muslims, they are not only obliged to make their lives reflective of their religious convictions but are encouraged to proselytize towards converting non-members to their religions. Both instances of outward expressions of religious beliefs, and proselytism, are

potential motivations for religious tension, as they design categories that separate believers from unbelievers. Besides, the reality of the world as a global village, the fact of multiple religious presence, and maintenance of socio-religious equilibrium among nations are also reasons for interreligious dialogue.⁹⁰ While the need for inter religious dialogue might be generally acceptable, the salvific equality of all religions is denied by some others. Similarly, while the doctrine of religious equality before God is permissible among some religions with certain restrictions, there are others that would ordinarily take it for granted that there could be no one exclusive path to God. The different approaches of religions to acceptance of other religions are matters of great importance to world peace. The next section shall consider how various shades of Christianity have theologically engaged the reality of multiple religious presence in the world. The excursus shall span over Biblical considerations, the views of the Roman Catholic Church, World Council of Churches, and selected theorists of religious pluralism.

2.6.1 Biblical Perception on religious pluralism

The faith based curriculum operative in Nigeria's CRS departments in COEs arguably makes the question of validity of an inclusive religious pluralism curriculum essential. In other words, would it be biblically correct and theologically compliant to deploy a pluralistic approach to religious studies in our teachers' training institutions? In simple terms, is Christianity an exclusive, or a pluralistic religion?

⁹⁰ Ilesanmi Ajibola has discussed some cogent reasons for interreligious dialogue in the world today. He argues that there are sociological, political, economic, and theological reasons for dialogue, and that interreligious dialogue remains imperative if peace and understanding are to be attained in our globalized world. Cf. Ilesanmi Ajibola, *Symmachus Unearthed: A Handbook on Ecumenism and Religious Dialogue* (Zaria: Faith Printers International, 2004). 53-61.

A cursory reading of the Bible might tend to support an exclusive, or at best, an inclusive religious view of Biblical faith expression. This is made even more specious when one puts the reproofs for nonconformity under threat of punishment and death projected by the Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah (46-51), and Ezekiel (25-32) into consideration.⁹¹ However, a closer reading of the Bible as would be noted in subsequent paragraphs does not condemn religious pluralism, but supports the variety of religious expressions that are evident in Biblical community's history.

2.6.2 *The Old Testament*

Gerald O'Collins has written a comprehensive book which "assemble and assess the biblical testimony about the salvation of God's 'other peoples' or the 'others' [as he calls them]."⁹² The book is a systematic presentation about the role of Jesus in the salvation of the world, and the Old Testament's testimony to God's positive relationship to religious situation of 'others.' O'Collins argues in the book that throughout the Bible there are testimonies that illuminate the universal scope of God's love and offer of salvation. He sets out details of the major biblical testimony to the universal scope of God's offer of salvation as very impressive and appropriate to contemporary discussions of the other religions and God's 'other' peoples. The role of Israel in the salvation of humanity is considered important but not necessarily a barrier between God and the

91 O'Collins associates the "words of judgment" in such passages to the history of exposure to suffering which characterized the various contacts of Israelites to the nations. But, according to him, that "is not the whole story. Instead of proposing merely negative things about 'outsiders,' the Old Testament also acknowledges the gracious goodness of God towards the nations and foreigners." Gerald O'Collins, *Salvation for All: God's Other Peoples* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), viii.

92 Gerald O'Collins, *Salvation for All: God's Other People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), v.

nations, and therefore should not be a reluctant divine instrument in prompting for repentance.

Significant volume of narratives in the Old Testament reveal God's positive dispositions towards the religious others. From the outset, one would observe that Biblical cosmogonies narrate stories of single strand of human beings with whom God related personally. The original plan of God in the Pentateuch was to have constant communication and fellowship (communion) with his human creatures.⁹³ The latter eventually sinned against God and began the process of regaining salvation through various means. On God's part, the desire to continue communion with human beings remained, despite the strained relationship created by human sin. Human beings thereafter multiplied and spread all over the earth. With time, regaining relationship with God was to be attained through conviction and was not restricted to the Jews who considered themselves special, and called by God to be his own. The varieties of means to salvation or attempts at reconnection to the single God of creation, are well documented in the Bible. A record of the various shrines as those at Shechem, Gilgal, Bethel, Hebron and Beersheba, with attendant tribal associations which defied efforts at a centralized worship at Samaria and Jerusalem attest to a religiously pluralistic worldview in Bible times.⁹⁴

93 See Gen 3:8

94 Biblical references to these locations of worship do not portray them as branches of a definitive religious body. This is evident in the various depictions by which various shrines were associated and identified with references to traditions of affiliation. For example, Gen. 15:1; 31:42; 49:24 refer to the Shield of Abraham, the Fear of Isaac, the Mighty one of Jacob, etc. Similarly, the various forms of *El*, and *Baal*, as well as the desert mountain *Yahweh* associated with Joseph's and Mosaic traditions, all point at the knowledge and appreciation of religious plurality in relating with God. Arguments such that depicts descriptions as the *Mighty One of Jacob*, the *Shield of Abraham*, and so on, are hints at ways by which diverse tribal groups had different traditions, shrines and even gods. This claim has been argued by scholars such as: T.N.O

In historical terms, Hobbs has demonstrated how the “J” hypothesized source of Pentateuch stressed the pluralistic outlook of the political and religious configuration of the kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon.⁹⁵ According to him, it was the threat posed by the centralization of political power in the king and in the city of Jerusalem combined with the beginnings of religious centralization in the Temple that gave rise to the remarkable openness to the diversity and openness witnessed in the composition of the J tradition.⁹⁶ He notes,

the diversities of tradition, cultus, gods, and shrines are brought into a complex unity ... which nevertheless allows each tradition its own place and witness. Instead of suppression of variety and diversity, we have appreciation of them, and appropriation of what each strand can offer to the larger, complex whole. The great contribution of J with respect to pluralism... is that he managed to hold all these diversities together by means of two things alone: the construction of a genealogical scheme which united all the various traditions into one family's heritage, and the claim that Yahweh alone was Israel's God, the other gods being only variant names for his worship and self-revelation.⁹⁷

However, O'Collins notes that the interface between the polarity of the same God being of the Jews and yet belonging to ‘others’ was never fully resolved. According to him,

The relationship of YHWH, God of Israel, and of his divine personification, Wisdom, to other people remains in the state of unresolved tension in the OT. On the one hand, Yahweh is presented as the God of Israel in an altogether special way. On the other hand, some

Quarcoopome in *History and Religion of Israel from the Creation through the Monarchy to the Exile (586 B.C.)* (Ibadan, Nigeria: African Universities Press, 1988), and Edward C. Hobbs, “Theological and Religious Pluralism: Pluralism in the Biblical Context,” *Pacific Coast Theological Society*, Issue November (1973): 16–17.

95 Hobbs, “Theological and Religious Pluralism: Pluralism in the Biblical Context.”

96 O'Collins, *Salvation for All: God's Other Peoples*. 64

97 Hobbs, “Theological and Religious Pluralism: Pluralism in the Biblical Context.”

prophetic, sapiential, and other texts propose that YHWH is also the God of all peoples and all individuals and has saving plans for ‘the nations.’⁹⁸

The two sets of ideas of a national god, who also has a salvific universal plan coexisted in a dialectic tension, without ever being examined and related in any full-scale fashion.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Hobbs’ observation on how the situation was managed is instructive. According to Hobbs, the Yahwist tradition in the OT neither denounced all the other gods in the tradition as bogus or as alien, nor did it demand allegiance to Yahweh alone, rather it arranged for another possibility of “creating the unity of the Israelite society in terms of faith in Yahweh as Lord of history.”¹⁰⁰ He ventilated the interface of the plurality of religious presence, and attempt at centralization with an idea of a Yahweh “who can permit diversity in names, shrines, cultus, traditions, and all the rest, but who unites his people into one complex whole in terms of their history, a common history under Yahweh's invincible guidance.”¹⁰¹

Observably, a constant state of threats to Israel from other nations did not provide an ideal state for generating fully balanced thoughts about the ‘others,’ yet there was a strong nationalist identity that did not rule out an awareness of Yahweh as the God of the entire world.¹⁰² In most cases, the relationship of God with human beings in the OT is not tied to particular religion or ethnicity. Just as God communicated with all, his punitive action is not religiously biased or partial as read in the story of the flood (Genesis 5:32-10:1). Rather, the punitive and redemptive act of God was universal. Despite Jews’

98 O’Collins, *Salvation for All: God’s Other People*. 64

99 Ibid.

100 Hobbs, “Theological and Religious Pluralism: Pluralism in the Biblical Context.”

101 Ibid.

102 O’Collins, *Salvation for All: God’s Other People*. 64

election theory, the door of God's self-revelation was not closed to other people outside the community of Israel. Distinctive examples of God's relationship with *God-fearing* individuals include Melchizedek, the Canaanite priest in Genesis 18:14ff,¹⁰³ Job ('iyobh) whom God referred to as his servant (Job 1:8), and Ba-lam, a heathen Midianite diviner (Numbers 23:3f). The Bible is full of instances where God's relationship with people, irrespective of creed and race are instructive in engaging religious pluralism. It may rightly be concluded therefore, "the operation of God's grace in the Old Testament is clearly not limited to the community of Israel."¹⁰⁴ Thus Ajibola notes, "the gracious activities of God must therefore not be confined to a particular religion or people. There must be openness to others' religion and healthy cultural practices."¹⁰⁵

2.6.3 *The New Testament*

In as much as we may not confine God in OT to Judaism alone, we cannot as well confine God to Christianity alone. This is because the New Testament (NT) presents God's borderless gratuitous acts beyond religious exclusivism. In the Gospel of Matthew (5:17), Jesus declared that he has not come to destroy The Law nor The prophets (two major division of the OT) but to fulfil them. This statement is significant to the extent that it projects unity of messages and recognition of an existing tradition of the Prophets and the Law. More precisely, Jesus recognized Judaism and its

103 Walter Brueggemann in his seminal work noted that Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High, *El elyon*, which does not necessarily refer to the God of Israel. According to him, the Most High in this context refers to the high God of the Canaanite pantheon, cf: Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, ed. James Luther Mays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 135.

104 Joseph A. Ilori, "Dialogue between Christian and Muslim in Nigeria, How Feasible?" The First International Conference on Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations (Miango, Plateau State, 1993) 48.

105 Ajibola, *Symmachus Unearthed: A Handbook on Ecumenism and Religious Dialogue*. 33

authority in spite of his vision to establish a nuanced understanding of the kingdom of God.

The entire message of Jesus' ministry on the realization of the kingdom of God is focused on Love (Matt. 22:36-40, Mk. 12:30, Luke 10:27, etc.). Jesus demands that his followers imbibe the Love of God and the Love of neighbor, which knows no boundary. Such love is all-embracing, and practically transcends the Christian fold. It is open to dialogue with practitioners of other faiths as demonstrated by Jesus in his responses to the needs of non-Jews, and those outside his immediate religious and social circle. For example, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus commended the Roman centurion's faith in glowing words: "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel" (Luke 7:9). In another instance, Jesus said to a Syrophenician woman: "Woman, you have great faith! ..." (Matthew 15:28). These non-Jews were people considered to be outside the God-Jews covenanted relationship. She was not part of the "lost sheep of Israel" to whom Jesus claimed to have been sent (Matthew 15:24). Territorial religious limitations did not deter Jesus from recognizing the strength of other's faith during his ministry. He saw the religious other of his time as included in God's plan for human salvation. This claim is evident in his allusion to the admission of such 'faithful' people into the kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 8:11-12, "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Likewise, and as Iwuchukwu surmises, the prayer of Jesus in John 17:9-11 implies an inclusive recommendation of oneness "for all followers of God," because Jesus had indicated in

the passage that all of God's followers are his, and his are God's.¹⁰⁶ Iwuchukwu's acknowledgment of inclusive recommendation of oneness of all followers of God has an interreligious implication which resonates with Dupuis' Christocentric inclusive pluralism.¹⁰⁷ The latter's view of an inclusive religious pluralism, according to Iwuchukwu, "appreciates a constitutive Christology, operative in the life of all seekers of God and indeed all creatures of God."¹⁰⁸ While the words, prayers and activities of Jesus might have pointed in the direction of an inclusive religious pluralism, the attitudes of Christians towards the religious others have varied in the course of Christian history.

2.7 Christian attitude toward religious others

Experiences of interreligious relationship in the OT and NT point in the direction of religious openness as the ideal religious disposition in the Bible. This conclusion is reached despite cleavages of resistance to religious openness evident in many parts of the Bible. Similar to such pockets of resistance to religious openness, the attitude of Christians towards the religious others is also checkered by varied emphases at different points in time. According to Iwuchukwu, "[A]lthough Christianity recognizes its roots in Judaism and Christians largely acknowledged that there would be no Christianity without Judaism, yet the supersessionist approach towards Judaism leaves a bad taste in the relationship between Christianity and Judaism."¹⁰⁹ In attempt to respond theologically to

106 Marinus Iwuchukwu, "Appropriating Christian and Islamic Sacred Texts to Underscore the Theology of Inclusive Pluralism Towards Effective Global Christian-Muslim Dialogue," *Louvain Studies* 39, no. 3 (2016), 277.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 Iwuchukwu. 271.

the presence of other religions and their soteriological relevance, the bad taste in the relationship between Christianity and Judaism soon became an experience that characterizes much of their relationships with many other religious traditions. The resultant outcome of the Christian attempts at explaining the presence of other religions and what their relationship ought to be with the followers of these religions were expressed in attitudes that project total rejection in many cases or passive acceptance of the religions. David Brockman has summarily divided Christian theological reflection about religious others into categories which broadly describe a movement from diversity (in the early stages), to monopoly (during western Christendom), and back to diversity (in modern times).¹¹⁰ These expressions are made despite the many biblical passages that are positively disposed towards other religions in the NT.

Iwuchukwu rightly observes that a constructive appreciation of biblical texts on the experiences of the early Christians would be by referencing the same text of Joel 2:28-29 used by Peter to authenticate the experience of the apostles on the morning of the birth of Christianity.¹¹¹ The context of Peter's speech was a gathering of people who had come from various parts of the world of the time with diverse religious faith traditions. According to Iwuchukwu, Peter reiterates that it was "the same spirit of God known to and appreciated by Judaism that was at work and impacting all present, both the audience and the apostles, regardless of people's religious, cultural, or ethnic differences."¹¹² The

110 David R. Brockman, "Thinking Theologically about Religious Others: Christian Theologies of Religions," in *The Gospel among Religions: Christiana Ministry, Theology, and Spirituality in a Multifaith World*, ed. David R. Brockman and Ruben L. F. Habito (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010). 18

111 Iwuchukwu, "Appropriating Christian and Islamic Sacred Texts to Underscore the Theology of Inclusive Pluralism Towards Effective Global Christian-Muslim Dialogue." 273.

112 Ibid.

early church's understanding of the New Testament's positive religious disposition towards others finds expression in Peter's speech. The speech portends a recognition of God's outpouring of his Spirit on all people irrespective of race, or religion. Peter did not consider his new religious community superior to the existing faith order. Rather he used the platform of his speech to invite the Jews and non-Jews to "be open to the fact that God is capable of richly and meaningfully impacting the lives of all people even against the expectations of men and women who hold the older order as normative and exclusive."¹¹³

It is important to note that the Christians were not necessarily lacking in definitive identity, rather the need for the establishment of their own religious identity was influenced by two variables in careful correlation of continuity and discontinuity with the Jewish traditions. Lucien Legrand refers to this disposition as the two great axes of continuity and discontinuity dramatized in the difference of outlook between Luke and Paul.¹¹⁴ Dupuis explains that the continuity axis "underlines the homogeneity of salvation unfolding according to God's plan," while the discontinuity "places the stress on the radical newness of Christ and his resurrection and by contrast sees the ancient world as darkness and sin."¹¹⁵ There was the affirmation that Christ is the culmination of the whole salvation history from Adam's fall through the election of the people of Israel," and that in the "Christ-event God has done something unique and decisive. Christ is the

113 Ibid., 274

114 Lucien Legrand, cited in Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 50.

115 Ibid.

new Adam.”¹¹⁶ The theological questions raised by the soteriological implications of Jesus’ mission, death, and resurrection in relation to Christians’ relationship with Judaism, were largely similar to questions characterizing Christian thoughts about other religions in its early formative period. Nevertheless, the reality of Jewish presence in their everyday social and religious engagements, coupled with the fact of encounter with other religions beyond Palestine, warranted a need for interreligious attitudinal definition for the Christians.

There are many passages in the NT that points at the predominant attitude of the early Christians towards other religious followers. Iwuchukwu, in “Appropriating Christian and Islamic Sacred Texts” refers to a receptive openness of the early Christians to the activities of the Holy Spirit in the lives of non-Jewish and non-Christian individuals, such as the Ethiopian Eunuch, as well as Cornelius and his household.¹¹⁷ In both cases, there is a recognition of God’s acceptance of human beings irrespective of race, culture, and religion. Peter thus proclaimed, “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34-35). The religious fervency of the Athenians with whom Paul had encounter in Acts 17:23 is also cited by Iwuchukwu as an example of Paul’s appreciation of the Athenian religious devotion to the “unknown god.”¹¹⁸ Paul’s attitude towards the Athenians points towards his positive disposition to religious inclusivism. Subsequent decisions which border on choices that hint at a non-exclusivist attitude of Paul are

116 Brockman, “Thinking Theologically about Religious Others: Christian Theologies of Religions,” 19.

117 Iwuchukwu, “Appropriating Christian and Islamic Sacred Texts to Underscore the Theology of Inclusive Pluralism Towards Effective Global Christian-Muslim Dialogue.” 274.

118 Ibid., 276.

evident in early church narratives, such as Acts 15:1, on the question of circumcision of non-Jews. The same principle of religious inclusivism aided Paul's evangelical apostolate among the Gentiles.

While an attitude of religious inclusivism apparently characterized the relationship of Christians with other religions adherents in the formative years of the Christian church, the first two centuries of its existence was generally marked by tension between continuity and discontinuity theology of religious encounter. Outside the NT narratives, early Christians such as Justin Martyr,¹¹⁹ and Clement of Alexandria,¹²⁰ in line with Paul's inclusive religious disposition argue for a positive acceptance of whatever is good in other religions as a continuity of the Gospel's message. The positions of Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria were however not so appealing to the kind of divine witnessing that Tertullian and Cyprian subscribed. The latter sustained the discontinuity aspects of Christian attitude towards other religions, stressing that only Christian teaching is salvific. In fact, the famous axiom of "no salvation outside the church" is associated with Cyprian. From the third century through late 20th century of Christian history, the

119 For instance, Justin had argued, "since each person would be saved by his own virtue, I also stated that those who obeyed the Mosaic Law would likewise be saved. They who are obliged to obey the Law of Moses will find in it not only precepts, which were occasioned by the hardness of your people's heart, but also those, which in themselves are good, holy, and just. Since they who did those things which are universally, naturally, and eternally good are pleasing to God, they shall be saved in the resurrection, together with their righteous forefathers..., together with those who believe in Christ, the son of God..." Cf. Saint Justin Martyr, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, trans. Thomas B. Falls, First Pape, vol. 6 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 215.

120 In his *Stomata 7:2* Clement argues for an inclusivity of all people in the salvation offered by Jesus. He could not in fact, see how Jesus could be Lord and Savior, if not the savior of all, and not just of those who believe in him. Cf. "The Son the Ruler and Savior of All," in Philip Schaff, "Clement of Alexandria," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. II, n.d., https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02/Page_163.html.

exclusive religious disposition gradually acquired dominance in the self-definition of the church, and general Christians' attitude towards the religious others.

2.7.1 *The Roman Catholic Church and the religious others*

What is at stake in the question of Church's acceptance of religious pluralism is the question of salvific potency of other religions. If Jesus remains the Savior of the world, and the church is the sacrament of that salvation,¹²¹ what role do other religions, Abrahamic and others, have to play in the salvific plan of God for humanity? The development of ways in which the Catholic Church has grappled with this question in documents and in relationships, is the history of what may be referred to as the Catholic Church's attitude towards other religions. According to Mahmut Aydin, "Up to the Second Vatican Council the official Catholic teaching concerning non-Christian religions was mainly concerned with the possibility of the salvation of non-Christians. During that period the major issue discussed among Church authorities and individual theologians was the axiom *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* [there is no salvation outside the Church]."¹²² Aydin's view is corroborated by O'Collins who also observes that it was only with the teaching of Vatican II that "Catholics, for the first time in the history of Christianity, enjoyed some official guidelines on how they should view and then act towards the

121 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* Pt.1, Sec.2, Chp.3 Par.1ff on the "Profession of faith" and "Names and images of the church," *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, vol. 2nd (Citta del Vaticano: Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1997).

122 Mahmut Aydin, *Modern Western Christian Theological Understandings of Muslims Since The Second Vatican Council*, ed. George F. McLean (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002), 11-12.

followers of other faiths.”¹²³ Nevertheless, the theme of salvation and the means thereof salvation has always been the concern of the church.

Debates over the salvific potency of other religions, and consequently, the attitude of Catholics towards the religions and adherents of other religions have witnessed variety of responses in history. The Catholic Church’s teaching and body language on views and relation with other religions has ranged from an inclusive perception of others, through a blanket condemnation and coercion of non-Christians to accept Christianity of the Catholic Church’s tradition, to some form of pluralistic understanding in recent times. As noted in the previous section of this chapter, the early Christians demonstrated an inclusive openness to other religions. However, by the third century of the Common Era, and the recognition of Christianity as official state religion, the Catholic Church became more exclusive in her relationship with other religions,¹²⁴ the axiom being “outside the church, there is no salvation.”¹²⁵ In spite of documents such as *Singulari Quadam* of Pope Pius IX (1854), and his allocution that, “outside the Apostolic Roman Church, no one can

123 Gerald O’Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions* (Great Clarendon Street, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), viii. A similar view is shared by Miika Ruokanen who notes, “Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church produced no positive statements on non-Christian religions,” cf. Miika Ruokanan, *The Catholic Doctrine of Non-Christian Religions* (The Netherland, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 11.

124 The *TraditionalCatholic.net* “Salvation Outside the church,” has published excerpts from Popes through the centuries on their defense of religious exclusivism famously expressed in the axiom: “Outside the Church there is no salvation.” Cf. http://traditionalcatholic.net/Tradition/Information/Salvation_Outside.html, Retrieved April 22 2017. A copy of the publication is attached to this chapter as Appendix D.

125 A detailed contextual study of the emergence, development and application of this axiom has been conducted by Francis A. Sullivan. There is also a deeply insightful review of the work by Gavin D’Costa. For details on the functionality of this axiom in the church’s theology of religions, Sullivan’s book is highly recommended, but along with the review by D’Costa. Cf. F. A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (Mahwah, New York: Paulist Press, 1992), and Gavin D’Costa, “Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 44, no. 2 (1993): 791.

be saved...,” the official Catholic church position relating with other religion was not defined until Vatican II. Rather, what was obtainable as John Galvin notes, was that the history of the church in relation with other religion is a history and development of the “self-conception of the Church and the permanence of the Christian faith over the course of its history.”¹²⁶

In defining herself, the Catholic Church often employs images that present the model of her disposition towards other religions. In the past, and even in the modern times, the church has variously described herself as “universal sacrament of salvation,” “mystery,” a church “perfected in glory,” and many others.¹²⁷ Some of these self-definitions give much away in terms of the church’s disposition towards other religions, and its ecclesiology. For example, Edward Hahnenberg identified two key models that the church uses in her self-definition and as principle in relating with other religions, he refers to them as the Mystical Body ecclesiology and the Communion/ Koinonia models.¹²⁸ He traces the history and development of both models to common roots in the New Testament and the patristics, and that both “enjoyed an internal theological diversity and saw one theological track appropriated and endorsed by the papal magisterium.”¹²⁹ While the first image excludes non-members of Christ’s body in the salvific operation of that union (between Christ and his body), the latter presents a more comfortable platform

126 John P. Galvin, “Salvation Outside the Church,” in *The Gift of the Church*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Coleville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 249.

127 See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* Pt.1, Sec.2, Chp.3 Par.1ff on the “Profession of faith” and “Names and images of the church,” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

128 Edward P Hahnenberg, “The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2005): 3–30, http://works.bepress.com/edward_hahnenberg/18.

129 Ibid., 30

on which “people of God” from all religious affiliations may be accommodated as children of the same Creator. But, “unlike the images of mystical body, people of God, or sacrament, ‘communion’ was not widely promoted as a comprehensive and integrative model of the Church prior to the Second Vatican Council,”¹³⁰ therefore the impression of a solely exclusive image of the church was more common.

The implication and futility in maintaining an exclusive attitude towards other religions was not totally lost on the church, as many of her celebrated theologians regularly call attention to the need for a shift towards an unfolding cultural and religious pluralistic dimension in the world. One of such theologians, details of whom shall be further considered under postmodern inclusivist theologians, is Karl Rahner. He argued for an “Open Catholicism,” that is, “a certain attitude towards the present-day pluralism of powers with different outlooks on the world.”¹³¹ The call by theologians such as Rahner towards more openness to other religions eventually finds expression in John XXIII’s pre-Vatican II Council call for input towards clarifying the church’s relation with the Jews. His call eventually led to an unplanned declaration but nonetheless, an official position of the church on relation with other religions, that is, the “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,” or *Nostra Aetate*.¹³² There are other documents from the Second Vatican Council that also touch on the church’s position on relation with other religions. They include *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Ad Gentes*, and others.

130 Ibid., 19

131 Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 5 (London: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1970), 115.

132 Pope Paul VI, “Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions,” Vatican II council, 1965, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

2.7.2 Documents and Declaration of Catholic Church on relation with other religions

Nostra Aetate is the most detailed single documents produced by the Vatican II Council on the Church's relation with other religions. It highlights the Church's new attitude towards the Jews, the Muslims, Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions. The document states, "the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions," and

therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men."¹³³

While *Lumen Gentium* states that the church is at once a mystical body of Christ and a visible institution, among whose duty it is to reveal to the world the Mystery of the Lord, it recognizes the "many elements of sanctification and of truth found outside of its visible structure."¹³⁴ It states, "those who have not yet received the Gospel are related in various ways to the people of God."¹³⁵ Significantly, it acknowledges the salvific plan of God as not excluding "those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel."¹³⁶ The Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*, also addresses

133 Ibid., #2.

134 Pope Paul VI, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium*, 2nd ed. (Pauline Books & Media, 1965), #8.

135 Ibid., #13 and 16.

136 Ibid., #16.

how the Church sees her role in bringing the Gospel to all people. It prized the religions as “leading strings toward God, or as a preparation for the Gospel.”¹³⁷

Arguably, *Ad Gentes* makes a shift from the previous *no salvation outside the Church*, to a recognition of the salvific presence of God, and the seeds of the Word in the non-Christian religions. From the background of the documents mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is evident that the Catholic church now has a clear desire to dialogue with the whole of human family irrespective of their religious affiliations. In fact, *Gaudium et Spes* presents an ecclesiology of the Church which highlights the Church as “leaven” in the world, and proceeds to identify levels of dialogue with various religions.¹³⁸ It asks that dialogue be engaged within the church itself, with other Christians,¹³⁹ with other religious traditions,¹⁴⁰ and with humanity in general. O’Collins’ comments further on these. He notes that *Gaudium et Spes* is the “first conciliar document in the history of Catholic Christianity to teach that all human beings are created in the image of God,”¹⁴¹ and that all human beings enjoyed same basic dignity, from which flow universal rights and duties.¹⁴²

137 Pope Paul VI, “Ad Gentes Divinitus: Decree on the Missionary Activity,” in *Vatican Council II*, ed. Austin Flannery (Dublin 1, Ireland: Dominican Publications, 1966), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html. #3

138 Pope Paul VI and Paul VI, “Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” Vatican, Rome, 1965, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. #40-51.

139 Ibid. #40-41, 90.

140 Ibid. #92.

141 O’Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions*. 129.

142 Pope Paul VI and Paul VI, “Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.” #26.

In the same spirit as the other documents reviewed above, *Ecclesia Suam* “does not regard God's mercy as an exclusive privilege [of the church], nor does the greatness of the privilege it enjoys make it feel unconcerned for those who do not share it.¹⁴³ Hence, “the Church must enter into dialogue with the world in which it lives.”¹⁴⁴ This is in spite of a document as *Dominus Iesus*, which technically deviates from the renewed inclusivistic outreach of the church as articulated in the cited documents above.¹⁴⁵ Dialogue with other religions is encouraged by *Ecclesiam Suam* to be exercised in cycles, which include humankind in general, atheists, and communists. Others include worshippers of the one God, which include the Jews, the Moslems and “followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions;” as well as Christians’ cycle, and Catholics.¹⁴⁶ The church’s inclusivistic openness is further reiterated in *Dialogue and Mission*.¹⁴⁷ *Dialogue and Proclamation*¹⁴⁸ also presents practical approaches to implementing the church’s theology of dialogue and principles of collaboration with other religions. It recognizes the

143 Paul VI, “*Ecclesiam Suam*,” Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Church, 1964, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html. #63.

144 *Ibid.*, #65.

145 The document makes bold to state, for example, that non-Christians are “in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation.”

146 “*Ecclesia Suam*,” #97 – 113.

147 Secretariat for Non-Christians, “*Dialogue and Mission: The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions*” (Rome, 1984), <http://www.cimer.org.au/documents/DialogueandMission1984.pdf>.

148 Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, “*Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection And Orientations On Interreligious Dialogue And The Proclamation Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ*” (Rome, 1991), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html.

moral and spiritual values identifiable in other religions and expresses desire to collaborate with them in good works.

Conclusively, the official position of the Catholic Church on relation with other religions is one of limited religious openness describable as inclusivistic. While this step has been welcomed in different theological and religious fora, Neuner and Jacques Dupuis have called for a more intense theological reflection on “other” religions.¹⁴⁹ Iwuchukwu notes that for Jacques Dupuis and others who identified the shift in Vatican II documents, the church’s position translates to saying that, “people of all races, religions, cultures, genders, and nationality, who lived in accord with the will of God (as known by Christianity) will be saved in Christ even if they willfully deny or reject Christ; and that world religions like Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. promote similar values and virtues as the church.”¹⁵⁰ However, the position of the pluralist theologians implies a conviction that religions other than Christianity can also be efficacious instruments of salvation to their adherents.

2.7.3 The World Council of Churches on Christian attitude towards other religions

Comparable to the wide outreach and spread of the Roman Catholic Church worldwide, with significant impact on substantial Christian populace in the world, is the World Council of Churches (WCC). The WCC is neither a church, nor a church regulatory body. Rather WCC “is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together

149 J. Dupuis, Jacques and Neuner, *The Christian Faith in the Documents of the Catholic Church*, 7th. enl. (New York: Alba House, 2001).

150 Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, “Looking Beyond Vatican II: A Shift from Religious Inclusivism to Inclusive Religious Pluralism,” *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, accessed April 26, 2017, <http://wakeuplazarus.net/v2/ESSAYS/iwuchukwu.html>.

their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”¹⁵¹ It is an ecumenical organization founded in 1948 in Amsterdam to facilitate “visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ.”¹⁵² With membership strength of 348 member churches, and presence in more than 110 countries and territories, WCC identifies itself as “the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movements in the world.”¹⁵³ Therefore, its objective at attaining Christian unity worldwide, and collective functionality in tolerance and mutual understanding of all Christians cannot be ignored. This is for the fact of its relevance to world peace, and the potential impact of its numerical strength.

WCC is dedicated to the promotion of peace among Christians, and mutual understanding in the larger society. The body, with roughly 560 million Christians,¹⁵⁴ cannot be a stranger to issues of interreligious significance ensuing from human social relations. Hence, it notes that, for a long time, people within the ecumenical movement have been trying to grasp the meaning of Christians’ obedience to the gospel in a world of many religions and cultures, and as such, the WCC has “struggled to understand the significance of other faiths in relation to the gospel.”¹⁵⁵ Therefore, it has organized

151 World Council of Churches, “What Is the World Council of Churches?,” accessed April 28, 2017, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us>.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid.

154 This estimated figure of Christian membership of WCC is found in David R. Brockman and Ruben L. F. Habito, eds., *The Gospel among Religions: Christian Ministry, Theology, and Spirituality in a Multifaith World* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 139.

155 World Council of Churches, “Inter-Religious Dialogue and Cooperation,” *WCC Central Committee*, 1984, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc->

conferences in that regard and assigned Commissions to respond to the necessity of setting Christian theology to the context of contemporary religious plurality.¹⁵⁶ Such Conferences and Commissions include, and are not limited to The World Missionary Conferences at Edinburgh (1910), Jerusalem (1928) and Tambaram (1938), and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 1961. It was however, the sub-unit on promotion of “dialogue between people of living faiths” formed in 1971, which drew up Guidelines on “Dialogue with people of Living Faith and ideologies” in 1979.

i. 1979 “Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies”¹⁵⁷

The document, “Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies,” is a landmark text produced by a group of Christians representing many different ecclesiastical traditions sponsored by the WCC and many churches around the world on interreligious dialogue. The document was first published in 1979 to serve as the official guideline for interreligious dialogue for WCC members. The Committee, persuaded by the fact that “Christians today live out their lives in actual community with people who may be committed to faiths and ideologies other than their own,” takes the situation to imply that dialogue “be recognized as a welcome way of obedience to the commandment of the Decalogue.”¹⁵⁸ The document notes that it is a Christian

programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/study-guide-my-neighbours-faith-and-mine/introduction?set_language=en.

156 Ibid.

157 World Council of Churches, “Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies,” 1979, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/interreligious-trust-and-respect/guidelines-on-dialogue-with-people-of-living-faiths-and-ideologies>.

158 Hans Ucko, “Dialogue with People of Living Faiths,” *Brill*, 2005, <http://www.brill.com/dialogue-people-living-faiths>. The section of the Decalogue to which they

responsibility to foster interfaith dialogue in a spirit of reconciliation and hope granted by Jesus to them. While noting the dangers inherent in many ideological projects in contemporary times, the document explains that in spite of that, “experience of human inter-relatedness in different local situations deepens awareness of the richness of the diversity of the community of humankind which Christians believe to be created and sustained by God in His love for all people.”¹⁵⁹ However, the document touches more on religions than ideologies because the sub-unit on Dialogue, which drafted the guidelines “has more experience of actual dialogues with people of living faiths than ideologies.”¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it recognizes its dialogue program to be inclusive of ideologies.

The basis of the document is rooted in the recognition of God as the “Creator of all things,” and one who wishes to be in relationship with His creatures.¹⁶¹ In God’s order of creation, people are born in relation with other people who express varied historical, social and religious perceptions. At the deepest level, “these have to do with their identity, which gives them a sense of being ‘at home’ in the groups to which they belong.”¹⁶² However, people at various locations and time have responded to this plurality in various ways. Being fully in the world, “Christian community shares in the many distinctions and divisions within and between the communities of humankind,”¹⁶³ “but amidst this complex, confusing and humbling situation, we believe that the Gospel

refer states ‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor’ But the committee further stress the injunction to imply, “not to disfigure the image of our neighbors of different faiths.”

159 World Council of Churches, “Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies.” *See* #6 and 7.

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid., #1

162 Ibid., #2 and #3

163 Ibid., #9

of our Lord Jesus Christ retains its divine given-ness.”¹⁶⁴ The document stresses that the Gospel of Christ may neither be limited to any particular culture, nor could its truth be distorted by the sinfulness of its Christian adherents. It expects that by interrelating with others, Christianity, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will shed its light on them all and upon them all.¹⁶⁵

The document is spiced with the idea of Christian religious inclusivism. It infers that the church remains a sacrament of reconciliation and unity of humankind recreated through the saving activity of God in Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁶ The existence and practices of other faiths are to be seen by Christians as part of God’s wisdom and design. Moreover, as Christians the tension between experiences of a Christian community in a human world, and the understanding that diversity of religions and culture in the human world is part of God’s promises should be kept in tandem. Although this tension is a difficult one to resolve, it is fundamental to the Christian identity. It is in the heart of the tension that “we discover the character of the Christian Church as a sign at once of people's need for fuller and deeper community, and of God's promise of a restored human community in Christ.”¹⁶⁷ The restoration of the “human community” envisaged by WCC is expectedly through Christ.

164 Ibid., #11

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid., #14

ii. **2002 “Guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions”¹⁶⁸**

The “Guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions” was drafted in response to the need for a revision of the 1979 "Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies." The document is necessitated by the need to review WCC’s thirty years of interreligious experience, increased awareness of religious plurality, a call by member churches for new guidelines, as well as the challenging call for greater understanding and cooperation with people of diverse faith.¹⁶⁹ The document opens with a position statement founded on the tradition of Christian heritage in the New Testament and throughout history. Categorically it states, “From its beginning, the Church has confessed that God is reconciling the world to Godself through Christ Jesus.”¹⁷⁰ Christians are expected to collaborate with their neighbors from other religious traditions in projects of common good on agreed guidelines; this is because “Whenever religious plurality gives rise to communal tensions there is a possibility of religious sentiments being misused.”¹⁷¹ The impression that religions are causes of conflicts or intensifier of conflicts, could be addressed through the opportunities provided by the multiple presence of religions in the society to serve together as agents of healing and reconciliation.

The guideline places the experience of encounters with neighbors of other religious tradition in biblical affirmation of a “common humanity” before God. Similarly,

168 World Council of Churches, “Guidelines for Dialogue and Relations with People of Other Religions,” World Council of Churches Central Committee, 2002, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2002/guidelines-for-dialogue-and-relations-with-people-of-other-religions>.

169 Ibid., #1-3.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid., #6, *see also* #7 and #8.

the document anticipates biblical eschatological vision to be inclusive of all nations as intended by God.¹⁷² Christians nonetheless, must keep in mind the ambiguities of religious expressions, as religious traditions are not immune to wickedness and sin. They must, therefore be committed to their Christian faith and the call to witness to God's healing and reconciling work in Christ. This call is to be carried out by "acknowledging that we are not fully aware of the ways in which God's redeeming work will be brought to its completion."¹⁷³ Accordingly, Christian guiding principles to interreligious dialogue should, among other things reflect a process of mutual empowerment, encourage growth in faith, affirm hope, strive towards mutual respect, respect the integrity of religious tradition, a co-operative and collaborative activity, and essentially strive to be inclusive of all sections of the community.¹⁷⁴

iii 2005 "Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding"

While the documents reviewed above, that is, "Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies," and "Guidelines for Dialogue and Relations with People of Other Religions" reflect the official WCC's declaration on interreligious relation, the document on "Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding" is congruent to the body's perception on Christian self-understanding in a religiously pluralistic world. Although the document does not necessarily represent the official view

172 Ibid., #10

173 Ibid., #13. The same point here is further explained in article 14 through 16.

174 These principles are outlined in the "Guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions" from articles 18 through 26. They are followed by some practical considerations that are detailed in Article 27 through 33. The latter raises questions concerning expectations and difficulties that may be encountered in the process of interreligious dialogue. Such issues include theological, social, political, and moral problems. The document however suggests, "plurality of positions on each side should not be ignored or suppressed while defending what is perceived to be the interest of one's community" (#29).

of the body, it remains an important document to the extent that it resulted from a study process in response to suggestions made in 2002 at the body's central committee on Faith and Order, Inter-religious Relations and Mission and Evangelism, and their respective commissions or advisory bodies. The document "seeks a new approach to the difficult and controversial issues related to Christian self-understanding in a religiously plural world."¹⁷⁵ It argues from the premise that God is the sole determinant of salvation, and in a world where Christians are confronted with religious plurality, they can only witness to God's offer of hospitality, but cannot determine who is saved. Its basis for this conclusion is that God's "hospitality" extends to all creation, and in developing a theology of religions, a "hospitality" hermeneutics remains the "key and an entry point" for discussion.¹⁷⁶

The idea of God's hospitality and God's universality in Jesus Christ repeatedly finds expression throughout "Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding."¹⁷⁷ The idea implies a catalytic principle to celebrate the hospitality of a gracious God in interreligious relation. The document hopes that by yielding to the call of hospitality as a Christian response in the light of the generosity and graciousness of God towards other religions and the world, the Christian would experience the power of mutual transformation. The expectation is founded on the historical background that Christians have not only learned to coexist with people of other religious traditions as in the case of Abraham and Melchizedek (Gen 14), but have also been transformed by such

¹⁷⁵ WCC Interreligious Relations, Mission and Evangelism, and Faith and Order staff, "Religious Plurality and Christian Self-Understanding," *Current Dialogue*, 2005, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/ix-other-study-processes/religious-plurality-and-christian-self-understanding>.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., IV, #25.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. See esp. #26 – 33.

encounters.¹⁷⁸ Christians stand the chance of mutual benefit and spiritual growth in interreligious engagement.

Practical hospitality and welcoming attitudes to “strangers” create the space from which mutual transformation, reconciliation and authentic Christian witnessing may find root. It is not up to anyone or religion to determine whom God may save. The document therefore concludes that salvation belongs to God and the various religious traditions of humankind in their great diversity are “journeys” or “pilgrimages” towards human fulfillment, and the search for the truth about human existence. Correspondingly, an acknowledgment of human limitations in language and every other aspect of human expressions in this search, demonstrates the limitation of human experiences in dealing with the scope of God’s work. The common human search for the truth about existence should therefore be done in humility that enables us to say, “Salvation belongs to God, God only. We do not possess salvation; we participate in it. We do not offer salvation; we witness to it. We do not decide who would be saved; we leave it to the providence of God. For our own salvation is an everlasting ‘hospitality’ that God has extended to us. It is God who is the ‘host’ of salvation.”¹⁷⁹

Despite the recognition that salvific potency of a religion remains the prerogative of God, the unofficial theology of religions expressed in “Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding” does not deviate from the official declaration of WCC on interreligious relation. The unique role of Christianity among other religions whose salvific potency cannot be determined by human discretion constitutes an irresolvable

178 Ibid., #34-35.

179 Ibid., 45.

puzzle for which Christians should not necessarily be perturbed. The “Guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions” notes,

Many Christians have found it difficult to make sense of, or relate creatively to, the reality of other religious traditions. However, as Christians we believe that the Spirit of God is at work in ways beyond our understanding (cf. John 3.8). The activity of the Spirit is beyond our definitions, descriptions and limitations. We should seek to discern the Spirit’s presence where there is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5. 22-23). The Spirit of God is groaning with our spirit. The Spirit is at work to bring about the redemption of the whole created order (Rom. 8. 18 - 27).¹⁸⁰

Like the Catholic Church, and the bulk of biblical attitude towards other religions, WCC’s official position on matter of the salvation of adherents of other religions, is typically an inclusive one. The examined documents largely advocate a religiously inclusive Christianity where Christ remains the default means of humanity’s restoration to the will of God. This position does not however interfere with forms of dialogue which promotes human dignity and social interaction. Recently, both bodies, the Catholics and World Council of Churches, proposed a collaboration to produce a joint document on education for peace.¹⁸¹ Though still at its early stage, delegates find the opportunity to serve as a step “in friendship and fruitful cooperation in promoting constructive relations with individuals and communities belonging to other religious traditions.”¹⁸² This is a significant step in interreligious relation beyond Christian inter-denominational cooperation. It is expected that the drafting of such document will bring members of

180 World Council of Churches, “Guidelines for Dialogue and Relations with People of Other Religions.”

181 Vatican Radio, “PCID and WCC to Draw up Document on Education for Peace,” Church in Dialogue, 2017, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/01/31/pcid_and_wcc_to_draw_up_document_on_education_for_peace/1289448.s

182 Ibid

other religions on board in the production of a far-reaching document on education for peace.

2.8 Modern and post-modern theories on interfaith dialogue

Being well grounded in one's religion is a basic requirement to engage in interreligious dialogue, but so is the need to recognize the religious autonomy of the other. As argued earlier in chapter one of this dissertation, the Nigeria NCE curriculum is faith-based, and this work is not by any means claiming that it is improper to have a confessional-centric curriculum. However, given the context of religious diversity, and the wish of Nigeria government to utilize the CRS curriculum to achieve interreligious peace, there is a need to tilt the contents of the curriculum towards an inclusive religious pluralistic model of interreligious theology. It is in this regards that the background from which Christian theology of religions has moved to its current stage of pluralistic worldview needs to be examined. The essence of the exercise is to present theological locations from which the confessional centric curriculum of Nigeria NCE may be better understood, and analyze.

2.8.1 Modern theorists on religious dialogue

Mahmoud Sadri identified Friedrich Schleiermacher and Ernst Troeltsch as two early modern theological luminaries who paved the way to current interfaith dialogue.¹⁸³ While Sadri has some credibility to his claim, to trace what is today described as interreligious dialogue to scholars like Schleiermacher and Troeltsch as advocates for such dialogue might be difficult. Although both scholars recognize the existence of other

¹⁸³ Sadr, "From Irony to Inclusion: Early Models for Interfaith Dialogue," 8. Brockman and Habito also made the same observation in *The Gospel among Religions: Christian Ministry, Theology, and Spirituality in a Multifaith World*, 80ff.

religions, they do not necessarily see Christianity as comparable to any other religion. This is not withstanding their special focus on religious relativism and more properly a certain philosophy of religion. They typically held Christianity as completely at a different level of superiority from other religions. The thoughts of Pius IX who offered the same kind of recognition as Schleiermacher, lending a voice to a “compromise between the necessity of the church and the possibility of salvation beyond its boundaries”¹⁸⁴ may also be included in that mix. What is however phenomenal is the extraordinary tolerance of spiritual diversity in the name of interfaith dialogue across religions, and among religious scholars in the late modern era and the various post-modern theories that are now common in various shades of contemporary societies.¹⁸⁵ In this regard, there are theological contributions from different religious locations as Protestantism and Catholicism in thinking theologically about the religious others.

Put in context, interreligious dialogue as obtainable in contemporary times is a product of peculiar circumstances in history. As a different way of looking at the religious other who practices a religion that is equally acceptable, and a valid way to

¹⁸⁴Brockman and Habito, *The Gospel among Religions: Christian Ministry, Theology, and Spirituality in a Multifaith World*. 23.

¹⁸⁵ The following authors are among the many others who have explored modern and postmodern thinking about the religious others, and shared their thoughts on same: Gavin D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); Michael Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); John Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religions: The Rainbow of Faiths* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (London: One World, 1993); Paul J Griffiths, *An Apology for Apologetics: A Study in the Logic of Interreligious Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991); Leonard J. Swidler, *After the Absolute: The Dialogical Future of Religious Reflection* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). Gavin D'Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990); Franklin Hamlin Littell and George Estreich, *The Growth of Interreligious Dialogue, 1939-1989: Enlarging the Circle* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989); Robert B. Sheard, *Interreligious Dialogue in the Catholic Church Since Vatican II: An Historical and Theological Study* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987).

God, interreligious dialogue assumes a unique and distinctive prominence between the 16th and the 17th centuries. According to the American historian of China, Japan, and world Christianity, Kenneth Scott Latourette, it was a period when Christendom was threatened by the rapacious spread of Islam to countries like India and China, and Christian missionaries were kept out of bound from those territories.¹⁸⁶ It was also an era when the crusade and Inquisition were not only revived, but it was also a period when the Roman Catholics and the Protestants were regularly at each other's jugular.¹⁸⁷ In the course of the "long 18th century," (1685-1815) a different wave of reasoning emerged with its own spirit of what is referred to as the enlightenment. Among the many influences of that stage of human advancement were revolutionary thinking which cut across almost every aspect of human experiences. The *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue* notes that the epistemological paradigm shift of the era greatly influenced how people "perceive, conceive, think about, and subsequently decide and act in the world."¹⁸⁸ The Christendom was not isolated as it also went through major epistemological paradigm shift in how humans understand their process of understanding and what meaning and status are attributed to "truth."¹⁸⁹ "Whereas the Western notion of truth was largely absolute, static, and monologic or exclusive up to the eighteenth/nineteenth-centuries Enlightenment, it has since become deabsolutized,

186 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Reformation to the Present*, Revised, vol. 2 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Prince Press, 1975). A detail of Latourette's narrative on this theme is told on pages 689 – 96.

187 Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Reevaluation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960).

188 Leonard Swidler, "The History of Inter-Religious Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell: A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication, 2013).11.

189 Ibid

dynamic, and dialogic – in a word, it has become “relational.”¹⁹⁰ The nonabsolutistic epistemology according to Swidler, arose from, and is sustained through “historicism, intentionality, sociology of knowledge, limits of language, hermeneutics and dialogue.”¹⁹¹ The paradigm shift in the ways that human beings understand reality and interpersonal relation at the dawn of the Enlightenment era reopens the non-absolutistic epistemology of the Eastern worldview on religious pluralism.¹⁹² In specific ways attention was paid to the notion of relationality which emphasizes that human beings cannot be isolated from each other’s experiences in any absolute way.

Beyond the Enlightenment pluralistic worldview but on its trajectory on modern thoughts, Martin Buber (1878 –1965), who is renowned for his religious philosophy of dialogue notes two kinds of human relationships, the “I and Thou” and the “I-It” relationships. The former is characterized by openness, equal and dialogical “total presentness,”¹⁹³ while the latter, which is “faced with no Thou, but surrounded by a multitude of ‘contents,’ has no present, only the past.”¹⁹⁴ The necessity of respective encounter as a social or religious imperative cannot be denied in Buber’s perception of

190 Ibid

191 Ibid., *See* 11-13

192 Swidler notes that the shift in Western understanding of “truth” as relational, that is, moving from a largely absolute, static, and monologic perception to deabsolutized, dynamic, and dialogic procedures is predated by a profession of nonabsolutistic epistemology of the Hindu and Buddhist thinkers. Nevertheless, such thoughts had no significant impact on the West owing to the relative cultural eclipse of those civilizations in the early modern period and the dominance of the Western scientific worldview. However, Swidler says, since the middle of the nineteenth century, Eastern thought has become increasingly well-known in the West, and proportionately influential. The knowledge and influence has also appeared to be increasing geometrically in recent decades. Cf. Swidler, “The History of Inter-Religious Dialogue,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, 11.

193 Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987). 11.

194 Ibid.

human relationality. Primarily distinctiveness in profound relation is pertinent to Buber's philosophy of dialogue and relationality. Accordingly, Buber notes that the relation of the Father and the Son as highlighted in the Gospel according to John buttresses a primordial human existential ideal.¹⁹⁵ In fact, according to him, "All modern attempts to interpret this primal reality of dialogue as a relation of the I to the Self, or the like – as an event that is contained within the self-sufficient interior life of man – are futile: they take their place in the abysmal history of destruction of reality."¹⁹⁶ The experience of the other in interhuman relationship by Buber's reckoning shouldn't be regarded as an accidental or an occasion of curious engagement with what I considered myself not to be. Rather, it is a moment that presents a possibility of that which I might become. Thus, the other and I are both subjects and not "Its," and can therefore operate the possibility of dialogue that can deepen our subjectivity and internal relatedness. Human social and religious activities may not find fulfilment and neutrality outside the unavoidable relational nature of human existence which Buber presents. Such an encounter, as between the I and Thou is immediately defined on impartial relational operations where intimate language of love distinguishes the I-Thou relationship from a reified I-It encounter of the other. Deductively, while the imperativeness of dialogue at social and interreligious level may not be lost on meaningful interhuman relationship, the recognition of the rights of the other as equal partner in that relation is of great importance. Similarly, religious pluralism and its attendant dialogical imperatives must be carried out in full recognition of the other's religious rights to belief and practices.

195 Ibid., 11.

196 Ibid., 111.

Buber's philosophy of dialogue which recognizes equality of subjects in dialogue is strong in allowing the dialoging partners to retain their otherness in the interpersonal relation. To Kelly, "It is in this way that speaking - or addressing another - does not destroy the height of the other."¹⁹⁷ One may rather add that such engagement strengthens understanding and acceptance of the other in peaceful coexistence. The thesis of this dissertation is once again strengthened by Buber's philosophy of dialogue that religious plurality is not out of tune with human natural tendencies, and that its acceptance in openness and respect for the other is worthwhile for peacebuilding in a religiously pluralistic society as Nigeria.

2.8.2 *Postmodern theorists on interreligious dialogue*

Although the use of the term "postmodern" is very much in vogue in contemporary theology, in literature and philosophical parlance its precise meaning and time span is quite fluid. Thus, Tyron Inbody says that it has come to "characterize almost anything that one approves or disapproves."¹⁹⁸ While there is a sense in Inbody's innuendo, the confusing sense of usage has been acknowledged by many theologians. A helpful attempt by Daniel Adam to clear the air suggests postmodernism to be a movement, which has arisen in reaction to the modernism of Western civilization, and broader and deeper changes going on in the world today.¹⁹⁹ Chronologically, he identifies

197 Andrew Kelly, "Reciprocity and the Height of God. A Defense of Buber Against Levinas," in *Levinas and Buber. Dialogue and Difference*, ed. P. Atterton, M. Calarco, and M. Friedman (Pittsburgh, PA.: Duquesne University Press., 2004), 231.

198 Tyron Inbody, "Postmodernism: Intellectual Velcro Dragged Across Culture," *Theology Today* 57, no. 4 (1995), 524.

199 He also defines its different usages: Social scientists tend to speak of postmodernity, while those in the arts and humanities prefer the term postmodernism. Postmodernity refers more to a cultural condition or state of being while postmodernism focuses more on a cultural movement or a plurality of movements within culture. We might say that postmodernity is the

its beginnings in the late 20th century, and associates four characteristics to its functionality: rejection of classical metaphysical thought; rejection of human autonomy; praxis; and strong anti-Enlightenment stance.

Concerning theological discourse regarding religious diversity since the late twentieth century, opinions have varied across the globe, but the common need to factor religious and cultural diversity and their autonomy into theological conversation on theology of religions has also remained a constant feature. There is a shift with postmodernism from a monolithic religious view of modernism to a theological framework, which articulates socio-cultural and religious contexts in talking about religious diversity. While this approach to religious diversity and interreligious relation gains prominence in contemporary times, perspectives of various theologians have differed. Below we shall consider the spread views of theologians across Protestant, Catholic, and African background.

i. Karl Rahner

The inclusivist attitude expressed in Modern theological era finds its way into some postmodern theological thoughts on other religions. As noted earlier in considering the history of interreligious relation in biblical times and among the early Christians, as well as evident in the theology of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, Christian tradition relishes inclusive views of the religious other, when it is not expressly exclusive. Karl Rahner is

condition in which late twentieth-century culture finds itself; postmodernism is a reflection upon that condition and a response to it. Daniel Adams, "Towards a Theological Understanding of Postmodernism," *CrossCurrents* 47, no. 4 (1997).

projected as probably the most influential inclusivist theologian of the 20th century.²⁰⁰ Rahner presented his arguments for his inclusivist position from his background as a Catholic Jesuit priest. Notwithstanding the fact of his Catholic priesthood, the Roman Catholic Church authority suspected his theological works, and he was subsequently banned in 1963 from delivering public lectures and book publication without specific permission. Despite the restriction, his theological view was highly influential to the extent of his appointment to serve as theological adviser at the second Vatican Council.

Rahner approached the question of Christian relationship with other religions from the role of Christianity and of the church in the salvation economy of God among cultures and people. He focused on reconciling the multiple presence of religion in the world, and the necessity of God's self-revelation in Christ. Rahner's inclusive argument is straightforward. According to him, the church needs to operate an "Open Catholicism," that is, "a certain attitude towards the present-day pluralism of powers with different outlooks on the world."²⁰¹ He maintains an understanding that Christianity itself is the absolute religion, intended for every human being.²⁰² However, he goes further to claim that a non-Christian religion is also "a lawful religion although only in different degree. Therefore, Christianity does not simply confront the member of an extra-Christian religion as a mere non-Christian but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this or that respect as an anonymous Christian."²⁰³ He suggests on that basis that the

200 See Gavin D'Costa, "Theology of Religions," in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 631.

201 Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 5 (London: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1970), 115.

202 Ibid, 118.

203 Ibid, 121.

Church today “must see itself not as that community which has a claim to salvation, but rather as the historically tangible vanguard and the historically and socially constituted explicit expression of what Christians hope is present as a hidden reality even outside the visible church.”²⁰⁴

The premise of Rahner’s argument is the logic of general revelation. God is revealed through creation and through history; as such, God’s gracious activities cannot be confined to Christianity, which began at a point in history. When Rahner’s thought on the religious others is placed outside the Christian box, the jigsaw does not seem to fit. He states that non-Christians who behave like Christians have implicitly accepted the grace won by Christ, and are thereby anonymous Christians. One wonders for instance, what it means for a non-Christian to behave like a Christian, especially given the fact that Christianity has a historical starting point, before which religious adherents have always projected valuable behaviors. Thus, the opposite of Rahner’s argument may also be valid, that is, Christians behaving like other religious adherents are “anonymously” members of such religions. More importantly is the implication of a non-Christian being tagged as an “anonymous Christian” with its attendant “thinly disguised Christian imperialism,”²⁰⁵ and somewhat insulting insinuation,²⁰⁶ which perhaps Rahner does not intend. Similarly, Von Balthasar, who was a contemporary of Rahner accused him of reducing being a Christian

204 Ibid, 133.

205 Tony Richie, *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Religions: Encountering Cornelius Today* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2013), 169. In like manner, Hans Kung accused Rahner of attempting to sweeping non-Christians into the Christian church through the back door. See, Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 77-78.

206 See John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religions* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1973), 131-132; and Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions*, 45-62.

living “to a bland and shallow humanism.”²⁰⁷ Being a Christian to Balthasar is not reducible to acting virtuously.

Carl Braaten sees Rahner’s approach to religious inclusivism and the concept of “anonymous Christianity” differently. He considers the concept to be helpful to Christian theology of missions and by the same token, to interreligious relation. The position of Rahner, according to Braaten steps out of the biblical confines to bridge the work of translating the gospel into the language of cultures.²⁰⁸ In other words, the recognition of something good in the values held as precious by practitioner of other religions and culture need not be condemned but considered as a stepping-stone to inviting others into Christianity. Although the benefit that Braaten recognizes in Rahner’s inclusivism is not necessarily ideal to interreligious dialogue where the aim is neither proselytism nor conversion, such approach recognizes the contributory capacity of other religions to better human status. What it does not do is affirm the full recognition of other religions on their own account.

ii. John Hick

John Hick is one of the very early, and prominent theologians associated with religious pluralism. He stated in a talk given to a theological Society in Norwich, England that he became a Christian by evangelical conversion as a Law student. Like many people of his generation, part of the package of belief he received albeit wholeheartedly was that Christianity is uniquely superior to all other religions and that the world is in process of

207 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Moment of Christian Witness*, trans. Richard Beckley (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1969), 126.

208 Carl E. Braaten, *No Other Gospel: Christianity among the World Religions* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1992), 96.

being converted to Christian faith.²⁰⁹ According to him, with time the little he thought he knew about other religions were largely caricature.²¹⁰ He came to realize that the religion that seems so obviously superior to anyone in many cases depends on the numerical strength due to circumstances of birth into a family. Thus, “someone born into a devout Muslim family in Egypt or Pakistan or Albania (or for that matter in England) is very likely to grow up as a Muslim; someone born into a devout Hindu family in India (or again in England) is very likely to be a Hindu; ... and so on.”²¹¹ This of course, is in spite of the possibility of individual conversions for various individual reasons. Hick however notes that such conversions are statistically marginal in comparison with a massive transmission of faith from generation to generation by circumstances of birth.

Hick became a major proponent of a position, which sees the *solus Christus* assumption of Christian exclusivists as incompatible with Christian teaching of a God who desires to save all people, presumably irrespective of culture and religion. Conscious of the fact that many Christian theologians and church leaders have moved away from strict exclusivism to an inclusive religious perspective, which sees salvation as obtainable indeed through Christ alone, Hick observes that the “the basic moral teaching of the religions remains the same;”²¹² and Christians do not necessarily respond better to moral principle than non-Christians. People of other religions are not necessarily less loving, less caring, or less honest, there are good and bad people, with varied degree of indulgence in both good and evil; but it does not seem that Christians in general stand out

209 John Hick, “Is Christinanity the Only True Religion or One among Others?,” *A Talk given to a Theological Society in Norwich, England*, 2001, <http://johnhick.org.uk/article2.pdf>.

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid.

212 Ibid., 4

as morally and spiritually superior to everyone else.²¹³ In fact Hick reiterates that Christians, either individually or collectively, are manifestly not better human beings than the rest of humanity.

Beside arguments on common moral principles, Hick poses the common inclusive religious theology of religion to controvert the logic of scientific and economic discoveries. To make his point clear, he cites the analogy of the solar system.²¹⁴ In the analogy, God is the sun at the center and the religions as planets revolving around that center. What the inclusivist does is in effect claim that the life-giving light and warmth of the sun falls directly only on our earth, and it is then reflected off to the other religions, which thus receive it as second hand. Similarly, in terms of economics, it is a kind of trickledown theory of salvation, where Christians are the spiritually rich at the top, with their riches trickling down in varying measure to people of the other world religions below. The reality of common gradual transformation of people irrespective of religions from natural self-centeredness to a new orientation centered in the divine reality called God does not seem to totally justify the claim that Christianity remains the one and only true, or one and only salvific, religion.

Hick's overall position assumes "that religion is our human response to a transcendent reality, the reality that we call God. And as a human response there is always an inescapably human element within it."²¹⁵ Evidence of such human element in

213 John Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 14.

214 Hick, "Is Christianity the Only True Religion or One among Others?", 3

215 *Ibid.*, 5. In another work, Hick argues that the various ancient religious traditions reveals saving relationship with the Eternal Reality from which all human beings live, what differs in human religious expressions are the names by which the Eternal Reality is known to

response to God manifests brutal activities, which gradually transform to a more humane religious ideal. The change from violent and aggressive domineering tribal god of Judaism (I Sam 15:3) for example, who later became a universal Lord of modern Judaism does not illustrate a change in God's nature, but changing human images of God. The different mental images of God according to human ideas, cultural assumptions, and histories are responsible for the different religions and even differences within a given religion.

Hick's religious pluralism has been challenged on various grounds.²¹⁶ While Douglas Geivett and Gary Phillips have critiqued his position which equates common moral behavior as equal common ground for salvation as arbitrary and weak,²¹⁷ Gavin D'Costa observes that Hick's theological revolution is still theocentric thereby excluded non-theocentric religions.²¹⁸ Notwithstanding these arguments, Hick's position on the need to avoid absolutizing religions in a multi-religious context remains valid. His admonition in this respect is instructive, that is, to

live wholeheartedly within our own faith, so long as we find it to be sustaining and a sphere of spiritual growth, but we should freely recognise the equal validity of the other great world faiths for their adherents, and we can also be enriched by some of their insights and spiritual practices. We should not see the other religions as rivals or enemies, or look down upon them as inferior, but simply as different human responses to the

different religions. cf. John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 18 and 43.

216 Haejong Je's dissertation focused on 20 of such criticisms, cf. "A Critical Evaluation of John Hick's Religious Pluralism in Light of His Eschatological Model" (Andrews University, 2009) 210-247.

217 Douglas R. Geivett and Gary W. Phillips, "Response to John Hick," in *More than One Way? Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Press, 1995), 78.

218 Gavin D'Costa, "Theology of Religions," in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 628.

divine reality, formed in the past within different strands of human history and culture.²¹⁹

2.8.3 *Responses of African theologians to renewed interreligious orientation*

Theological discourse on African Christianity by Africans is no longer seeking recognition, or relevance in the global world. For one, only Africans can tell their own story the way it is, especially in a context where *praxis* is the watchword in theologizing. Many African theologians are lending their voices to theological issues, which include interreligious dialogue. The all-important second Vatican document on interreligious dialogue, *Nostra Aetate* is one of the many areas of concern for the African theologians.

Although, African Traditional Religion (ATR) is not specifically mentioned in any of the conciliar documents, the council's recognition of "other religions found everywhere" which try to "counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing 'ways,' comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites,"²²⁰ may, by extension, be applied to the African religious expressions. The Catholic Church has significant presence in Africa where cultural views and religious expressions are often intricately connected. Cultural and social expressions are in many instances vented through religious convictions in the African context, hence religions largely play major role in the people's everyday experiences. Religious dialogue and a theology of religions by the church must necessarily pay attention to the religious expressions, and diverse cultural interests of the Africans.

The 1993 "Letter of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences in Asia, the Americas and Oceania," specifically

219 Hick, "Is Christianity the Only True Religion or One among Others?" 6.

220 Pope Paul VI, "Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions." #2

addresses the Catholic Church's position on Traditional Religions. The Council defines what it means by Traditional Religions as "those religions which, unlike the world religions that have spread into many countries and cultures, have remained in their original socio-cultural environment."²²¹ The document makes a further important clarification that it does not, by the use of the word "traditional" refers to something static or unchangeable, but rather it uses the word to denote a religion with localised matrix.

The document examines the nature of Traditional Religions, noting that the religions generally have a clear belief in One God that is considered a Supreme Being Who goes by such names as Great Spirit, Creator, the Great One, the Mighty Spirit, the Divine, the Transcendent, the One who lives above, and so on.²²² It also highlights some of the values and religious elements of the religions and gave reasons for church's pastoral attention and the need for dialogue with the religions. The glowing tributes in these paragraphs are not necessarily meant to place these religions on common pedestal with Christianity. The official position of the church in relating with religions as African Traditional religion remains at best inclusive. Documents such as *Nostra Aetate* (#2), *Ad Gentes* #11), and *Lumen Gentium* #17) make this position clear by laying emphasis on the claim that such religions possess "ray of the truth" and "the seeds of the Word," Jesus being the Word and the Truth referenced.

Reactions from many African theologians have generally been compliant with the official church's position regarding relation with African religion, and are not necessarily based on the merit of the religion itself. Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator associates such

²²¹ Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, "Pastoral Attention to Traditional Religions: Letter of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences in Asia, the Americas and Oceania" (Vatican, 1993), #1.

²²² Ibid., #3

attitude to conservativeness and activities of ill prepared bishops and priests.²²³ Unfortunately, these church officials are often those with whom theology and hermenutics of religious relation in Africa are associated. However, in recent times, such docile ancillary attitude is yielding to more profound theological engagements. To put this in perspective, Denis Chidi Isizor, an official of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican until his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Onitsha in Nigeria, attempts a description of the ATR in sub-saharan Africa. Citing Pope Leo XIII' *Catholicae Ecclesiae*, Benedict XV's *Maximum Illud* and Pius XI's *Rerum Ecclesiae*, he contends that the "theological/pastoral thinking" meant to provide direction for all Christians, especially the missionaries at the pre-Vatican II era was negative.²²⁴ He considers the efforts of Vatican II Council and the post-conciliar church's engagement with ATR as positive. Paul Bekye continued the conversation in "African Traditional Religion in Church Documents."²²⁵ He copiously uses official church documents to demonstrate the "positive recognition of religious pluralism [as] a distinctive mark of the post-Vatican II Catholic Church." According to him, the church's new self-understanding towards ATR "is a watershed in its theological openness to, and appreciation of, the religious traditions and religious values of non-Christian peoples."²²⁶ Largely, the African

223 Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, "After All, Africa Is Largely a Nonliterate Continent': The Reception of Vatican II in Africa," *Theological Studies* 74, no. 2 (2013): 284f.

224 Chidi Denis Isizoh, "Dialogue With African Traditional Religion In Sub-Saharan Africa: The Changing Attitude Of The Catholic Church," n.d., <http://Www.Afrikaworld.Net/Afrel/Changing-Attitude.Htm>.

225 Paul Bekye, "African Traditional Religion In Church Documents," n.d., <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/atrxadocs.htm>.

226 Ibid.

theologians cited in this section agree that there is an improved platform for dialogue between ATR and the Catholic Church.

Orobator however, goes beyond Bekye's exposition to examine what he refers to as "critical factors that determines the impact, reception, and implementation of Vatican II in Africa."²²⁷ He argues that reception and implementation of the vast explorable opportunities for dialogue with ATR has been hindered. Orobator lays the burden of the drawbacks on the attitude of African church leaderships. Notwithstanding the "illiteracy of ill-informed laity and the opposition of conservative and ill-prepared bishops and priests," according to Orobator, "evidence exists of credible attempts at propagating and implementing the directives and orientations of Vatican II in Africa."²²⁸ This is more so as the spirit of the council continues to animate, motivate, and support the demographic and theological flourishing of the African church.

On his part, Onaiyekan highlights the church's aim of dialogue with ATR, it is aimed at bridging the gap between faith and life, not to offer a cheap and easy form of Christianity. He advocates an inculturation based on the African Synod's clarifications in terms of fundamental theological concept as Trinity, incarnation, and Pascal Mystery. That is, the unity in diversity that characterizes the Blessed Trinity as reflecting the unity of the church with its diversity that must necessarily entail diversity of cultures.²²⁹ Similar theme as Onaiyekan's runs through a compendium of essays in ecclesiology with focus on the church in African Christianity edited by J. K Mugambi and Laurenti

²²⁷ Orobator, "'After All, Africa Is Largely a Nonliterate Continent': The Reception of Vatican II in Africa."

²²⁸ Ibid., 292

²²⁹ John Femi Onaiyekan, "The Church in Africa," in *The African Synod: Document, Reflections, Perspectives*, ed. Maura Browne (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 212.

Magesa.²³⁰ The volume engages perceptions on the identity of the African church and what it means to be the people of God.

Developments in African churches, especially following the second Vatican council, mark methodological shift from outright condemnation of ATR to a more tolerant attitude towards practices that are considered to be “rays of Truth” by Christian standard. The missionary Christian Churches with Western origin and orientation, such as the Catholic Church, have tenaciously held unto religious inclusivism. Such churches would rather prefer to define ATR as mere possessor of some of her “ray” of “Truth” and “seed” of her “Word.” This theology of Christian interreligious relation with ATR is asymmetrical, and does little in promotion of dialogue with ATR. On the other hand, ATR have been most open to dialogue with other religions, and by its accommodating principle of religious plurality, it has been most receptive to the presence of other religions. Ironically, many African Indigenous Churches have continued to display strict exclusivist position with regards to ATR; yet some valuable practices in the religion which are considered socially, or culturally viable by Christians have been inculturated in Christian worship. Some of such practices include drumming, religious paraphernalia, and other features of African social traditions and religious observances. Given the positive disposition of ATR towards other religions and their adherents and Christians’ supersessionism, David Adomo has an advice for interreligious relation between ATR and Christianity in contemporary time: ““unlike the colonial encounter with African indigenous religions, which was characterized by hostility and condemnation, the

230 Laurenti (Eds). Mugambi, Jesse Ndwiga Kanyua and Magesa, “The Church in African Christianity: Innovative Essays in Ecclesiology,” ed. Jesse Ndwiga Kanyua Magesa, Laurenti and Mugambi, African Challenge Series (Indiana, 1990).

postcolonial encounter should be characterized by mutual respect, understanding, tolerance, and some level of freedom, liberation and genuineness.”²³¹ Adomo’s advice resonates with the thoughts and perception of Marinus Iwuchukwu who also advocates respect and friendship in interreligious engagements.

2.8.4. *Marinus Iwuchukwu and Jacques Dupuis’ inclusive religious pluralism*

The coming of age of interreligious dialogue among Christians, that is, moving from exclusive religious orientation through various forms of inclusivism, would not yield the mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance without the logical conclusion of attaining a consciousness of religious pluralism. In Nigeria, on which this dissertation focuses, religious diversity is most evident and so is the yearning for mutual religious respect, understanding, and tolerance. Among the Nigeria born contemporary theologians, one who is convinced that interreligious dialogue remains the way to peaceful coexistence in the country is Marinus Iwuchukwu.

Iwuchukwu is currently on the faculty of Theology at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, USA. In a deposited dissertation at Marquette University, Iwuchukwu defended a thesis that “religious pluralism is not only a *de facto* (matter of fact) social reality but also a *de jure* (matter of principle) of God's relationship with the people God created.”²³² He inferred this assumption after an exploration of a history of the church’s interreligious experiences, and an examination of relevant theological works by interreligious luminaries. In a subsequent book, *Media Ecology and Religious*

231 David T. Adamo, “Christianity and the African Traditional Religion(s): The Postcolonial Round of Engagement,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32, no. 1 (March 4, 2011).

232 Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, “The Catholic Church in Dialogue with Non-Christian Faith Traditions: Engaging Jacques Dupuis’s Model of Religious Pluralism with Walter Ong’s Concept of Dialogic Openness in Media Society” (Marquette University, 2008), <http://epublications.marquette.edu/dissertations/AAI3326760/>. ii, 3, 107f.

Pluralism: Engaging Walter Ong and Jacques Dupuis Toward Effective Interreligious Dialogue, Iwuchukwu recognizes the positive shift towards a more open Catholic church in interreligious dialogue but argues that the effort could be more far reaching through the application of Jacques Dupuis' theological assumption of inclusive religious pluralism.²³³

The link created by Iwuchukwu between Dupuis' theological assumption, which he considers as not only "sensitive to the theological reality of God's relationship with human nature but also to the social global reality," and Ong's "dialogic openness" for promoting and sustaining the desired enduring interreligious and intercultural dialogue in today's world is commendable. Like many revolutionary ideas, which rocks traditional mindset, a good delivery template is required for effectiveness and dissemination. While Iwuchukwu focused on Ong's dialogic openness in delivering a controverted theological assumption of Dupuis in his dissertation, he has also attempted irenic application of his thoughts on religious peace in practical contexts. One of such contexts is Nigeria.

In *Can Muslims and Christians Resolve their Religious and Social Conflicts?* Iwuchukwu paid attention to the incessant crises that are often tagged "religious" in Nigeria. He notes that such instances are not always exclusively religious, but "combination of economic, political, and religious factors."²³⁴ His recommendations towards enduring resolution of these crises feature inclusive forms of dialogue that are

233 Marinus Iwuchukwu, *Media Ecology and Religious Pluralism: Engaging Walter Ong and Jacques Dupuis Towards Effective Interreligious Dialogue* (Koln, Deutschland: Lambert academic Publishing, 2009), 113.

234 Marinus C. Iwuchukwu and Brian Stiltner, eds., "Revisiting the Perennial Conflicts in Northern Nigeria, 1990-2010: Broadening the Focus of Muslim-Christian Dialogue," in *Can Muslims and Christians Resolve Their Religious and Social Conflicts? : Cases From Africa and the United States* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2013), 4.

not covert efforts at conversion, but efforts to “regain respect and friendship among each other.”²³⁵

The interreligious ideal that Iwuchukwu advocates,²³⁶ is very much in accord with a theological position beyond old theological binary of exclusivism and inclusivism. In relation to this dissertation and in the context of Nigeria, a confessional centric curriculum in schools, for achieving lasting peace in a diverse religious society as Nigeria would only perpetuate asymmetrical religious situation with contest for conversion. A situation such as that cannot breed any meaningful peace. In line with Iwuchukwu’s thoughts, truly honest, lasting, respectful, and successful interreligious dialogue is convincingly possible on an inclusive religious pluralism. Detail of this theological assumption with particular reference to Jacques Dupuis’ theology of religions shall be discussed below.

2.9 Jacques Dupuis’ “Inclusive Pluralism”: Towards an inclusive religious pluralism for peacebuilding curriculum

2.9.1 Background to Dupuis’ form of pluralism

Theological theories are better understood within the contexts of their development. A theological position does not arise from a vacuum; certain experiences are given expressions in theological analysis to arrive at a theory that would in turn be used to revisit the situation. Broadly speaking, this procedure can be described as a

235 Ibid., 33.

236 See Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). 151-172

movement from praxis-theology-praxis.²³⁷ As a background to Dupuis' theology of inclusive pluralism, his religious and educational location must be put into consideration. On the one hand is the environment of his pastoral and theological experiences, and on the other, is the position of the church through which he speaks concerning salvific potency of other religions outside the church's confines.

Dupuis was born in December 1923 to a middle-class Catholic family in Belgium. He had all his academic years with the Jesuits, and eventually became a member of the order in 1941. He left Belgium for India in 1948 on missions, partly to explore new ways to "plant an indigenous Gospel," but also to gain teaching experience.²³⁸ He had his doctoral studies at Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, but spent most part of his life in the service of his Order at the Jesuit Faculty of Theology of Kurseong (later moved to Delhi, and renamed 'Vidyajyoti College of Theology').²³⁹ Living in India provided him the rare opportunity to relate with Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, and Muslim, and mediate the religious culture of the East and the West. He was also a theological adviser to the Indian Bishops' Conference, and had played major role in midwifing the transition

237 Methods of theological reflections varied in approaches; however, they all consider human experiences as a prominent factor in theological analysis and development of theological models. For example, while Bernard Lonergan in *Method in Theology* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1990:300-302) emphasizes a movement from the classist theological notion to an empirical method of theology, Browning dwells on a method of Correlation, cf. Don Browning, *Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1995). To Browning, theology must touch on human experiences, thus he suggests a procedure from Interpretation of common human experience, to an Interpretation of symbols, to Correlation of Two Interpretations, before Metaphysical Analysis, to be followed by Cultural and Social analysis in light of Theological vision, and then the development of Programs and Actions. Other methods which emphasize this procedure include: J Shea, "Storytelling and Religious Identity," *Chicago Studies* 21, no. 1 (1982): 23-43; P. Killen and J. DeBeer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroads, 1994); C. Delve, S. Mintz, and G. Stewart, *Community Service as Values Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Company, 1990).

238 R B Kaiser, "Dupuis Profile," in *In Many and Diverse Ways: In Honor of Jacques Dupuis* (New York: Maryknoll Publications, 2003), 223.

239 Ibid.

from Vatican I to Vatican II in the Catholic Church in India. It is also interesting to note that Dupuis was invited to teach “Theology and Non-Christian Religions” at the Gregorian University in Rome in 1984, and was subsequently appointed director of *Gregorianum* journal, and consultor at the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, respectively. Dupuis has many articles, papers and books which ventilate his interreligious and theological activities, but it was his *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* that led to his being investigated by the Catholic Church’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2001. From his baggage of interreligious exposure there is no doubt that Dupuis is most qualified for the subject of interreligious dialogue on which he speaks.

The general relation of the Catholic Church with other religions is often in tandem with the church’s self-understanding, which is defined on two models: the Mystical Body ecclesiology and the Communion/ Koinonia models.²⁴⁰ While the former stressed an exclusive ecclesiology, the latter is founded on a more inclusive theology. While these are expected to shift and give room for a more accommodating ecclesiology with time, and by the evidence of global recognition of pluralism on culture and religions,²⁴¹ Dupuis

240 Edward P. Hahnenberg has discussed the development and usage of these models in details in “The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2005): 3–30.

241 Hahnenberg in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70, no. 1, expresses this view. He traced the history and development of “Mystical Body” and “Communion” ecclesiologies from their common roots in the New Testament and the patristics, noting that they both “enjoyed an internal theological diversity and saw one theological track appropriated and endorsed by the papal magisterium.” According to him, “unlike the images of mystical body, people of God, or sacrament, ‘communion’ was not widely promoted as a comprehensive and integrative model of the Church prior to the Second Vatican Council.” Nevertheless, he projects that in view of the past developments in ecclesiology and in looking toward future theological reflection on the Church, while the euphoria of the communion model is significant, “history suggests that, like the model of mystical body, today’s ecclesiology of communion will exert its influence and then give way to new and complementary ways of talking about the Church.” (See pg.4)

seems to have lived ahead of such a time. Although he had articulated his thoughts on Christian relation with other religions in earlier books such as *Jesus Christ at the encounter of world religions*, *Who do you say I am? Introduction to Christology*, published in 1991 and 1994 respectively, his magnum opus, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* was called to question by Rome. While highlights of the book shall be discussed below, suffice it to note that the book primarily offer insightful interpretation and evaluation of Christians' attitudes towards other religions and made a far-reaching suggestion that religious pluralism is not only "in fact" a reality to be accepted, but God's will "in principle." The need for further clarification by the Vatican led to many ordeals of Dupuis. Although he was not directly disciplined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), he was made to sign a notification on subsequent edition that,

It is consistent with Catholic doctrine to hold that the seeds of truth and goodness that exist in other religions are a certain participation in truths contained in the revelation of or in Jesus Christ. However, it is erroneous to hold that such elements of truth and goodness, or some of them, do not derive ultimately from the source-mediation of Jesus Christ.²⁴²

Dupuis' book on *Christianity and the Religions: From confrontation to dialogue*, published in 2001, may be considered a response to CDF. The book did not recount any of the contents of the controverted book, but shed further light on the uniqueness of Christ, interreligious dialogue in a pluralistic society and relationship between the Reign of God and the church. Dupuis' theology has had significant influence on many

242 Joseph Ratzinger, "NOTIFICATION on the book 'Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism' (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York 1997) by Father JACQUES DUPUIS, S.J.," *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, 2001, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20010124_dupuis_en.html.

contemporary theologians, and although the principles of the Church's relation with other religions have remained, the hermeneutics have witnessed variation in perspectives.

2.9.2 Dupuis' *Theology of religions*

The second Vatican Council had settled doubts concerning the official position of the church on relation with other religions. In *Nostra Aetate*, the church encourages dialogue with people of other religions within some given parameters. The question that Dupuis takes further in that conversation is "whether religious pluralism is summarily to be accepted or tolerated as a reality *de facto* in our present world. Or can it, on the contrary, be viewed theologically as existing *de jure*?"²⁴³

In response to his questions, Dupuis notes that the current religious landscape of today's world is characteristically pluralistic, and the same goes with the plurality of religions; and by all human predictions, that reality is not about to end in any near future. Therefore, the plurality of religions is a factor to be reckoned with, rather than merely welcomed.²⁴⁴ He notes that the persistence of religious plurality is partly due to "the partial failure of the Christian missions," and the dual response to religious pluralism. In the latter case, he notes, "the same plurality is welcomed as a positive factor which witnesses at once to the superabundant generosity with which God has manifested himself to humankind in manifold ways and to the pluriform response which in diverse cultures human beings have given to the divine self-disclosure."²⁴⁵ In other words, while the plurality of religious presence is accepted within the Christian tradition as means by which God manifests himself to humankind, responses to that fact have existed in

243 Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 386.

244 Ibid.

245 Ibid.

different forms. Thus, Dupuis asks if religious pluralism is only permitted by God or, on the contrary, positively willed by him in his overall design for humankind.²⁴⁶ Dupuis' response to this profound question is the content of his theology of religions, which is now known as inclusivist religious pluralism.

It is quite important to note that Dupuis did not completely deviate from the Catholic Church's inclusive religious theology of religions, but rather improves on the theology from a biblical hermeneutical perspective, which ventilates contemporary religious and cultural realities. Dupuis upholds the centrality of Jesus in matter of faith and salvation but holds that idea in tandem with "the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ as neither absolute nor relative."²⁴⁷ In the Christ-event, "God has brought about universal salvation; Christ's risen humanity is the guarantee of God's indissoluble union with humankind ... In this plan of God, ... the other religious traditions represent true interventions and authentic manifestations of God in the history of peoples; they form integral parts of one history of salvation that culminates in the Jesus Christ-event."²⁴⁸ Simply stated, Dupuis' version of religious pluralism maintains the centrality of Jesus in God's plan for human salvation, but concedes that people of other religious traditions are able to attain salvation without recourse to Christianity.²⁴⁹ He maintains that while no human knowledge can ever claim a divine view of things, in our contemporary times many theologians acknowledge a positive role and value of religious

246 Ibid.

247 Ibid.

248 Ibid.

249 Jacques Dupuis quoted in Iwuchukwu, "The Catholic Church in Dialogue with Non-Christian Faith Traditions: Engaging Jacques Dupuis's Model of Religious Pluralism with Walter Ong's Concept of Dialogic Openness in Media Society," 111

pluralism in God's sight. Despite this limitation, there is a need for definitive position for religious pluralism based on God's activities in human interreligious experiences. This is partly because "genuine religion necessarily entails a relationship with other religions In short, to be religious is to be interreligious . . . By way of consequence, a theology of religions becomes interreligious theology with a universal imperative."²⁵⁰ To be sure, according to Dupuis, such theology cannot be built on mere faith in a plurality of persons in one God in *its self*. It will not also suffice to build such a foundation by simply appealing to the fact of a "plurality" character of all reality, like the plurality of the elements of nature, of seasons, etc.²⁵¹ On the other hand, Dupuis reasons that it would not also be enough, "merely to refer to the inborn, unavoidable limitations of every human apprehension of the Divine Mystery," to infer a basis for religions. To do so, he contends, "would amount to seeking to establish a plurality of principle on a truncated view of religion as representing but a human quest for the Divine."²⁵² Religion rather, has its original source in a divine self-manifestation to human beings, as such the principle of plurality is made to rest primarily on the superabundant richness and diversity of God's self-manifestation to humankind. According to Dupuis,

The divine plan for humanity...is one, but multifaceted. ...That God spoke "in many and various ways" before speaking through his Son (Heb. 1:1) is not incidental; nor is the plural character of God's self-manifestation merely a thing of the past. For the decisiveness of the Son's advent in the flesh in Jesus Christ does not cancel the universal presence and action of the Word and the Spirit. Religious pluralism in principle rests on the immensity of a God who is love.²⁵³

250 Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 11

251 Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 387

252 Ibid.

253 Ibid.

In fact,

Just as the human consciousness of Jesus as Son could not, by nature, exhaust the mystery of God, and therefore left his revelation of God incomplete, in like manner neither does nor can the Christ-event exhaust God's saving power. God remains beyond the man Jesus as the ultimate source of both revelation and salvation. Jesus' revelation of God is a human transposition of God's mystery; his salvific action is the channel, the efficacious sign or sacrament, of God's salvific will. The personal identity of Jesus as Son of God in his human existence notwithstanding, a distance continues to exist between God (the Father), the ultimate source, and he who is God's human icon. Jesus is no substitute for God.²⁵⁴

In part one of *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Dupuis traces the history of Christian theologies of religious pluralism with emphasis on development within the Roman Catholic tradition. In his view there is a shift from the church's prominent "ecclesiocentric viewpoint" to a wider perspectives. In *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*²⁵⁵ Dupuis contends that Vatican II considered the relations of the Church with non-Christian religions within clearly defined parameters. According to him, it is the wish of the church to foster mutual esteem and cooperation with other religions, but within the limits imposed by its self-identity and its understanding of its own mission. He observes however that there is a shift from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism and from Christocentrism to theocentrism, and additions of new models for evaluating the church's relationship with other religions.²⁵⁶ But such discussions have progressively marginalized the central Christological question, which, however must stand at the center of the debates. He took up this issue in the light

254 Ibid., 298

255 Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 74- 95.

256 Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 185-201

of the new understanding of the church and the implication for the understanding on her role in the salvific work of Christ and the reign of God. According to him, there is a need to sustain the role of the church as the “universal sacrament of salvation,” in spite of the understanding that the church does not have a monopoly on the reign of God.²⁵⁷ Members of other religious traditions share truly in the reign of God present in history, and they can contribute to the building up of the reign of God in the world; “they exercise a certain sacramental mediation of the reign of God, different, no doubt, but no less real.”²⁵⁸ His theology recognizes religious pluralism to be in accordance with God’s salvific plan not only in *de facto* but also *de jure* (in principle).

Of course, like many religious pluralists, Dupuis’ theology has been praised, but also challenged.²⁵⁹ He considers such reactions as expressive of “the interest the book has aroused.” For instance, he cited two contradictory reviews by an Italian Catholic Newspaper, “L’Avvenire” in which *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* was first described as “a guide, a compass to orientate the journey of Christian theology as it is on the verge of entering the third millennium.” The same paper, a couple of months later, published another long review stating that “the fundamental affirmations which guide the entire volume and which conclude it appear to us (*the paper belongs to the Italian Episcopal Conference: italics are mine*) unacceptable, not only from the

257 Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*. 213

258 *Ibid.*, 217

259 For a review of Dupuis’ theology of religious pluralism as highlighted in *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, and *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, and Dupuis’ responses to some of the challenges, see, Gerald O’Collins, “Jacques Dupuis’s Contributions To Interreligious Dialogue,” *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 388–97.

theological point of view, but also from that of the Christian faith.”²⁶⁰ It was this scene and the likes, according to Dupuis, that laid the foundation for the official questioning by the CDF. The CDF claims suspicious doctrinal error in Dupuis’ views, a point to which Dupuis considered as being beyond disagreeing with certain theological position of an author. The latter point could, in fact promote theological reflection in common search for truth, while an accusation of “grave error against the Christian faith” closes “the door to dialogue and theological discussion.”²⁶¹ The CDF issue has been discussed in earlier section.

Another constructive criticism is found in the work of Jon Paul Sydnor who claimed that Dupuis’ theology has several problems including flawed hermeneutic of religion. He cites, for instance, that Dupuis in *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*

asserts that salvation is effected for all: “The Christ-event has a universal impact: in it God has brought about universal salvation” (303). At the same time, he believes that “agape is indeed the sign of the operative presence of the mystery of salvation in every man and woman *who is saved*” (325, italics added). And it is by the practice of agape that our righteousness shall be determined: “The Gospel further requires that love be universal . . . love of God and of fellow humans go hand in hand; it is by that latter love that people *shall be judged*” (323, italics added). The presentation is perhaps contradictory. Salvation is universal; those who are saved practice agape and by that practice shall be judged. But we notice that not all practice agape; therefore, all are not saved. So, salvation cannot be universal.²⁶²

260 Jacques Dupuis, “‘The Truth Will Make You Free’: The Theology of Religious Pluralism Revisited,” *Louvain Studies* 24, no. 3 (1999): 211

261 Ibid., 212-213

262 Jon Paul Sydnor, “Beyond the Text: Revisiting Jacques Dupuis’ Theology of Religions,” *International Review of Mission* 96, no. 380/381 (2007): 7

The concern of Sydnor and the likes is understandable, especially being a Christian and judging from the weight of a statement such as would not exhaust the salvific offering of God in Jesus to be absolute, but leaves a function for the Holy Spirit which would potentially guarantee the salvific possibility of other religions through the activities of the Spirit. Dupuis had claimed that,

a well poised claim to oneness and universality of Jesus Christ leaves room for an open theology of religions and of religious pluralism. In particular, a Trinitarian Christological perspective allows for the recognition of the ongoing presence and activity of the Word of God and of the Spirit of God. Such a perspective ... makes it possible to affirm the plurality of ways or paths to human liberation/salvation, in accordance with God's design for the humankind in Jesus Christ; it also opens the way for recognizing other saving figures in human history.²⁶³

The Thomistic influence in Dupuis' theology must be brought on board to get the right context in which he uses words as "absolute" as in the citation above. In this instance, Dupuis statement is in line with Thomas Aquinas who argues that only God, who is totally necessary, utterly unconditional, uncaused, and unlimited, is truly absolute.²⁶⁴ Having said that, it is remarkable that Sydnor however admits that the flaws he identified in Dupuis' theology are rectifiable,²⁶⁵ thereby acknowledging that his observations do not necessarily affect the fundamental principles that underpin Dupuis's theology. Equally, O'Collins argues that Dupuis has always insisted that he distinguishes but does not separate various things such as the divine and human operations of the incarnate Son of God, or distinct paths of salvation within the one divine plan to save all

263 Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 281-282.

264 See Thomas Aquinas in O'Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions*, 185

265 Sydnor, "Beyond the Text: Revisiting Jacques Dupuis' Theology of Religions," 1.

human beings.²⁶⁶ Hence, according to O'Collins, "no critic has found a passage in Dupuis' two books where he moves beyond a distinction and introduces a false separation between the incarnate Word's action within the Church and in the world at large." He notes that what Dupuis has consistently argued is that "within the one person of Jesus Christ we must distinguish the operations of his [uncreated] divine nature and his [created] human nature."²⁶⁷

By O'Collins' assessments, Dupuis' thoughts are in line with Thomas Aquinas, who championed the oneness of Christ's person but also had to recognize that Christ's divine nature infinitely transcends his human nature. Dupuis' theology recognizes the unique role of Christ in the salvation of humanity, and lends credibility of universal value of the same to other religions. He derived two conclusions from this position: first, that a theology of religions cannot be built on an ecclesiological emphasis, and secondly, that the church, as a derived mystery and utterly relative to the mystery of Christ, cannot be the yardstick by which the salvation of others is measured.²⁶⁸

Conclusively, on the question of whether religious pluralism is to be welcomed as a reality *de facto* in our present world, and theologically, as existing *de jure* in God's plan, Dupuis' response is a definitive yes. O'Collins in a general review of Dupuis' work insists that his theology of the religions converges with the official teaching and actions of John Paul II, and provides it with a massive theological underpinning.²⁶⁹

266 O'Collins, "Jacques Dupuis's Contributions To Interreligious Dialogue," 391.

267 Ibid.

268 Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, 77.

269 O'Collins, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions*, 397

2.9.3 Dupuis' Indian context and the Nigeria Religious *sitz im leben*

Dupuis did not in any way have Nigeria in mind in any of his writings. That notwithstanding, the scope of his works and the theme of his theology has acquired a non-ignorable scale at the global stage. His experiences in socio-religious condition of India which is similar to the Nigeria socio-religious context, make his “inclusive pluralism” applicable to the Nigeria situation.

The immediate relevance of his theological contribution to the Nigeria religious context lies in the comparative socio-religious situation of his geographical and theological location. Dupuis lived most part of his active life in India (1948-1984), where the environmental and religious composites prompted, and concretize his theology. The India of Dupuis' time exemplifies a multi-religious environment where interreligious relation was prominent. The reality of religious and cultural diversity could not have made itself more glaring to Dupuis as he had experienced it throughout his sojourn in India. By the 2001 census on the official website of the country, “out of the total population of 1,028 million in the Country, Hindus constituted the majority with 80.5%, Muslims came second at 13.4%, followed by Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and others.”²⁷⁰ The “others” include Jews (Judaism), and the Parsi (Zoroastrianism). The daily encounter of citizens of the same country with a huge variety of religious presence, made Dupuis' to acknowledge the benefit he derived therein, “I went through a conversion by living for so many years in India. If I had not lived in India for 36 years, I would not preach the theology that I am preaching today. I consider my exposure to

270 National Portal of India, “Religions,” *India at a Glance*, 2016.

Hindu reality as the greatest grace I have received from God in my vocation as theologian.”²⁷¹

The indexical justification for Dupuis’ interreligious experience for Nigeria is validated by the akin life situation in the India within which he wrote and lived his theology. On the one hand, both countries face multiple religious presence which necessitates interreligious dialogue; on the other hand, India has progressively managed interreligious relation to a point of being a model to other religiously pluralistic countries as Nigeria. As it is, most religious tension and area of interreligious conflicts in Nigeria are often heightened between Christians and Muslims.

Besides religious acrimony in the country, the continued inter-ethnic clashes, regional rebellion, and struggle for resource control that often result in calls for constitutional reform make Nigeria’s situation attractive to Dupuis’ inclusive pluralism. The amalgamated Nigeria remains one entity with many parts where one part ought not be considered greater, important, or more valuable than the other. The navigation of such difficult socio-religious human terrain makes Dupuis’ inclusive pluralism even more attractive to addressing the situation in Nigeria.

2.9.4 Dupuis’ Inclusive Religious Pluralism and the Nigeria’s COE’s Religious Curriculum

Admissions into general subjects in Nigeria tertiary schools are largely irrespective of religious affiliations. The arrangement to have a wide spread of students across the nation might be deliberate, for the fact that part of the goals of tertiary

271 Quoted in Ambrose Mong, *Accommodation and Acceptance: An Exploration in Interfaith Relations* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: James Clarke & Co, 2015), 175

education in the country is to “forge and cement national unity.”²⁷² By that fact, tertiary schools in Nigeria have become microcosms of societal religious diversity, and consequent implications thereof. Similarly, religious education curricula in Nigeria are centrally controlled. By this is meant that there is a nationwide minimum standard of expectations in religious education. The contents of each religious education curriculum itemize areas and activities that are expected to have been completed by each student before graduation. From a background of mixed religious presence, and a centralized curriculum, colleges and institutions, public and privately owned institutions are expected to recognize and implement the contents of such curriculum if they are to be recognized and accredited by education regulatory agents. In spite of having various religious adherents on the same campus attending to the same curriculum, the CRS students are confined to contents and delivery of a religious studies minimum standard that is muddled by confessional inflections. The immediate implication of such tangled curriculum is evident through studies in restrictive religious attitude and an unavoidable stressful religious encounter with the religious other on daily basis on campus.

The well-intentioned arrangement of the *National Policy on Education* (NPE), towards enhancing unity among all citizens is underscored by the nation’s Federal Constitution. The Constitution advocates a pluralist attitude towards all religions in the country,²⁷³ but smacks the laudable injunction with advocacy of apparently exclusivist religious education curricula. This is similar to the way in which the NPE, which

²⁷² Part of the 7 goal-items of the *National Policy on Education* on Tertiary Education is to “forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction” (See Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), Sect.5 Sub sec 81, # f and g. .

²⁷³ See Federal Republic of Nigeria, “Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,” Section 38: Par. 1-4.

envisioned an enhanced patriotism, national unity, moral norms, and values for national unity and integration through subjects as Religious Studies,²⁷⁴ is stalled by the use and promotion of confessional-centric religious education curricula. It would be valid to ask, if the paradox of religious plurality (promoted by the nation's Constitution and education policies) and the exclusive religious studies curricula could be resolved. The question becomes necessary on the basis that commitment to one's religion is as important as the need to prioritize openness and respect for others' religion in the country. In the Nigeria education context, creating a balance between these two components of pluralism is of utmost importance.

The current CRS curriculum does not have the capacity to forge the needed balance of commitment to one's religion in full recognition and respect for the religions of the other. Holding unto injunctions as the Gospels' mandate in Matthew 24:14 and Mark 16:15, that Christians should preach the Gospels to every part of the world, and the attempt to utilize CRS in Nigeria's COES to advance this injunction through academic syllabi, must be done within the reality of globalization and cultural renaissance in modern times. The reality of religious and cultural plurality cannot be missed in the Nigerian society where its highly pluralistic composition and the government intention to use academic means to achieve a more inclusive pluralistic society have remained a recurrent issue.

Dupuis' religious pluralism provides a way through the imbalance in the NPE/Constitutional windows of religious plurality, and required religious commitment of stakeholders of CRS. Previous discussions on the history and development of

²⁷⁴ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), Sec. 19, Par. a - f.

interreligious dialogue as analyzed in this work demonstrates a shift from a Christian monolithic approach to the rest of religions and other religious adherents to a more inclusive, and eventually a pluralistic view of theology of religions. The arguments proffered by Dupuis indicate that the Bible contains clear indications of God's establishment of saving covenants with "other" people that may by that fact be referred to as "people of God." This is in line with his other argument that the salvific act of the Word of God goes "beyond" the humanity of Christ to include the unfettered work of the Spirit among the religions.²⁷⁵ His theological assumption underscores interreligious dialogue as willed by God *in principle*; it recognizes the multifaceted outreach of one single plan of God for humanity. The various presence of religions in Nigeria, especially Christianity and Islam are in themselves valid ways to religious expression before God. Rejection or exclusion of one another in recognizing authentic religious path to God is not within the purview of either adherent to make; rather, commitment to one's religious tradition should be the focus.

In Dupuis' theological assumptions, a Christian theology of religions, which must necessarily be "confessional," must go beyond that horizon to be "universal." According to Dupuis,

while being necessarily 'confessional,' a Christian theology of religions need not, or for that matter, cannot, be insular or parochial. For the opposite is true: a Christian theology of religions must adopt a global perspective which embraces in its vision the entirety of the religious experience of humankind. Its horizon must be truly universal. Moreover, even while the various religious traditions differ in their foundational experience of faith, they can nevertheless hold some truth in common. It

²⁷⁵ Details of these claims are found in Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*. See Chapter 4 for "other" as "people of God," chapter 6 on the activities of Spirit beyond the humanity of Christ, and the participatory but non-identical status of the church with the kingdom of God in chapter 9.

belongs to interreligious dialogue in its various forms to discover whatever Christians and others can say and do in common, despite their irreducible differences, and it is part of ecumenical goodwill to provide the thrust for it.²⁷⁶

Dupuis' view on religious pluralism gives profound meaning and importance to the commitment of a Christian to Christ, yet it makes respect and recognition of religious validity of the other an essential element for effective interreligious relation. This work is convinced that Dupuis' theological assumption provides a good framework to make the COE's CRS curriculum achieve the desired constitutional and education goals in the country. Attempts to prove this conviction shall be made in the next chapter through a proposed inclusive pluralistic CRS curriculum.

2.10 National unity and peacebuilding in Nigeria COEs and Dupuis' theological parameters for inclusive religious pluralism

The theological assumption of Dupuis' religious pluralism is though quite attractive and relevant to the Nigeria situation, it must be remembered that Dupuis speaks as a faithful Christian who was also committed to his Catholic doctrines. He often refers to the four forms of dialogue published by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue.²⁷⁷ While Dupuis has a good disposition towards these modalities for engaging in interreligious relations his stand on the various models of interreligious approaches sets limitations for the application of his inclusive religious pluralism. Since the intention of this project is to apply his theological insight to the attainment of national unity and

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 7

²⁷⁷ Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, "Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection And Orientations On Interreligious Dialogue And The Proclamation Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ." #42.

peacebuilding in Nigeria, the extent to which such tools may be applied must be determined, and that is the aim of this section.

As noted in the first chapter of this work, approaches to religious dialogue have often been classified into exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism; the same models are recognized by Dupuis as valuable in describing the undeniable presence of religious diversity in conversations about religions. On **religious exclusivism**, Dupuis recognizes the essence of such model in defending one's religious convictions, which by that fact necessitates an ecclesiocentric emphasis in religious relation; nevertheless, he reckons that such a theological parameter for inter religious dialogue cannot withstand a Christian theology of religions. This is simply for the fact that "theology of religions cannot be built on an ecclesiological emphasis that would falsify perspectives."²⁷⁸ Since varied religions exist and so are the perspectives of the adherents on God, it is therefore pertinent to note Dupuis' observation that the church, as a derived mystery relative to Christ cannot be the yardstick by which the salvation of these varied perspectives would be measured.²⁷⁹

Notably, a confessional centric curriculum is sympathetic to religious exclusivism. It is characterized by dominance of a specific religious tradition with pedagogic aims at internalizing confessional truths of the tradition. While this approach to religious education and modeling has advantages in providing radical belongingness to a religious tradition, and in facilitating guidance against dangerous religious exposures, the socio-religious contexts of COEs in Nigeria are not monoreligious.

278 Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, 77.

279 Ibid.

Part of the previous exposure required for admission into CRS program in Nigeria COE is a knowledge of the Bible. A prospective student is expected to possess a high school pass credit as an entry requirement for the program. It is also assumed that the respective catechetical environment and monoreligious confinements of the homes and primary education have instilled a knowledge of the Christian tradition in the pupil. Attainment of this cognitive aspect of the Christian traditions provides a template for affective demonstration of transmitted values of the Christian tradition with specific denominational biases. Continued grooming of the adult in a COE on an exclusive religious model via a planned confessional curriculum would model the individual on exclusive religious disposition towards others. The result of such training is attainment of exclusive religious approach to interreligious relation. By seeing Christianity as the only religion that can lay claim to truth, and Jesus as the only way to redemption, a confessional centered curriculum runs a clog in the wheel of negotiating national unity and peacebuilding in the country. According to Sterkens, this model does not adequately allow for the growing plurality of religions in educational contexts.²⁸⁰ Besides, dialogue in openness and recognition of the other on equal religious footing remains the most viable path to peace.

Dupuis' view on **religious inclusivism**, the second model of interreligious relation, is apparently rooted in his Christian religious context. The position concedes some possibility of salvation to other religious traditions. Dupuis considers this attitude to be a welcome departure from the rigid *exclusivism* that characterizes previous positions

280 Carl Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education* (Boston: Brill Leiden, 2001), 52.

of Catholics, and majorly, the Protestants' theology of religions. The departure from stiff exclusivism witnesses a positive disposition of Christians towards religions that harness the innate desires of humankind to unite with the Divine. To these religions are offered an inclusive recognition of God's acceptance through Jesus Christ and Christianity. By this standard, religions that are hinged on the innate religious aspiration of humanity for the divine are tagged *natural* religions, while Christianity remains the only "supernatural religion." According to Dupuis, such an inclusivist understanding of religions is known as the "fulfilment theory." It is a theory which states that salvation reaches members of other religions through Jesus Christ as a divine response to human religious aspirations expressed by every person through his or her own religious tradition. By themselves, such religious tradition does not however play any role in that mystery of salvation."²⁸¹ Another side to inclusivism which Dupuis refers to as "theory of the presence of Christ in the religions" or "inclusive presence of Christ"²⁸² is the positive role the religions of humankind have played before the Christ event as *preparatio evangelica*. By this theory, the various religions of humankind represent in themselves initial specific interventions by God in the history of salvation. However, these interventions are ordered to the decisive saving event in Jesus Christ.²⁸³ As such the religions may not be considered as mere "natural religions" as in "fulfilment theory" because,

they still retain a positive value in the order of salvation by virtue of the active presence in them, and in some way through them, of the saving mystery of Jesus Christ.... Thus, in every religion a divine intervention in the history of the nations can be found historically, and an existential

281 Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, 47

282 Ibid.

283 Ibid.

presence of the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ is recognizable. All religions are accordingly supernatural for more than one reason.²⁸⁴

Based on the same argument, Paul Knitter reasoned that since God's Spirit works through other religions and their adherents, its role and such perception should be the focus and center of Christian theology of religions.²⁸⁵ Dupuis does not differ from such conclusion as inferred by Knitter as it is only logical that the evidence of God's self-communication in other religious traditions²⁸⁶ should be a basis for interreligious dialogue and a reason for its inclusion in the church's mission.

An inclusive paradigm for interreligious dialogue has its weak point which shall be discussed shortly, but its beauty lies in the recognition of its religious uniqueness, as clear religious identity remains of paramount importance to interreligious dialogue. As with *exclusivism*, it recognizes distinctiveness of a religion and provides required convictions for the rootedness of the adherent in the professed faith. Nevertheless, and unlike *exclusivism*, classical "inclusivism" for instance affirms the possibility of salvation of the people in spite of their non-Christian religions. Typically, the view does not necessarily consider other religions to have salvific value. They may be "seed of faith" or pointers but do not in themselves possess potentials for salvation. This is not to deny the value of these religions in calming the hearts of men through a program of life which

284 Ibid.

285 Paul F. Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 100

286 Dupuis notes with references to specific Vatican documents that there emerges a teaching that "the Holy Spirit is present and active in the world, in the members of other religions, and in their religious traditions themselves." Cf. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, 224

covers doctrine, moral precepts and sacred rites.²⁸⁷ These values are recognized in Christian religious inclusivism as having a place in the overall salvific plan of God for humanity despite the higher rating of Christianity over and above those religious traditions. Christian inclusivists believe that the traditions find “fulfillment” in or enjoys “inclusive presence” of Christ.

Nigeria COEs are microcosm of the pluriform status of the larger Nigeria society. As a heterogeneous and multireligious society, individuals in COEs are faced with multiple presence of other religious tradition. The lowest bargain in navigating the religious terrain in such environment would be to see the religious other from the lenses of one’s religious affiliation. Since, outright exclusivist approach would shut the individual out of functionality in interreligious engagement in a school environment, an inclusivist perception, albeit its identity imposition may suffice for rudimentary acceptance of other religious traditions. The students at this level of study have been well exposed to the rudiments and doctrines of Christianity. They cannot however continue to think and live as if only their religion exists and have the right to be. The presence of other religions and their adherents become more present and visible in their daily activities and encounter in the school environment. A positive assessment of the religions notwithstanding one’s own as unique and superior to the other (that is apparently what religious inclusivism does) is a step beyond a total condemnation of others. Within the school environment therefore, the cognitive requirement for a religiously inclusive interreligious relation is to have a knowledge of the contents and manifestations of other

287 See “Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions,” Vatican II council, 1965, n.1

religions. The current CRS curriculum of Nigeria COEs does just that. CRS students are offered optional introductory courses in African Traditional Religion and Islam (CRS 117 and 126 respectively), and are exposed, though minimally, to the study of basic contents of Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Bahaism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam, in CRS 111. These exposures to the contents and manifestations of other religious traditions are done within the purview of knowing and appreciating the moral values of Christian doctrine for students' spiritual growth and development in the Christian tradition.²⁸⁸ Since the curriculum is confessional based and executed exclusively by Christians who are expected to be well grounded in their faith, the teaching and learning process of CRS in COEs is at best meant to be inclusive in nature. While learning about other religions in this model neither require personal involvement, cooperation with other religions, nor constructive dialogue with the religions, it has the capacity to make students more tolerant of other religions.

An inclusive religious curriculum of CRS in Nigeria COEs may go a long way in teaching tolerance of other religious adherents in schools and beyond, nevertheless, its behavioral objectives for peace and unity in the country are not far reaching enough. A more constructive religious engagement and committed dialogue with other religions, especially Islam and African Traditional Religion must be brought on board the CRS curriculum. Although Dupuis identifies with this model of religious dialogue, that is inclusivism, he believes that a further engagement in religious pluralism is also possible, and in fact necessary. How would a Christian student who is exclusively compliant to

288 Cf. The objectives of CRS in the official document of the NCCE: Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education* (Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012), <http://www.nceonline.edu.ng/NCCE-Digitization/base.html>, 1.

religious inclusivity engage in interreligious dialogue with the assumption that Jesus is the only mediation by which other religions are validated? Or generally as O'Collins asks, "how can we profess and proclaim faith in Jesus Christ as the one redeemer of all humankind, and at the same time recognize the Spirit at work in the world's religions and cultures—as has been done by Pope John Paul II?"²⁸⁹ While Dupuis recognizes the important contribution of the inclusive model, like the other two models to the theological debate on religions, he noted that a workable model must be sought for a synthetic theology of religion that is both Christian and open.²⁹⁰ He carried out that task in his inclusive pluralism.

In *Christianity and the Religions*, Dupuis revisited the theme of his earlier work, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, on the question of a "Universal Savior and Unique mediator." He notes a paradigm shift from *ecclesiocentrism* to *Christocentrism*, a shift that he reckoned as an important turnover with weighty consequences in which a radical "decentering" of the church is implied.²⁹¹ The decentering of the church focuses on "recentering" on the person of Jesus Christ, a move which places mediation between God and humanity squarely on Jesus as opposed to the implication of the axiom, "outside the church no salvation." However, focus on Christocentrism which is inclusivist in nature has also shifted to accommodate a pluralistic perception of the order of salvation. The centrality of Jesus in the order of salvation as perceived by the Christian faith has been opposed for a theocentric model in which God and God alone is at the center. Dupuis explains the "theocentric pluralism" as

289 O'Collins, "Jacques Dupuis's Contributions To Interreligious Dialogue," 389.

290 Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, 75

291 Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 185

“the substitution of many ‘ways’ of saving figures leading to God-the-Center, in the place of one, universal, constitutive mediation of Jesus.”²⁹² He does not subscribe to this form of pluralism. The implication of the paradigmatic shift as Dupuis in the same text acknowledges, is that the various religions, Christianity included, represent as many ways leading to God, all of which, differences notwithstanding, have the same validity and equal value. The view plays out the centrality of Jesus on the altar of theocentrism. Dupuis however insists that the Christological question must remain at the center of the theology of religion if Christian theology must remain Christian.²⁹³ Citing instances of conflicting details resulting in “relativism” and “absolutism” in the theocentric and Christocentric models,²⁹⁴ Dupuis advocates a consensus that would project plurality without opposing commitment to one’s faith. This is the crux of his “inclusive pluralism.” The emphasis on clear religious identity to which inclusivism gives expression, and the recognition of characteristic human religious plurality to which individual in every pluriform society must acknowledge, does not have to generate tension in peaceful co-existence; rather, one’s religious identity may actually improve through dialogical encounter with other religious traditions and not by confrontation.

As noted in chapter one of this work, the confessional status of the current CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs aims at protecting the Christian religious tradition of the students, rather than providing a level ground for constructive encounter with other religious traditions. By Dupuis’ theological parameter for interreligious dialogue, both exclusivist and inclusivist tendencies have their values, but their restrictions in

292 Ibid, 186

293 Ibid, 190-193

294 Ibid, 185-201

interreligious engagements overshadows such limited values in a pluralistic society. For national unity and peacebuilding in Nigeria via a CRS curriculum of COEs, Dupuis' integration of inclusivism and pluralism sets a viable theological standard by which loyalty to one's faith and acceptable recognition of others may be accentuated in dialogue. The next chapter shall focus on translating the model into practicable educational units where the mode and details of knowledge acquisition of other religions (cognitive aim), modality for interreligious involvement (affective aim), and deliberate efforts at promoting mutual respect (attitudinal, psychomotor aim) shall be tendered.

2.11 Conclusion

Planned curriculum that is aimed at unity of citizens and peace must necessarily prioritize respect for one's religion and the religions of others. The CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs is partly meant to achieve unity among citizens and to attain peaceful coexistence among various religious adherents in the country. This chapter made a historical and theological excursus into typical models of interreligious relations that have characterized Christian theology of religions across time. It concludes that the various models of interreligious engagement are valid in their own rights, but agrees with Dupuis that a synergy of models that would simultaneously sustain one's religious commitments and respect for plurality of religious presence is the best approach to interreligious relation. Student-teacher relation in religious education context brings with it an interface of religious persuasions, which serves as the teacher and the student's religious locations. No one, it is said, talks from a vacuum, similarly it cannot be taken for granted that the teacher totally and exclusively brackets his or her religious opinions and convictions in teaching religious education courses in public institutions as Nigeria's

COEs. The same goes for the students who may not give up their religious convictions on the altar of doing religious studies in an academic environment. The plurality of religious presence in a public teacher-training environment raises the question of contents and objectives of the curriculum especially when the unity and peacebuilding of the country is at stake; thus, maintaining a balance in personal faith commitment, and the demand of religious plurality in the country is paramount. Given the baggage of tense historical memories of religious tension, differentiated efforts by different religious agencies towards peacebuilding in Nigeria, and the fact that the Christian religion is not fundamentally opposed to interreligious dialogue, the chapter argues that CRS students in COEs should brace up themselves for an inclusive pluralistic approach to religious education in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE
AN INTERRELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR PEACE BUILDING IN
NIGERIA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the crux of this dissertation. It is built on the background information provided in chapters one and two. From the weaknesses observed in the current CRS curriculum of Nigeria COEs, this chapter embarks on crafting an inclusive pluralistic religious education curriculum by which it is hoped that improved interreligious relation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, through a better interactive and engaging curriculum, would be facilitated.

The new curriculum is designed on the basis of Dupuis' model of inclusive pluralism for interreligious dialogue. Subsequently, the philosophy and objectives as well as the structure and features of the proposed curriculum are presented alongside their implications for the teaching-learning processes. The chapter concludes with a sample of lesson plan and suggestions on instructional resources and teaching methodology for the implementation of the proposed curriculum.

3.2 Recent Curricula Changes and Interreligious Needs in Nigeria

Recently in Nigeria, the NCCE reviewed the structure and curriculum of the NCE programs in Nigeria's Colleges of Education. The review was consequent on the 2012 revised 9-year Basic Education Curriculum and the need to upgrade the NCE curriculum in light of the revised curriculum. The NCCE had hope that the revision of the NCE curriculum would make the Colleges more relevant to the new realities that NERD

intends to meet with the revised primary education curriculum.¹ The new BEC span over a 9-year plan which covers the curriculum of Primary 1-3, 4-6, and Junior Secondary School from JSS 1-3.² These are the classes for which the NCE program is intended to serve with teachers that are specifically trained for their needs. While it must be acknowledged that the new curriculum is laudable for its futuristic orientation at helping to nurture well-grounded youths, who will be able to compete with the challenges of the 21st century entrepreneurship, by default the plan does not take on board the major role that religion plays in the overall well-being of nations and in individuals inter-human relationships.

The study of religion in the revised BEC, as against the previous primary school curriculum, is collapsed into “Religion and National Values” alongside civic education, social studies, and security education.³ This decision and subsequent implementation of the curriculum, especially with regards to CRS triggered the suspicion of the Christians in the country. The Christians complained that the new BEC creates an indirect window of

¹According to NERDC the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) was developed in “response to Nigeria’s need for relevant, dynamic and globally competitive education that would ensure socio-economic and national development. Specifically, BEC was developed to ensure that learners at the basic Education level receive well rounded education capable to compete favourably anywhere in the world in terms of knowledge, skills, techniques and values and aptitude.” cf. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, “New Curriculum Subjects: Basic Education (JSS 1-3),” *The New Curriculum*, 2012, <http://www.nerdc.org.ng/eCurriculum/CurriculumStructure.aspx>. Nevertheless, negotiating the socio-economic terrain of global interconnectedness necessarily makes encounter with people of other religions imperative. Hence, a review of the teacher training curriculum must take on board the demand of the new challenges in global relation which the reviewed curriculum does not consider to be a major issue.

²See Appendix H, I, and J.

³Details of the new curriculum and mode of implementation could be found at Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, “About the Revised the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC),” NERDC, 2013, https://web.facebook.com/NERDC/posts/734776969881272?_rdc=1&_rdr. See also Appendix H, I, and J.

advantage for the Muslims to make Christian pupils take Arabic language in place of the alternative French language. In other words, that the review is a subtle means to convert Christians to Islam. Based on the misconception, it is understandable why Christian religious education stakeholders, especially the Christian Association of Nigeria, understood the new basic education curriculum to imply the removal of Christian religious studies from the curriculum of primary education in the country. To be sure, the federal education agencies, especially the Federal Ministry of Education, and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council have debunked that inference.⁴ Nevertheless, that denial does not in itself eliminate the problem of unclear religious model for CRS at virtually all stages of Nigeria education system.

A quick look at the curricula models operative in Nigerian education system shall be considered in the next section as basis for proposing an interreligious curriculum model for religious education in Nigeria College of Education.

3.3 Curricula Models in Nigerian Education System

3.3.1 Curriculum

The idea of curriculum is often taken for granted as self-explanatory. For the purpose of this work, the definition of curriculum shall be attempted from the background works of John Kerr and as further developed by Vic Kelly in her seminal work on

⁴The following Newspapers have reported the key issues involved in the debate over the new curriculum and how the issues have been addressed. Cf: Ifreke Inyang, "NERDC Speaks on 'removal' of CRK from School's Curriculum," *Daily Post*, June 21, 2017, <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/21/nerdc-speaks-removal-crk-schools-curriculum/>. Ebuka Nwankwo, "Nigeria's School Curriculum and the Outcry from Christian Leaders," *The Cable*, June 16, 2017, <https://www.thecable.ng/nigerias-school-curriculum-outcry-christian-leaders>; Azezat Adedigba, "Nigerian Govt. Reacts to Controversy over Alleged de-Listing of Christian, Islamic Subjects," *Premium Times*, June 20, 2017, <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/234607-nigerian-govt-reacts-controversy-alleged-de-listing-christian-islamic-subjects.html>.

curriculum. Kerr had defined curriculum as “All the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school.”⁵ Key points in the definition strike at the notion that curriculum is characteristically planned and guided by schools. Building on that, Smith notes that school curriculum theory and practice entails four major aspects: a body of knowledge to be transmitted, attempt to achieve certain ends in students, curriculum as process and, curriculum as praxis.⁶ These aspects highlight the teaching, learning, execution and impact of a curriculum. From these perspectives, a curriculum would mean structured and planned process for knowledge acquisition. However, “curriculum” means much than that. Generally, in terms of goals, objectives, and content, a curriculum may be categorized as planned, received, hidden, total, formal or informal. As an official course of study, a curriculum is normally categorized as planned. Such a curriculum has structured learning activities that are targeted at specified audience. This is different from a hidden curriculum which comprises of unofficial activities and learnt indulgences acquired outside the planned curriculum. Watson calls the latter form of curriculum an “implicit curriculum.”⁷ A significant aspect of a hidden curriculum is its ability to trigger love or hate especially in a mixed religious environment where interreligious dialogue is not necessarily part of the planned curriculum of the school. As an aspect of affective

⁵ Kerr was quoted as such in the earlier version of A.V. Kelly, *The Curriculum: Theory and Practice* (London, 1983, 1999).

⁶ M. K Smith, “Curriculum Theory and Practice,” the encyclopaedia of informal education, 2000, www.infed.org/biblio/b-curric.htm

⁷ B Watson, *The Effective Teaching of Religious Education* (London: Longman, 1993). 19.

educational category, traits as love and hate, tolerance and bullying, find fertile ground to be nurtured albeit their unplanned or informal source.⁸

The curriculum implementation framework crafted by the NCCE recognizes that it is not only content that is learnt in curriculum implementation, but also skills and attitudes. However, Flynn suggests that general education and religious education which are formally taught by teachers in a formal curriculum can contribute positively to a more holistic development of students.⁹ His idea of a curriculum resonates with the expectation of this work in effecting attitudinal change in CRS students in COEs for peaceful co-existence. It also anticipates Parkay and Hass' comprehensive idea of a curriculum. The duo define curriculum as, "all of the experiences that individual learners have in a program of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives, which is planned in terms of a framework of theory and research or past and present professional practice."¹⁰ The expected outcomes of the proposed curriculum in this dissertation is to effect positive change in the overall religious experiences of would-be teachers trained in Nigeria's COEs.

3.3.2 *Models of Nigeria Education System*

Education systems are generally guided by curriculum models and their various components. By curriculum components is meant the aims and objectives, content, teaching, learning and assessments in curriculum process. In Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, education and its need has continued to change thereby requiring continuous

⁸ibid.

⁹ M. Flynn, *The Effectiveness of Catholic Schools* (Sydney: St. Paul Publications, 1985)..

¹⁰ F.W Parkay and G Hass, *Curriculum Planning — A Contemporary Approach*, 3rd ed. (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 2000). 3.

review of the nature and structure of education system to meet new realities and challenges as they arise. This understanding of education system resonates with Kelly's view on educational system. He explains the system as a social institution which should be expected to change along with such institutions.¹¹In other words, as a social institution, the education system continues to develop and responds appropriately to various changes in the society and the ever-increasing understanding of the educational process. Thus, the education process requires continuous review of the educational curriculum to reflect social changes and other developments in the society. Such reviews must be carefully planned to take on board the social, moral, political as well as technological and economic development and their consequences. In sync with this theory, the Nigeria education stakeholders have continued to upgrade the educational system through various models to reflect the needs and changes in the society.

In recent review of the education system in the country, the government focused on economic empowerment. It has developed a model of education for tertiary institutions where entrepreneurial interest has an advantage. Thus, the government has developed a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for the nation's Tertiary institutions¹² “with the objective of making massive investment beyond the means available to the government in order to close it yawning infrastructure gap towards achieving the vision

¹¹A.V. Kelly, *The Curriculum: Theory and Practice* (London: Paul Chapman, 1999). 17.

¹²*This Day Newspaper* reviewed Government's effort at the proposed model, reporting it as a model obtainable among comity of nations towards development. The paper reckons that “PPPs are increasingly envisaged as an attractive proposition for involving the private sector in infrastructure development... generically known as a form of cooperation between government and the private sector which sometimes also involves voluntary organizations (NGOs, trade unions) or knowledge institutes – that agree to work together to reach a common goals or carry out a specific task, while jointly assuming the risks and responsibilities and sharing resources and competences.”

of being one of the top 20 global economies by 2020.”¹³ In the Senior Secondary Schools, the model is meant to “develop a framework for implementing the public/private partnership model for management of unity schools.”¹⁴ The Federal Ministry of Education has also developed communications strategy to manage the model; it is tagged *National Education Plan*. The strategy which includes communication in indigenous languages, reviving existing and establishing more co-curricula activities that support reading in schools, e.g. Readers’ club, LIFE club, Literary and Debating Society, and promotion of “Right Role Models” and de-emphasize the elevation of “Wrong Role Models” among others, is essentially structured on strengthening entrepreneurial capacities.

While the effort of the government in adopting a PPP model in its education plan is commendable, the weakness of the plan in reducing development in the 21st century to direct labor market needs and demands cannot be missed as being inadequate. Hence, alongside the PPP model, there is a need to have a clear-cut model for religious education towards solving the hydra headed religious issues in the country if true platform for development is to be generated. In chapter two of this dissertation, instances of multiple religious unrest in the country were highlighted, and arguments for the need for interreligious dialogue in the country were marshaled. It is argued that an inclusive religious engagement among citizens will go a long way in achieving the educational goal of unity and peace (required for development) in the country.

¹³A. F Ndubuisi, *Curriculum: Objectives for Effective Teaching* (Onitsha: Africana Educational Publishers, 1981).

¹⁴Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Curriculum Implementation Framework for Nigeria Certificate in Education* (Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education Abuja, 2012).12.

Furthermore, the practice, teaching and learning of religion in Nigeria's educational institutions require balanced moral fiber from the teacher and the students. In proposing a model therefore, the implication of varied theories on relationship between religion and religious education need be examined. This shall be done in the next section to be subsequently followed by a recommended model and a curriculum for action plan.

3.4 Theories on Relationship between Religion and Religious Education

The exploration of various theologies of religions in chapter two of this work demonstrates a resolute movement from exclusivism, or even inclusivism, to a more respectful pluralistic theology of religions worldwide. However, since the centralized Nigeria religious education curriculum promotes confessional-centric approach to religious education, the question of expected type of interreligious attitudes from the curriculum arises. The question of outcomes further raises questions regarding curricula models. The issue of model relation of religions is important as education in tertiary schools is much more than schooling, since education campuses provide viable grounds to test what is imbibed through planned and unplanned curriculum. The profound question therefore centers around possible attitudinal correlation of teachers who are well rooted in their religious beliefs, and expected outcomes on students of diverse faiths. In other words, how would a CRS teacher satisfy the demands of a religiously pluralistic society? Carl Sterkens puts the question in a very concise form when he asks, "how does one speak from a position with one's own religious tradition while fully recognizing the reality of religious plurality?"¹⁵ There are three approaches to this question, which are

¹⁵Carl Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education* (Boston: Brill Leiden, 2001). 47.

summarily expressed in models that are either mono-religious, multi-religious, or interreligious in orientation.¹⁶

3.4.1 Mono-religious (exclusivism) Model of Religious Education

The mono religious model in the relationship between religion and religious education portends an exclusive religious claim to absolute truth. The model recognizes a particular or specific religion as superior to others. The possibility of a teacher who subscribes to this model to suspend his or her claim to religious dominance or superiority in the teaching-learning process is quite improbable. The educational aim of this model of religious education is the transmission of controlled religious claims towards the promotion of particular religious belief that is recognized by the teacher and the curriculum to be superior to other religions. Mostly, details of the curriculum in this model are expected to be accepted without questioning. By implication, a constructive dialogical engagement with other religious traditions with the aim of positive accommodation of the religions on equal footing is mostly absent. The cognitive aim of this model of religious education is the understanding of the content and teachings of the religion being studied. The CRS curriculum in Nigeria's COEs is by nature and contents exclusively Christian in the various domains of learning. Cognitively, it aims at exposing the pupils to the traditions and teachings of Christianity. Similarly, while the affective domain of learning is aimed at nurturing the norms and values of the Christian religion, activities in the psychomotor domain are geared towards socializing the pupils in the act of what it means to be a Christian. As stated in chapter 1 of this work, the CRS

¹⁶ These models are identified in Sterkens' *Interreligious Learning*, 47-73. His models shall guide discussions in this section of this dissertation, especially for its value in empirical studies on interreligious learning.

curriculum of Nigeria's COEs includes elective studies in Islam and some other religions; however, such studies are done from the Christian religious perspective. Since the COEs in Nigeria are not socially or religiously exclusive, just as the Nigerian society at large is not a mono religious society, an exclusive model of religious education in Nigeria would be an oddity in the nation's search for religious harmony.

3.4.2 *Multi-religious (plurality) Model of Religious Education*

This model of religious education offers a positive recognition of multiple religious presence in a society. The model gives room for the possibility of a detached assessment of other religious traditions. Its cognitive aim is to examine the contents and features of various religions identified in a given curriculum on an equal footing. It is therefore, neither pejorative in assessing the contents of a religion, nor projects a specific religion as qualitatively superior to others. This model of interreligious attitude ventilates religious plurality where openness to other religious practices are not only accepted but encouraged. A religious education curriculum designed on this model would encourage students to learn about different religious traditions, thereby gaining insight into wider religious worldviews. An empirical research conducted among Dutch pupils on this model of religious education shows that pupils are interested in the multireligious model and that they accepted it.¹⁷ According to Sterkens, the model has been in use in the Netherlands where religious instruction is clearly distinguished from religious education; the latter is said to be more subjective than instruction in religious education and ideological movements.¹⁸ The CRS curriculum in Nigeria COEs does not consider

¹⁷Carl Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning*, 55-56.

¹⁸ Ibid, Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Curriculum Implementation Framework for Nigeria Certificate in Education*. 56

Christianity as simply one of the many possible ways to salvation. Rather, the curriculum prioritizes Christianity over and above other religions and jealously guards its dogma against comparison with other religions. The reason for this approach is the confessional interest of the curriculum to teach the dictates and tenets of the Christian religion to the NCE students for an onward transmission to their potential pupils. To a great extent, this method of “religious education” is more of a religious instruction where consideration of other religions is only in the margin of the course of study. While the multi-religious model might expose the students to the danger of religious relativism, reduction of religious education to religious instruction could as well confine the students to the shackles of religious exclusivism.

It must however be noted that the multi-religious form of religious education model could facilitate the environment of religious harmony which the Nigerian society sought. It is however inadequate in itself as personal religious commitment and detailed exposure to the distinctive features and values of one’s own religious affiliation might not be adequately explored. The need to retain specific distinction and religious claims by various religions should not necessarily be sacrificed on the altar of religious pluralism. Therefore, there is a need for further search for a model of religious education that would retain the distinctive claim to individual religious truths while recognizing the validity and value of other religious traditions.

3.4.3 Interreligious Model (Inclusive pluralism) of Religious Education

Sterkens did not directly discuss any such model as *inclusive pluralism* in his categorization of theories about religious relationship; rather, he established details of what he calls the *inter-religious* model as the third of his categories. By his use of

interreligious dialogue, he differentiates this form of dialogue from the recognition of multiplicity of religious traditions, which he terms *multi-religious* model, thereby avoiding terminologies as *pluralism* and *inclusive pluralism*.¹⁹ The beauty in his distinction is that the very term “multi-religious” signifies in a way, a range of religious presence, while the term “interreligious” immediately signifies an interaction of multi-religious traditions. In the latter sense, there is an engagement of tradition as compared to the simple presence of many religions in the multi-religious model. According to Sterkens, the interreligious model “not only observes and describes the plurality, but also deals with it constructively.”²⁰ The model is characterized by dialogue and it aims at developing competence in dialogue about religious traditions. By aiming at developing competence in dialogue, the model has the advantage to change perspectives thereby expressing strength in the cognitive, affective and attitudinal aspects of religious education. The model thus goes beyond mere recognition of plurality and gaining insight into other religious world views, to engaging such traditions in constructive dialogue. By promoting involvement with others, the model helps in dialoguing with the other from their own religious location.

Considered from the point of view of an inclusive pluralism, one’s religious location is not sacrificed in the process of engaging other religious traditions. Thus, a religious educator still holds on to his/her religious beliefs and practices while

¹⁹ It is helpful to note with Marinus Iwuchukwu that the concept of “inclusive pluralism” is an emerging one where “inclusivity” sharpens the idea of “pluralism,” and “pluralism” is the key ideology. Cf. Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). 156

²⁰ Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education*. 63

constructively engaging other religious traditions. The impact of such engagement on the pupils is “the coexistence of different faiths, and to do so not grudgingly but willingly.”²¹ Iwuchukwu rightly considers the inclusive component of religious pluralism as the boost that is needed “for an effective dialogue between Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria.”²² The inclusive religious pluralism helps avoid confrontation in relating with the religious other, and do so “in such a manner as to appreciate and find within each faith the beauty of the other is an indispensable necessity toward eliminating some of the root causes of conflicts emanating from religious differences.”²³

A curriculum of CRS built on this model would help the CRS student acquire in-depth knowledge and understanding of the faith of other religious adherents from his/her genuine religious perspective. The religious educator, using this model would also guide the teaching and learning sessions in openness to other religions and within the students’ authentic religious traditions, while retaining his/her basic religious convictions. The challenge according to Camps in Sterkens is to paradoxically “know and understand the other’s faith maximally from the perspective of both one’s genuine belief and that of the other.”²⁴ The socio-cultural context of religious education in Nigeria makes an inclusive religious pluralism attractive to addressing the problem of unity of citizens in the country. It is an “operative paradigm in the theories and practices of sociology and other human sciences,” and has also formed “the bedrock of constitutions of modern states,” as well as

²¹See David Bosch in Iwuchukwu, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism*. 155.

²²Iwuchukwu, *ibid.*, 157

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education*. 67.

the hub on which pre-Islamic and pre-Christian cultural and religious worldviews of African societies are hinged.²⁵

In summary, a curriculum for unity in a religiously pluralistic society as Nigeria must necessarily avoid an explicit advocacy of exclusive claim to absolute religious truths. Such model neither gives room for dialogue which ought to be a fundamental principle in religious practice, nor helps negotiate and accommodate contextual realities of a pluralistic society. Furthermore, since it does not allow for the growth of plurality of religions in an educational context, the mono religious model does not satisfy the requirements for crafting a religiously pluralistic compliant curriculum. Similarly, the second model, that is, the pluralistic model *per se*, does not possess the capacity to mediate a balance between personal religious commitment and the plurality it advocates. Since clear religious identity and commitment are required for effective interreligious dialogue, the teacher's "neutral" pose in adopting a multi-religious model in executing the curriculum downplays his/her, as well as the students' individual religious location. This is not so with inter-religious model which takes on board the religious identity and perception of the students while being introduced to the religious beliefs of the religious other. The model resonates with the inclusive religious pluralism approach to religious education that this dissertation proffers for peace building in Nigeria, and for the cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor needs of CRS students in Nigeria COEs.

²⁵Iwuchukwu, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism*. 158.

3.5 Justification for an Inclusive Religious Pluralism Model Curriculum for NCE CRS Program

Student-teacher relation in religious education context brings with it an interface of religious persuasions, which serves as the teacher's and the student's religious locations. No one, it is said, talks from a vacuum, similarly it cannot be taken for granted that the teacher totally and exclusively brackets his or her religious opinions and convictions for teaching a course in religious education. The same goes for the students who may not give up their religious convictions on the altar of doing religious studies in an academic environment. Thus, the plurality of religious presence in a teaching environment and within attendant pluralistic hosting community raises the question of extent of interference of one's religious location in discharging one's responsibility in such environment. A standard study on the criteria for evaluating relations between religious traditions in an educational context has been carried out by Carl Sterkens. In his study, he asserts three criteria which include the following:²⁶

1. Involvement with one's own religious tradition
2. Recognition of religious plurality
3. Reflections on the polarity arising from involvement with one's own religious traditions, and a recognition of religious plurality.

The first criterion recognizes the fact that partners in interreligious dialogue speak from a religious location with personal religious experiences, and the individual is expected therefore to be committed to his or religious traditions. This does not necessarily mean a demonstration of superiority of one's own religious tradition and

²⁶ Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning*, 47 – 49.

experiences over others. Rather, the criterion implies a non-inclusive understanding of the other person's religious tradition, but an understanding in terms of the others' own premises of religious practices. Sterkens contends that such understanding of others' religious traditions in terms of their own premises implies "transcending the 'we'-perspective of the religious tradition to which one belongs and in whose terms one thinks and speaks. One should develop the ability to assume the perspectives of the different religious traditions involved in the dialogue."²⁷ The criterion points at the need for proper understanding of the other person's concepts and ideas as emanating from his or her traditions.

The second criterion takes on from the first. It implies a respect for both "world-views and traditions to which one does not subscribe and their adherents."²⁸ This criterion advocates decrease in religio-centric attitudes. Sterkens defines religiocentrism as "an exclusively positive attitude towards one's own religious group [religious in group], combined with negative attitudes towards other religious groups [religious out groups]. What this criterion does is to consider the level of decrease in religiocentrism in interreligious relations. That is, going by Eisinga and Scheepers' study in Sterkens,²⁹ fewer exclusivist claims on the part of one's own religious tradition, and fewer negative attitude towards other religious traditions.

The third criterion combines the first and second criterion to reflect on the polarity arising from both. It emphasizes the need to arrive at insight and indicators of

²⁷ Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education*. 48.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

interreligious education that may help, if not resolve, the polarity between involvement and engagement with a particular worldview and genuine recognition of the polarity of worldviews.³⁰ A religious dialogue that reflects a balance of polarity between involvement and engagement would care for the cognitive and affective aspects of the religious relation. Cognitively, concept and evaluative criteria of one's religious traditions and of others must be recognized for what they are, in the same manner, as commitments to one's own religion and others' commitments to their religions. These levels of cognitive and affective aspects of religious relations may generate confrontation between adherents with accompanying contradictory or conflicting feelings. Hence, Sterkens reiterates that the criterion is having to do with "the need for insight and indicators that would identify these tensions and clarify their meaning."³¹

Sterkens' criteria are reflective of Dupuis' recommendation for attaining harmony, convergence, and unity without mutual religious contradiction and confrontation. Dupuis notes, "If we hope to build a theology of religions founded not on mutual contradictions and confrontation but on harmony, convergence and unity, the current problematic must be abandoned."³² The problematic to which he refers surrounds the imperialistic pose in inclusivism, and the relativistic proclivities of pluralism. While Sterkens infers an involvement with one's own religious tradition, recognition of religious plurality, and a reflective engagement of both in attaining religious harmony, Dupuis reiterates same in advocating retention of clear religious identity in openness to

³⁰ Ibid., 48 – 49

³¹ Sterkens., 49

³² Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002).84.

accepting human religious plurality which individuals in every pluriform society must acknowledge; this he calls inclusive pluralism.

The unfortunate socio-religious fracas that have interspersed Nigeria's chequered religious history prominently feature desire to protect one's religious affiliation over and above the others in the country. The same tendencies have been demonstrated to underlie the confessional status of religious education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, especially the teacher training institutions, that is, the COEs. As Dupuis observed, there is a need to find a balance between bias in claims which betrays religious imperialism and religious resignation to relativism in the name of pluralism. If Nigeria hopes, as a nation, to resolve the incessant religious acrimony expressed in interreligious fracas in the country, our religious education curriculum must go beyond the current exclusive outlook curricula to a more embracing course contents where inclusivism and pluralism would not be mutually exclusive paradigms. This is what Dupuis' theology of religions offers, and the reason for which his theology is proposed as a model to underlie a reviewed CRS curriculum.

The theology of the proposed model builds on Dupuis' "Trinitarian Christology" which holds in tandem the uniqueness of Jesus as the peak of God's revelation (inclusivism), and the complementary role of the Spirit in continuing the mission of Jesus in God's saving action expressed in other religions (pluralism). The model does not simply accept religious pluralism with the danger of unbridled relativism but recognizes the differential religious identity that is unique to each religion. Part of what an inclusive religious pluralism curriculum could do in an environment as Nigeria is to instill a religious consciousness in terms described by Paul Heck, "The religious landscape offers

us horizons, but we cannot define all its contours with precision. There is, then, an open-ended side to religion. Believers are not simply objects to label but moral agents. Thinking about religion in terms of common ground is one way to articulate this unity: religion is not a concept that can be captured in distinct cages of identity.”³³ On the bases of Nigeria’s need for unity and peaceful co-existence among citizens in the country, the inclusive religious pluralism model is justified by its theology and contents to meet these desires.

3.6 Adjusted CRS Curriculum for Inclusive Pluralism in Nigeria COEs

The proposed curriculum is aimed at promoting a philosophy of religious education that would have the potential for expressing authentic religious identity with adequate understanding and openness to the religion of the religious other. The curriculum is expected to aid the production of teachers that would be well equipped to translate religious education to viaduct of religions in the country. The would-be teachers at this level of studies already possess basic knowledge of the Bible and the central dogma of Christianity since a credit in Christian Religious Knowledge is a requirement for their admission into the program. In addition to acquisition of skills in teaching CRS in primary and junior secondary schools, the teacher in training shall be better oriented in the study of constituent religious plurality in modern society, and the need for matured religious dialogue. With some exposure to teachings and dogmas of various religious traditions and fundamental arguments in Christian theology for religious pluralism in the adjusted NCE 1 and 2 curricula, the NCE 3 curriculum shall focus on maintenance and consolidation on details of religious education for peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

³³ Paul Heck, *Common Ground: Islam, Christianity, and Religious Pluralism* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009) 6.

Objectives

By the end of NCE 3, the students will be able to do the following:

1. Explain the fundamental features of Christianity.
2. Appraise religious pluralism as essential to peaceful coexistence.
3. Correlate essential religious ideals among religions.
4. Design simple exercises to facilitate interreligious relation among pupils.
5. Implement the interreligious components of primary and junior secondary CRS curricula.
6. Act responsibly in words and actions that seek interreligious cooperation and facilitate peace.

Mode of Teaching

In addition to the existing modes of teaching CRS in COEs, it is recommended that field trips to Churches, Mosques and Shrines be made compulsory in NCE 3. Since the first semester of NCE 3 program is for research and teaching practical, field trips could be arranged for the second semester. If students have been taught the principles of interreligious engagements, and have over the years experienced, albeit theoretically, the teachings and dogmas of other religions, a field trip to religious sites will give much context and chemistry to what they have learnt in the classroom. It will help the students to learn by doing, thereby reinforcing their understanding of the subject matter. The teacher should however, emphasize standard etiquette and respectful behavior towards the places, objects and people at the site of the visit.

For clear distinctions, the suggested courses shall be prefixed with an acronym, IRPC (meaning Inclusive Religious Pluralism Course). The status of the course as either elective or compulsory shall be designated as E (for Elective), and C (for Compulsory). The hour of contact between the teacher and the student per week shall be tagged in figure which shall follow the status in bracket. Further, the first designated figure of the course code represents the level of study, while the second figure signifies the semester and the third represents the number of the course itself in the semester. E.g. IRPC 321 (C) 1 means Inclusive Religious Pluralism Course, for NCE 3, offered in second semester as course number 1. It is Compulsory and has a one hour a week contact.

3.7 Course description of the proposed Inclusive Religious Pluralism

Curriculum (IRPC)

3.7.1 IRPC 111 - Religious Identity (E) 1

Résumé

A major feature in Jacques Dupuis' inclusive pluralism is the recognition of the rights of the individuals in a pluralistic society to full inspiration of his/her religious beliefs and practices. The presence of various religious shades in a pluralistic society should not necessarily obliterate individual religious identity. Strong individual religious identity prevents religious tepidity, and enhances conviction in one's religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, this course provides the needed platform for the CRS students to boost their radical belongingness to Christianity, and consolidate on principles that would sustain their basic religious convictions. The course is proposed as an optional (elective) course. It should not be mandatory for two reasons. One, it is assumed that majority of the students in CRS departments are Christians with in-depth catechetical exposures at

various fora; and secondly, to avoid unwarranted compulsory exposure of a non-Christian student studying CRS to Christian faith allegiance. Similarly, the course is allotted a one hour a week contact since the idea is to consolidate on previous knowledge on religious identity formation and expression.

Objectives

The course is designed to equip the students with basic but comprehensive religious and theological contents of the Christian doctrine and traditions. It is expected that by the end of the course, the student should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the Christian faith, and communicate same effectively. The course is distinguished from CRS 216: *Christian Doctrine* in bringing clarity between faith and life.

Course outline

1. The doctrine of God in Christianity
 - a. Jesus Christ: model of human personality
2. Christian religious identity and culture
 - a. Christian ideals and practices
 - i. Love, Conscience, sin and suffering
 - b. Living as a Christian community
3. Christian prayer and worship
 - a. Prayer and identity
4. Christian devotion and evangelism
 - a. Relation with the religious others
 - b. Mission and dialogue

Learning Resources:

Visual aids, songs and hymns

Teaching method:

Small discussion groups, voluntary sharing of personal religious experiences

Suggested literary sources:

Donga, J. B. S. (2003). *Christian Doctrine Simplified*. Zaria, Nigeria: Faith Printers International.

Brockman, D. R., & Habito, R. L. F. (Eds.). (2010). *The Gospel among Religions: Christian Ministry, Theology, and Spirituality in a Multifaith world*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Grudem, W. (1994). *Systematic Theology* (2011th ed.) Great Britain: Inter-Varsity Press.

Hvalvik, R., & Sandnes, K. O. (Eds.). (2014). *Early Christian Prayer and Identity Formation*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Keenan, J. F. (2017). *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition* (3rd ed.). London: A Sheed & Ward Book.

Pope John Paul II. (1984). *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*. Vatican City. Retrieved from http://www.pcinterreligious.org/dialogue-and-mission_75.html

Relevance of literary source to the course

The doctrine of God and the person of Jesus Christ is central to the formation of Christian identity and consciousness. Sambo Donga's book is a thematic study on Christian understanding of God and his self-communication. Other chapters in the book pay attention to Christian pneumatology, ecclesiology, sacrament, soteriology, and eschatology among others. Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* (parts 1 – 5) is an optional reading to give further theological insight into the simplified issues identified in Donga's work. Selected themes (pgs 7-64) from James Keenan will identify and reiterate

the ideals of Christian virtues. Chapters One, two and sixteen (1-34, 371-380) of the edited work by Hvalvik, R., & Sandnes address the matter of identity among Christ-believers from the viewpoint of prayer. The place of prayer as ‘theology performed’ is significant to identity formation which unfortunately has not been given much attention in CRS. Finally, since no self-identity makes responsible sense outside relation with other people, the interface between one’s personality as a Christian and the responsible attention to mission as characterizing Christianity shall be introduced and engaged. The latter shall be guided by the publication of Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue on the Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions, a Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission.

3.7.2 IRPC 112 -Religion in Globalized world 2C

Résumé

This course improves on the current CRS 111: *Introduction to the study of religion*. Rather than the passive introduction to selected religions of the world in CRS 111, the proposed course shall focus on the dialectics of human responses to issues of social, cultural and global concerns through religious contingencies. The course shall study basic tenets of some of the world's great religions vis-à-vis their relevance to the contemporary world of the 21st century. Attention shall be paid to certain cultural and religious differences and how such differences influence social and cultural understanding of individuals’, groups’ worldviews, ideologies and underlie conflicts in the world.

Objectives

It is expected that, by the end of the course, the students would value the contributions of various religious traditions to global peace and stability. Further, students will be able to identify and discuss key concepts in the studied religions, as well as demonstrate how the possibility of global peaceful coexistence is a function of understanding the others' cultural and religious perspectives.

Course Outline

1. Religion: meaning and vicissitudes
2. Religion and culture
3. World religions and their global relevance
 - a. Indigenous Rel. Trads /African Traditional Religion
 - b. Hinduism
 - c. Buddhism
 - d. Judaism
 - e. Christianity
 - f. Islam
 - g. Zoroastrianism
4. Religion and violence in a globalized world
5. Terrorism is not a religion

Learning Resources:

Maps, video clips, visit to selected worship centers

Teaching method:

Guided Discovery, Inquiry, Discussion.

Suggested literary sources:

Huber, W. (2011). Religion and violence in a globalized world. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 32(2). <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4102.ve32i2.581>

Mehrabani, M. F. (2017). Religion in Itself or Exclusivist Interpretation: Is Religion Inherently Violent? In M. Masaeli & R. Sneller (Eds.), *The Root Causes of Terrorism: A Religious Studies Perspective* (pp. 46–61). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing,.

Samovar, Larry A. and Richard E. Porter. *Communication between Cultures*. Canada: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004

Sullivan, L. E. (Ed.). (2013). *Religions of the World: An Introduction to Culture and Meaning*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Relevance of selected literary sources to the course

The major text for this course is the edited work by Lawrence Sullivan. The book is relevant to the course on two major strengths; in-depth consideration of specific world religions, and its structure that is designed to aid students in study and discussions. The work is also relevant in introducing religion and its vicissitudes to the students, most especially at inter-human relational levels. Samovar and Porter's book is strong on religion and culture in the world, and how religion is a definitive part of the deep structure of human culture (81-112). The journal article by Wolfgang Huber refutes three major propositions which argue that religion leads to violence. He argues that "violence is not an inherent, but rather an acquired or even an ascribed quality of religion;" and while "some situations do seem to make the use of violence inevitable; however, religions should refrain from justifying the use of violence and maintain a preferential

option for nonviolence.”³⁴ The chapter from Mehrabani supports this thesis and argues that there is no direct relationship between religion and violence, but distorted interpretations of God’s message (59).

3.7.3 IRPC 121 - *The Bible and the religious other 2 (C)*

Résumé

This course focuses on the Old and New Testaments perspective on the religious other. It reviews biblical positions on interreligious relation. The emphasis is to bring students into conversation with biblical perspectives on the faith of the religious and cultural other. The course is expected to ease seeming discomfort of CRS students in engaging other religious adherents in religious discussions, and to proffer biblical basis for such engagements. Dupuis reckons that the Bible contains clear indications of God’s establishment of saving covenants with “other” people, and that the salvific act of the Word of God goes “beyond” the humanity of Christ to include the unfettered work of the Spirit among the religions.³⁵ Dupuis’ view stands against the “religious sentiments” reported by John Isah as having been responsible for most religious conflicts in Nigeria institutions.³⁶ The course shall proceed on the assumption that the various religious presence in Nigeria, especially Christianity and Islam are in themselves valid ways to

³⁴ Wolfgang Huber, “Religion and Violence in a Globalised World,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32, no. 2 (2011),1

³⁵ Details of these claims are found in Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*. See especially Chapter 4 for “the universal history of salvation,” chapter 6 on the universal action of the Word as such,” and the participatory but non-identical status of the church with the kingdom of God in chapter 8.

³⁶John contends that the exclusive missionary nature of both Christianity and Islam makes their adherents resent each other’s teachings by default; a factor that has often resulted in mutual suspicion and a reason for conflict. Cf. John Isah, “An Investigation into the Impact of Interreligious Dialogue on Peaceful Coexistence among Students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria” (Ahmadu Bello University, zaria, 2009). 15 - 17

religious expression before God. It shall uphold the argument that a rejection or exclusion of one another in recognizing authentic religious path to God is not within the purview of either adherent to make; rather, commitment to one's religious tradition should be the focus.

Objectives

The course is aimed at guiding the students to attune with biblical bases for a Christian theology of religions which adopts a perspective that embraces in its vision the entirety of the religious experience of humankind. It shall present and discuss stories in the Bible that have to do with either non-Jewish or non-Christian people that found favor with God as well as texts or stories in the Bible that speak to God's universal appreciation of people's spirituality. The ultimate objective is to assist the students to be well acquainted with biblical appeal for interreligious engagements. Students are expected to gain cognitive insight towards achieving desired constitutional and education goals of unity among citizens in the country.

Course outline

1. Biblical bases for interreligious dialogue
 - Instances of God's continued dialogue with human beings
 - Oral communication, the tablet, *Urim w^e tummim*, the Scriptures, the prophets, etc.
 - Universality of God's punitive and redemptive acts knows no boundary. E.g. Genesis 6 and 11.
 - Christianity and the message of unfettered love, 1 Cor. 13

- God's human instruments of intervention in human history cut across religions, and ethnic binary
 - Melchizedek, the Canaanite priest, Genesis 18
 - Ba-lam, a Mesopotamia diviner, Numbers 23
 - The Ethiopian Eunuch experience of the Holy Spirit, Acts 8
 - The Pentecost event in Acts 2 defiles linguistic and cultural boundaries.
2. The Bible and positive values in other religions
- Job, God's "servant," Job 1
 - Jesus' praise for the faith of the Roman centurion, Luke 7, and the Syrophoenician woman, Matthew 15
 - Jesus and the compassionate Samaritan
 - God is not prejudiced, the narrative of Cornelius and Peter, Acts 10:1–11:18
3. Christological hermeneutics of Old Testament's confrontational archetypes
- Retrieval of Jesus' tradition of pluralistic religious engagement, e.g., Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:40-42), and his interactions with the Syrophoenician woman (Mk. 7:24-30); retelling of Elijah calling of fire on the religious other (1 Kings 18), and the rebuke by Jesus in similar context, Luke 9:54.

Learning Resources:

The Holy Bible

Teaching method:

Lecture, Map, Inquiry

Suggested literary sources:Primary text

Robinson, Bob. *Jesus and the Religions: Retrieving a Neglected Example for a Multi-Cultural World*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012.

Supplementary text

Ajibola, I. *Symmachus Unearthed: A Handbook on Ecumenism and Religious Dialogue*. Zaria: Faith Printers International, 2004.

Relevance of selected literary sources to the course

The primary text suggested for this course is Bob Robinson's *Jesus and the Religions: Retrieving a Neglected Example for a Multi-Cultural World*. The book offers impressive biblical passages to respond to challenging questions regarding fear of engaging the religious other in our society. Although it does not engage any world religion such as Islam directly, because that would of course be out of scope, it offers fresh insight into Jesus' relations with Samaritans and Gentiles. It sheds light on Jesus' positive interfaith relations especially in commending acts of faith beyond the boundaries of Israel. Similar theme is also picked up in the supplementary text, *Symmachus Unearthed* which argues from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible and from a broad Christian perspective (Chp. 2) that, there are justifiable biblical grounds for Christians in Nigeria to engage in religious dialogue with the religious other in country. Generally, the selected texts present the bible, and Jesus as being open to the cultural and religious other, the course therefore is aimed at building on these platforms to reiterate the need for dialogue, and to emphasis its imperativeness for better interreligious engagement in Nigeria.

3.7.4 IRPC 226 *New Religious Movement: Africa and Global Perspectives 2 (C)*

Résumé

The inclusion of this course in the proposed curriculum is to project CRS 226 in the current curriculum beyond localized consideration of emerging religious movements in Africa. In its current form, CRS 226 examines “causes of the rise of independent churches in West Africa,” “distinguishing features of the main movements,” “comparative study of orthodox and independent churches,” and a study of four of the following: The Cherubim and Seraphim, The Christ Apostolic Church, The Church of the Lord Aladura, Living Faith International, Musama Disco Christo Church, The Celestial Church of Christ, and Deeper Life Bible Church. These churches started as sects of some other main stream Christian churches and were at some point in their formative period considered to be cults³⁷ of some sort. While the introduction of a course on new religious movements in Africa is quite insightful, neither the course, nor any other course in the program examines similar developments in any other part of the world. Therefore, the current NCE program does not have the accommodating capacity to introduce non-African oriented religious movements to the students. Notably, however, the knowledge and understanding of these other religious movements in a globalized, religiously pluralistic world is of utmost importance; their impacts are far reaching and cut across

³⁷The term cult is often defined, albeit mischaracterization, as a negative religious practice or a factious movement in main stream religion. Practitioners are sometimes described as renegades who go against orthodoxy. However, the root of the term suggests a “ritual behavior that showed ‘care’ (cultus) for a god, hero, or sacred precinct in the form of prayer, offerings, ceremonies, Sacrifices, and other religious observances,” cf. Lawrence E. Sullivan, ed., *Religions of the World: An Introduction to Culture and Meaning* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013) 305 - 306. “Glossary” in the same book technically defines it as “a small community of religious believers; in popular thought, however, the terms often refers to a religious group that many people consider illegitimate,” Ibid.,333.

nations and races. Thus, it is expedient and of global relevance to study the indigenous African religious movements alongside new religious movements and their roles in global perspectives of religion.

The suggested adjustment shall bring to light the history and development of selected religious movements in Africa and in other parts of the world. It shall present the positive and negative impact of some of such movements on the larger society. In the global world of religious pluralism, the proposed course has the potential of helping the teacher-in-training get accustomed to the psychological and sociological implications of such religious presence. For the purpose of additional consideration of new religious movements in the global stage, it is suggested that the course be allotted additional one hour to make it a two-hour compulsory credit unit, since the current CRS 226 is a one-hour compulsory credit value course.

Objectives

Since no one religion may solely subsist for human religious needs and aspirations, emergence of new groups shall always be found in every human society. The main objective of this course is to disabuse the minds of students on outright condemnation of new religious movements without objective accommodation and study of the movements. An inclusive pluralistic curriculum (IPC) should promote recognition of diverse religious practices, and as much as possible avoid negative profiling without due examination, but from impressions born of biased mindset. The course shall therefore study selected religious movements in Africa and other parts of the world. It shall pay attention to the use of words like “cults,” “sects,” “occult,” and “new religious movements.” It is expected that by the end of the course, students should be able to

define New Religious Movements, and further state why the use of expressions such as cults and sects should be avoided in describing the others' religious practices. By the end of the course, the students should also be able to discuss some of the factors for the emergence of NRMs, their common features, and cite some of their global relevance and highlights of their activities.

Outline

1. Introduction

Problem of nomenclatures: Cults, Occult, Sects and New Religious Movements

2. Nature and Features of New Religious Movements

Factors for the emergence and conditions for membership

3. A detailed study of three of the following: -

- a. The Cherubim and Seraphim
- b. The Christ Apostolic Church
- c. Living Faith International
- d. Musama Disco Christo Church
- e. Deeper Life Bible Church

4. A detailed study of four of the following (2 from each section): -

Section A

1. Almadiyya Movement
2. Bahá'í Faith,
3. Madkhalism

Section B

1. Jehovah Witness
2. Rastafarianism
3. Unification Church
5. New Religious Movements, hostilities and violence
6. Global relevance and Highlights

Learning Resources:

Textual materials, Video clips

Teaching method:

Discussion in small groups

Suggested literary sources:

Ibrahim, M. (2013). The Rise and Proliferation of New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(15).

Linda Woodhead, Christopher Partridge, & Hiroko Kawanam (Eds.). (2016). *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations* (3rd ed.). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Ujata, A. (2009). *Distinguished African Church Leaders*. Zaria, Nigeria: Esonaj Publisher.

Relevance of selected texts to the course

Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations is recommended for its detailed and insightful approach to the study of religion especially in contemporary times. The chapters required for this course (13, 14 and 19) pay attention to contemporary esotericism (by Kennet Granholm), emergence, and features of new religious movements (by Douglas Cowman). A global perspective of these issues alongside the theme of religion and popular culture (by Christopher Partridge) are addressed. These are expected

to help the student locate the happenings and development of new religious movements in Africa, and Nigeria in particular within a larger global framework. Ibrahim Murtaga brings the global conversation on NRMs to the shores of Nigeria. He identifies secularism, religious experience and existential crisis as part of the reasons for the emergence of NRMs in Nigeria (184-188). He notes that such bodies face a lot of discrimination, accusations and negative stereotypes due to their unorthodox beliefs (189). However, on account of his research he concludes that the negative attitude toward NRMs is based on misinformation and misunderstanding (189). It is at this point that the work of Amos Ujata on specific movements, and churches founded by Africans comes in. Among the many distinguished African religious movements leaders he examined are Tertullian, Williams Wade Harris (42-54), Isaiah Shembe's South Africa Ama Nazaretha church (55-63), Simon Kimbangu (Kimbanguist church, Congo), Joseph William Egnaka Appiah (Musama Disco Christo Church, Gold Coast – Ghana). Others include the Cherubim and Seraphim church, the Apostolic Church, Celestial Church of Christ and other Aladura Churches founded in Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

3.7.5 IRPC 321 - *Dialogue in Nigeria's Pluralistic Society 2 (C)*

Résumé

This course improves on CRS 323: *Ecumenism and religious dialogue* in the current CRS curriculum. It focuses on more constructive religious engagement and committed dialogue with other religions in Nigeria, most especially Islam and African Traditional Religion. The existing courses that interface interreligious relation (i.e. CRS

111, 117 and 126 respectively), offer optional introductory courses in African Traditional Religion and Islam in the last two cases, and minimal exposure to the study of basic contents of Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Baha'ism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam, in CRS 111. Since these courses are offered from the background of appreciating the moral values of Christian doctrine for students' spiritual growth and development in the Christian tradition,³⁸ they are weak in fostering robust interreligious relation for peace and unity among citizens. Learning to live, tolerate, and appreciate each other's religion in their own terms through constructive dialogue with the religions, could be more strenuous. This course therefore is aimed at positioning the students to desire an ecumenical disposition in Nigeria's pluralistic society. By the injection of IRPC 111, 112 and 121 into the curriculum, the students are conversant with the imperative of religious pluralism and the need to maintain one's religious identity. Through this course, they shall be guided through the mode and structure of religious dialogue, and the crucial importance of ecumenical and interreligious relations in Nigeria among other themes.

Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to create awareness on the need for peaceful co-existence among Christians and between Christians and other religious adherents. The course is designed to be an orientation on practical steps to interreligious dialogue and living in a religiously pluralistic society while maintaining peace with

³⁸ Cf. The objectives of CRS in the official document of the NCCE: Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education* (Abuja: National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012), <http://www.ncceonline.edu.ng/NCCE-Digitization/base.html.1>.

members of one's religious affiliation. As such in addition to other contents outlined below students shall engage basic concepts as exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism as often used in discussing relations among religions.

Course outline

1. Nigeria interreligious experience
2. Philosophy of religious dialogue in Nigeria
3. Theologies of religion
4. Ecumenism and ecumenical associations in Nigeria
5. Avenues to interreligious dialogue
6. Mode and structure of religious dialogue
7. Religious conflicts and peace building in Nigeria
8. Requirements for fruitful dialogue in Nigeria

Learning Resources:

Videos and picture clips of aftermath of religious crises in the country; Field trip to sites that have been rampaged by religious violence.

Teaching method:

Discussion, lecture, guided excursion to desolate sites of religiously informed violence.

Suggested literary sources:

Ajibola, I. (2004). *Symmachus Unearthed: A Handbook on Ecumenism and Religious Dialogue*. Zaria: Faith Printers International.

Pope Paul VI. (1964). "Decree on Ecumenism: Unitatis Redintegratio." Retrieved February 23, 2016, from

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html

Tanko, P. B. (2014). *Principles of Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue*. Kaduna, Nigeria: Sunjo A. J Global Links.

Van Gorder, A. C. (2012). *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria*. Houston, TX: African Diaspora Press.

Relevance of selected texts to the course

The sources selected for the course dwell on the need and means to facilitate ecumenism, and beyond that, to foster robust interreligious relation for peace and unity in Nigeria. While *Unitatis Redintegratio* reiterates the founding of one church by Jesus Christ, and the need for Christians to unite, Ajibola and Tanko laid out specific steps to attaining better collaboration among Nigeria citizens despite religious differences. Dialogue with African Traditional Religion (chapter four), the philosophy of religious dialogue (chapter five), as well as path to interreligious dialogue, avenues to interreligious dialogue, and the mode for interreligious dialogue (chapters ten, eleven, and twelve) of Ajibola's *Symmachus Unearthed* are well tailored towards the theme and context of the course. Tanko's *Principles of Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue* updates themes in Ajibola's work; and in part II of the book (36 – 74), Tanko establishes the bases, forms, aims, and risks of interreligious dialogue. Tanko's thesis is that both ecumenism and interreligious dialogue "have profound relevance, considering the Nigerian situations" (75). Christian van Gorder's *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria* is a supplementary source that is meant to remind the students of the numerous religious violence in the country. The book is a handy

exploration of the instances, reasons, and extent of Nigeria’s multi-faith violence (115 – 293), and how “salaam and peace in Nigeria” may be achieved (353 -386).

3.7.6 IRPC 322 - Inclusive Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Dialogue 2 (C)

Résumé

This course is specifically designed to teach and advocate inclusive religious pluralism as the most appropriate mindset and model for interreligious dialogue. This is in line with Iwuchukwu’s observation that “the mindset of inclusive religious pluralism is increasingly necessary and imperative” in the light of theological, social, and cultural developments contingent on the proselytizing nature of Islam and Christianity in the world, and for the human population the religions control.³⁹ The course consolidates on the preliminary arguments for the need to inculcate an attitude and disposition of profound religious commitment in would-be teachers of COEs while being fully convinced of the legitimacy of others’ religions and religious practices in the country. Thus, need for the course in the revised curriculum cannot be overstressed as the entire review is primarily to make the study of CRS curriculum more compliant with the objectives and goals of the nation’s constitution and National Policy on Education as regards unity of citizens.

Objectives

The objective of this course is to reiterate the principle of peaceful religious coexistence in Nigeria through an emphasis on the right of all religions to exist, maintain

³⁹ Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, “Appropriating Christian and Islamic Sacred Texts to Underscore the Theology of Inclusive Pluralism Towards Effective Global Christian-Muslim Dialogue,” *Louvain Studies* 39, no. 3 (2016): 261–262.

a reciprocation of respect, and facilitate mature proselytism. Jacques Dupuis' theory of inclusive religious pluralism shall guide the process of attaining these objectives. The model is chosen for its meaningful recognition for individual authentic religious identity, and an appreciation of the religious others' right to legitimate expression of their faith.

Course outline

1. Problematic of religious exclusivism and supersessionism
2. Jacques Dupuis' theory on inclusive pluralism and interreligious relation
3. Theological bases for inclusive religious pluralism
4. Necessity for inclusive religious pluralism in Nigeria interreligious context
5. Approaches to inclusive religious pluralism
6. Dialogue, mission and evangelization and the imperative of inclusive pluralism
7. Religious teacher education and the imperative of inclusive pluralism

Learning Resources:

Videos and picture clips of religious composition of Nigeria and methods of proselytizing in the country.

Teaching method:

Lecture, small group discussion.

Suggested literary sources:

Iwuchukwu, Marinus C. *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

_____. "Appropriating Christian and Islamic Sacred Texts to Underscore the Theology of Inclusive Pluralism towards Effective Global Christian-Muslim Dialogue." *Louvain Studies* 39, no. 3 (2016): 261–83.

Supplementary reading

Dupuis, Jacques. *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*. Translated by Phillip Berryman. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002.

Phan, Peter C. "Inclusive Pluralism." *America: The National Catholic Review*, no. 2003 (2003).

Relevance of selected texts to the course

Jacques Dupuis' works on inclusive religious pluralism shall be mediated by the works of Marinus Iwuchukwu. The rationale and advantage of using the selected works of Iwuchukwu is for their context-based relationship of Jacques Dupuis' theology of religion with Nigeria's religious *sitz im leben*. Iwuchukwu's extensive research on Dupuis' inclusive religious pluralism would adequately mediate the technicalities of Dupuis' thoughts on inclusive pluralism, which might be a bit advanced for the targeted subject of the reviewed curriculum, and the knowledge of the theology that they are required to interpret the syllabus to their pupils at the lower school levels. In *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism*, Iwuchukwu highlights possible causes of Muslim-Christian conflicts in the Northern part of Nigeria. These, he notes, include "blind fanaticism," "claim to the possession of absolute truths," and "uncompromising competition."⁴⁰ It is important to note that his research population and scope are greatly significant to the social and political as well as the economic composition of the entire country. Rightly, he observes that "northern Nigeria is considerably a more pluralistic geopolitical society than most of Southern Nigeria."⁴¹ As such, by appropriation, the interreligious experience of the northern part of the country remain an inestimable index

⁴⁰ See, 139-153

⁴¹ See, ix

to assess and address similar issues in the rest part of the country. From pp. 173-186, Iwuchukwu argued that inclusive religious pluralism remains a feasible and an “imperative option for the continued survival and harmonious healthy development of northern Nigeria in the twenty-first century and onward.” The book is very relevant to the course for its prolific presentation of the main issues addressed in the course outline. It offers in clear terms the thoughts of Dupuis on inclusive religious pluralism and tailored same to the needs of the context of the course as designed. Similarly, the supporting text also by Iwuchukwu, “Appropriating Christian and Islamic Sacred Texts to Underscore the Theology of Inclusive Pluralism towards Effective Global Christian-Muslim Dialogue,” explores Biblical and Qur’anic sources for evidences of inclusive religious pluralism. The article offers scriptural bases for inclusive pluralism from both Christian and Islamic perspectives. Significantly, and in line with this course’s interest in building a mindset of inclusive pluralism, Iwuchukwu projects Dupuis’ balance of tension between religious authenticity and independence of non-Christian religions, and the universal imperative of the divinity of Christ.

3.8 Conclusion

An inclusive pluralistic curriculum must simultaneously be strong on maintaining one’s religious identity on the one hand, and not only recognize the presence of other religions, but accord them the right of existence with an open receptive attitude to their claim to religious authenticity. Such a religious disposition was extensively argued in the previous chapter to delineate its importance for any credible dialogue in a religiously pluralistic society to take place. Since the Nigerian society, which is pluralistic in religious composition also advocates peaceful co-existence of all religious adherents, and

proposes the education sector as a means to achieve this desire; the adjusted curriculum highlighted in this chapter will go a long way in such efforts. The chapter focused on making the CRS curriculum relevant and effective for peace building via an inclusive pluralistic curriculum. While there are entirely new courses that are introduced in the curriculum to initiate better interreligious dialogue (e.g. IRPC 111, 112, and 121), there are other courses that are adjusted to reflect inclusive religious pluralism, unity, and the principle interreligious cooperation (IRPC 226 and 323). The new and adjusted courses are carefully modeled on unfolding global acceptability of religious pluralism. Thus, the targeted students for the courses shall be intellectually matured to hold healthy and matured dialogue with people of different religious persuasions across the globe, while remaining steadfast to their religious affiliations. It is therefore expected that the adjustments made on the existing curriculum will create a more accommodating mindset on multiple religious presence among the CRS students; and that such orientation would in turn be transmitted to the younger generation of learners with whom the CRS teachers are going to work.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research on the theological analysis of confessional-centric curriculum of Christian religious education in Nigerian Colleges of Education. The chapter attempts a general overview and evaluation of the entire work vis-à-vis the proposed Inclusive Religious Pluralistic Centered Curriculum for CRS in Nigeria Colleges of Education. The evaluation is done with an eye to its implementation feasibility by the machinery for education policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria alongside the objectives of Nigeria National Policy on Education. For the purpose of contextual validity of the research results, the findings are juxtaposed with Sterkens' empirical work on interreligious education in the Netherlands. Recommendations to the National Commission for Colleges of Education and related educational research agencies are made for necessary action and a general conclusion on the research is ultimately drawn.

4.2 Summary of research

The study takes up the problem of adequacy and relevance of the present CRS curriculum in Nigeria's COEs for the attainment of peace among adherents of the various religions in the country. Through a theological analysis of the course contents of the present curriculum of CRS in the COEs it was discovered that the curriculum does not have the capacity to address the incessant cases of religious intolerance arising from the multi-religious status of the nation. The study therefore embarked on an exploration of Dupuis' inclusive religious pluralism as a theological principle to design a more

responsive CRS curriculum that could stimulate the goal of Nigeria *Constitution* and *National Policy on Education* for the citizens to live in peaceful atmosphere and religious freedom.

The study adopts a threefold methodology comprising of historical, analytical, and prescriptive approach in its study. It notes that interreligious relation and dialogue are indispensable human realities in our contemporary world, and that the evidence of human interconnectivity in its various ramifications does not dispel differences in views and ideology, regardless of religious beliefs and practices. This reality makes genuine and constructive engagement of adherents of various religious tradition a nonnegotiable imperative.

The study further notes that integral component of such engagement differs from the understanding of each other's religion from the background of comparative religious studies or traditional apologetics, but that its essential character rests on mutual respect for each other's religious differences, and openness to learning from each other. An operative principle for this model of interreligious relation is identified in this work as 'inclusive religious pluralism' patterned on Jacque Dupuis' theology of religion. It builds on a thesis that inclusive religious pluralism remains an ideal theological proposition on which an unassuming religious curriculum for Christian religious studies in Nigerian Colleges of Education may serve as hub for interreligious peace in the country. It makes a case for the attainment of peace in the country through an inclusive pluralistic disposition that recognizes separated religious identity and the right of existence thereof, as well as accruable socio-political equilibrium that is dependent on that recognition.

4.3 Research validity

Similar works as the interest of this dissertation especially on interreligious learning have been conducted. The result of such works as identified at the introductory chapter of this dissertation under “review of related literature” justify the feasibility of the basic hypothesis of this dissertation. For instance, the empirical results from a social constructionist perspective of Carl Sterkens¹ work on interreligious model of interreligious learning among primary school pupils in the Netherlands, demonstrates evident changes in commitment and religiocentrism through interreligious learning. Sterkens understands individual’s religious identity as a totality of processes that constitute meaning.² He notes that a religious person is a “polyphonic self” in which different voices are in dialogue with each other. Through interreligious learning and dialogue with others’ religious traditions, the individual is at once better developed and enriched.³ Hence, going by Sterkens’ empirical study, exposure of CRS students to a theology of inclusive pluralism where students can engage other religious traditions in their own terms could only increase a positive involvement of pupils with other religious traditions and commitment with their own religious traditions.

Similarly, in Nigeria several authors have also dealt with the problem of religious peace and the potentials of the education sector as a panacea to the problem. What is however unique about this dissertation is the fact that it takes up the significant loopholes in previous works which are mainly theoretical in approaches, by proposing a curriculum

¹Carl Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning: The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education* (Boston: Brill Leiden, 2001).

²Ibid., 110f.

³Details of Sterkens research, result and discussion on the claims in this paragraph could found in Chapter three of his *Interreligious Learning*, 75– 124

designed to inculcate the rudiments and principles of inclusive religious pluralism required for peaceful coexistence of adherents of various religions in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the proposal of Jacque Dupuis' inclusive religious pluralism as a guide for the theological analyses of the confession centered curriculum of Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria's COEs is novel to the best of my knowledge. What is new in the dissertation is the application of Dupuis' inclusive religious pluralism to the Nigerian *sitz im leben*, particularly towards the production of teachers of Christian religious studies that would be conscious of the reality of the country's religious diversity and guide the pupils in their custody on the need to be compliant with that reality for peaceful coexistence in the country. To my knowledge, no similar work has been done in Nigeria on Dupuis' interreligious thoughts and its relevance to the context of this research. Hence, by seeking a compliant theology of religion that is responsive to the socio-religious reality of Nigeria through the blending of religious education and profession of religious faith with deep recognition of the other's right to religious belief and practices, this research can be regarded as original.

4.4 Recommendations

From the history of religious issues in Nigeria, and the analyses of related theological problems with the present CRS curriculum of the NCE programs in Nigeria COEs, mutual distrust has been a major clog in the effort for religious peace in the country. Attempt at peacebuilding must therefore factor in a full recognition of this threat. To facilitate an inclusive religious pluralistic curriculum in Nigerian colleges of education, all stakeholders, from the students, through the Colleges, to the facilitating agencies have roles to play. It is in view of these consideration that the following

recommendations are made for effective use of CRS curriculum for interreligious peace and harmony in the nation's Colleges of Education and the larger Nigerian society.

4.4.1 Federal Government

4.4.1.1 Commission for review of education policy on model of religious education

There is a need for the government of the federation to lay emphasis on the importance of religion in the index of the country's development factors. Although the federal government has the "moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations"⁴ as one of its educational goals at all levels of education in the country, the emphasis on other developmental factors such as vocation and technology have disproportionately overshadowed the capacity of religion as a source of human development. The influence of religion in the nation's politics and other inter-human engagement in Nigeria does not seem to be at the margin of the national life. Thus, the mainstream position commanded by religion in the country ought to be harnessed through the education sector for national integration and peacebuilding. In this respect a commission for review of educational policy should be constituted with a mandate to feature modality for religious pluralism in the relevant educational curricula across all levels of education in the country.

⁴ Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, 6th ed. (Lagos: NERDC Press, 2013), <http://www.nerdc.ng/national-policy-on-education>. "Philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria" 1(9)c

4.4.1.2 Variation in conditions for recruitment of CRS teachers in COEs

The recruitment of CRS teachers in COEs should not exclusively be contracted on the basis of the potential teachers' religious affiliations. Rather, teachers should be recruited on the merit of their academic qualification and appropriate preparedness for the program but with clear religious identity. This suggestion might not be popular in Nigeria institutions of learning, especially given the tempo of present religious sentiments and interreligious animosity in the country. Nevertheless, if an academically qualified Muslim who is also well grounded in his/her religion is to teach CRS 126 that is, "Introduction to the study of religion," the students may have a better opportunity to gain knowledge of religion from teacher's personal wealth of experience. Of course, a Christian who is a specialist in Islam may as well be given the opportunity to teach a course on Islam. The bottom-line is the interest of the students who should be exposed to the rudiments and substance of each course.

4.4.1.3 Assessment Committee on interreligious relation in neighboring African countries

Neighboring countries with a good mix of varied religious adherents, and a consistent record of positive and successful management of religious differences to the advantage of all citizens should be engaged in diplomatic dialogue on means and modality for such success.

4.4.2 National Commission for Colleges of Education

4.4.2.1 A merger of the religious studies departments

In line with its statutory designation, the NCCE should merge the differentiated departments of Christian Religious studies and Islamic Studies in Colleges of Education into one single department of Religious Education. Such merger has precedence in many Nigerian universities, for instance Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and University of Ilorin, Ilorin, where religious studies departments form a single section in a school. A merger of departments will send strong piercing signal to the bloated mutual suspicion of Christians and Muslims within the academic environment. The imperative of joint academic and cooperate activities irrespective of religious affiliation would be better appreciated in such settings. Since the head of the common department could then either be a Muslim, Christian, or traditional religious adherent, a recognition of competency in administration over and above religious sentiments will not only enhance better interreligious relationships of faculty members and students, but advance social relations and general sense of development in the department.

4.4.2.2 Interest based admission policies

The NCCE should ensure that admissions to its accredited programs in the colleges strictly follow laid down minimum standards and avoid influence by undue religious interests and affiliation. Admission of students should be considered on the basis of individual's interest to read the course of choice as long as the academic requirements are met. A Muslim who wishes to study CRS should be given the opportunity without suspicion of having ulterior motive.

4.4.2.3 Creation of Departments of African Traditional Religion in COEs

The NCCE ought to give a consideration to the creation of Department of African Traditional Religion in COEs. The idea is not only to accommodate a major religious body present in the country, but to also provide opportunity to study the religion and be better informed on the doctrines and practices of the religion. The lack of clear knowledge of the contents and practice of the religion has led to tense moments between the adherents of the religion and practitioners of other religious traditions in the country. Having a department of ATR where interested candidates may get better informed and acquire knowledge of the values, beliefs and practices of the religion will lead to more openness, respect and tolerance among the Nigerians of varied religious affiliations.

4.4.3 Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council (NERDC)

4.4.3.1 A comprehensive review of current religious studies curricula

NERDC in line with its vision of “providing the nation with Building Blocks for Strategic Educational Planning & Development; Education Quality Assurance; Policy Formulation and Implementation,⁵” need to review the current curriculum of CRS in COEs to be in sync with the ideals of the country’s Constitution and National Policy on Education on unity of citizens. Nigeria needs a religious education curriculum that promotes education for interpersonal relationship for peace and development. A fair presentation of the beliefs and practices of the other’s religious tradition in ways that elicit understanding of the other cannot but be in the right direction at obtaining peace in

⁵ Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, “About Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council (NERDC),” 2017, <http://www.nerdc.org.ng/eCurriculum/AboutNERDC.aspx>.

the country. A curriculum reflective of inclusive religious pluralism is suggested in this respect. Such a curriculum will help dispose the student-teacher to authentically learn about other religious traditions in their own term while being better oriented in their own religious affiliations.

4.4.4 Colleges of Education

4.4.4.1 Sensitization workshops

A continued professional development workshops on the changing realities in religious relation is recommended for the present CRS teachers in COEs. Advancement in communication technology, transport facilities, and massive migration of people across the globe has made inter-human and interreligious encounter unavoidable. Alongside these encounters is the need to understand each other better. Therefore, coping with the reality of religious pluralism is inevitable; as such it is recommended that teacher of CRS in COEs get sensitized on this reality, and acquire further skills in managing contexts of multiple religious presence in their classrooms. Furthermore, a review of the current CRS curriculum for an inclusive religious pluralism curriculum of CRS would also warrant teacher reorientation. For instance, there will be a need to update skills in managing religious differences while encouraging clear religious identity.

4.5 General Conclusion

This dissertation has been able to demonstrate that the curriculum of Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria Colleges of Education is inadequate for the much-needed peaceful co-existence of adherents of the multiple religions in the country. The federal government in its various educational policies and blue prints has expressed desire to

utilize the education sector to foster peaceful coexistence of citizens; unfortunately, the heavily confessional centric nature of religious studies curricula have sustained the inhibiting clog in the orientation of many religious education students and teachers in the country.

This dissertation identifies the teachers' producing Colleges as potentially valuable platform to effect the needed orientation of citizens towards a more open religious cohabitation. Its choice of Dupuis' model of inclusive religious pluralism helps situate the necessary confessional requirement for a matured and robust interreligious engagement while stressing the need to recognize the values and authentic right of existence of the others' religious expressions. Dupuis' recognition and argument for religious pluralism as a principle of the Trinity's relationship with people provides a convincing argument for Christian students and Christian religious studies teachers to be more open to the reality of religious plurality in a religiously diverse country as Nigeria, while maintaining their strong foothold in their Christ centered religious beliefs and practices. The proposed Inclusive Religious Pluralistic Centered Curriculum is built on Dupuis' theological insights, and it is designed to help in positioning the NCE students in the direction of attaining the objectives of the national education policy on unity of citizens.

It is hoped that this dissertation's contributions will go a long way in the attainment of sustained religious peace and harmony in the country, especially by internalizing the principle of Dupuis' model of inclusive pluralism through effective engagement of an inclusive religious pluralistic curriculum of Christian religious studies in Nigeria Colleges of Education.

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APPENDIX B: Education distribution in Nigeria

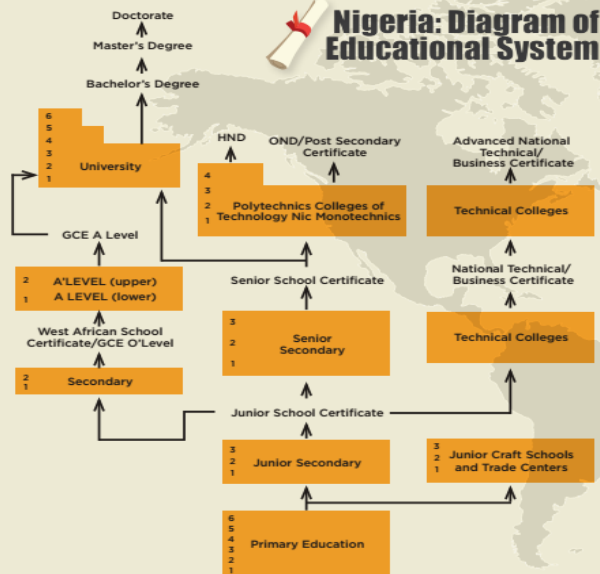
EDUCATION IN NIGERIA



QUICK FACTS

- Population: 174.5 million (July 2013 est.: CIA World Factbook)
- Language of Instruction: English (Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba in the first 3 years of primary)
- Compulsory Education: Primary & Lower Secondary School (Grades 1-9)
- Academic Year: September - July
- Number of Universities: 128 (51 private)
- Secondary Gross Enrollment Ratio: 44% (UIS: 2010)
- Tertiary Gross Enrollment Ratio: 10 % (UIS: 2005)
- Adult Literacy Rate: 61.3% (UIS: 2010)

Nigeria: Diagram of Educational System

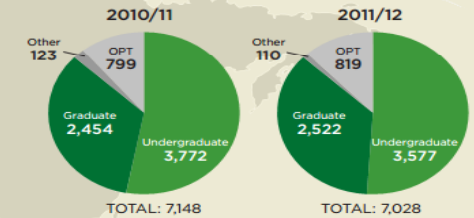


Grading Scale & U.S. Equivalent

Scale 1	Scale 2	U.S. Grade Equivalents
A/AB	70 - 100	A
B/BC	60 - 69	B+
C/CD	50 - 59	B
D	45 - 49	C+
E	40 - 44**	C
F	0 - 39	F

** The minimum passing mark may be lower depending on the year of graduation and the institution.

Number of Nigerian Students in the United States



Source: IIE, Open Doors, OPT: Optional Practical Training



Document Requirements for Credential Evaluation

HIGHER EDUCATION:

- Clear, legible photocopies of all degree certificates issued by the institutions attended.
- Academic transcripts showing all subjects completed and all grades awarded for all years of postsecondary study must be sent directly by the institutions attended.
- For completed doctoral programs, a letter confirming the awarding of the degree must be sent directly by the institutions attended.

SECONDARY EDUCATION:

- External examination results for the Senior School Certificate should be sent directly by the West African Examinations Council, unless one or more years of postsecondary study has been completed; in which case no secondary documents are required.



Source: Nick Clark and Caroline Ausukuya, "Education in Nigeria," *World Education News and Reviews*, 2013.

<http://wenr.wes.org/2013/07/an-overview-of-education-in-nigeria>

APPENDIX C: Some prominent cases of violent religious conflicts in Nigeria, 2000–2015¹

Name	Date	Location	Deaths	Notes
2000 Kaduna riots	21 February–23 May 2000	Kaduna	2,000 ^[6] ^[7] –5,000 ^[8]	Religious riots between Christians and Muslims over the introduction of sharia law in Kaduna State, start of the religious riots phase of the Sharia conflict in Nigeria.
2001 Jos riots	7–17 September 2001	Jos	500–5000 ^[9]	Religious riots between Christians and Muslims.
Miss World riots	November 22, 2002	Kaduna	200+ ^[10]	Inter-religious riots that started on 22 November in Kaduna, along with many houses of worship being burned by religious zealots. Cause: article in <i>This day</i> about the 2002 Miss World beauty contest (to be held in Abuja), in which Muslims took offence.
Yelwa massacre	February–May 2004	Yelwa, Shendam and Kano	c. 975 ^[11]	Religiously motivated killings between Christians and Muslims.
Muhammad cartoons crisis	18 February 2006	Maiduguri	50+ ^[12]	The international crisis reached the Nigerian city of Maiduguri, in which over 50 people were killed and many buildings destroyed or damaged by rioting Muslims, outraged because of cartoons about Muhammad in the

¹ Cf. “List of massacres in Nigeria” http://wikivisually.com/wiki/List_of_massacres_in_Nigeria. Incidents that are not of religiously induced causes have been taken off the list.

Name	Date	Location	Deaths	Notes
				Danish newspaper <i>Jyllands-Posten</i> .
2008 Jos riots	28–29 November 2008	Jos	381 ^[13]	Religious riots between Christians and Muslims over the result of a local election.
2009 Boko Haram Uprising	July 2009	Maiduguri, Bauchi, Potiskum, Wudil	1,000+ ^[14]	Islamic militants killed over a thousand people between 26 and 29 July; during the violence, Christians were killed for refusing to convert to Islam ^[15]
2010 Jos massacre	2010	Jos	992	Religious rioting; victims were mostly Christians killed by Muslims ^[16]
2011 Abuja United Nations bombing	26 August 2011	Abuja	21 ^[17]	73 injured; Boko Haram attacked a United Nations compound ^[17]
2011 Damaturu attacks	4 November 2011	Damaturu	100-150 ^[18]	Islamic militants associated with Boko Haram attacked police stations, churches, and banks
December 2011 Nigeria clashes	December 2011	Maiduguri and Damaturu	68+ ^[19]	Islamic militants associated with Boko Haram clashed with security forces between 22 and 23 December
December 2011 Nigeria	25 December 2011	Madalla	41+ ^[20]	73 injured; Muslim militants bombed a Catholic church

Name	Date	Location	Deaths	Notes
bombings				during Christmas mass
January 5–6, 2012 Nigeria attacks	January 2012	Mubi, Yola, Gombe, and Maiduguri	37+ ^[21]	Islamic terrorists attacked churches and Christian businesses; Boko Haram claimed responsibility
January 20, 2012 Nigeria attacks	20 January 2012	Kano	185 ^[22]	Islamic terrorists attacked churches and Christian businesses; Boko Haram claimed responsibility
April 2012 Kaduna massacre	8 April 2012	Kaduna	38 ^[23]	Islamic terrorists bombed a church on Easter ^[23]
June 2012 Kaduna church bombings	17 June 2012	Kaduna, Wusasa, and Sabon Gari	12 ^[24] -19 ^[25]	80 injured; Islamic terrorists bombed three churches
Deeper Life Church shooting	7 August 2012	Okene	19 ^[26]	Islamic militants attacked a church; the pastor was among the dead
December 2012 shootings in Nigeria	25 December 2012	Maiduguri, Potiskum	27 ^{[27][28]}	Islamic militants attacked a church on Christmas Day; afterwards the church was set on fire
2013 Baga massacre	19–20 April 2013	Baga, Borno	228+ ^[29]	Identity of the perpetrators remains unclear; some blame the Nigerian military while others blame the Islamic

Name	Date	Location	Deaths	Notes
				terrorist group Boko Haram ^[30]
Yobe State school shooting	6 July 2013	Mamudo government secondary school	30 ^[31]	Suspected Boko Haram terrorists killed at least 41 children and one teacher ^[32]
Gujba college massacre	29 September 2013	Gujba Yobe school	50 ^[33]	At 1:00 a.m. suspected gunmen from Boko Haram entered the male dormitory in the College of Agriculture in Gujba, Yobe State , Nigeria, killing at least forty-four students and teachers. ^[31]
Kawuri massacre	11 January 2014	Konduga Local Government, Borno State	85 ^[34]	Attack by Boko Haram
Borno Massacre	11 February 2014	Konduga, Borno State	39	About 39 people are believed to have been killed in an attack by Islamist militants on a Nigerian town. Local residents said the attack on Konduga , in the north-east Borno state, lasted several hours, beginning shortly before sundown on Tuesday night with the arrival of gunmen in 4x4 trucks. A mosque and more than 1,000 homes were razed to the ground, residents said. ^[35]
Federal Government College Buni Yadi attack	25 February 2014	Federal Government College Buni Yadi, Yobe State	59	Islamist gunmen killed 59 students at a boarding school in Yobe State. ^[36]
April 2014 Abuja attacks	14 April 2014	Bus Stand, Abuja,	71	Two bombs exploded in a crowded bus station in the

Name	Date	Location	Deaths	Notes
		Nigeria		outskirts of Abuja, Nigeria. ^[37]
May 2014 Gamboru attacks	6 May 2014	Gamboru, Borno, Nigeria	300+ ^[38]	Militants attacked at night and set houses ablaze. When people tried to escape, they were shot dead. ^[39]
Gwoza massacre	2 June 2014	Gwoza , Borno, Nigeria	200-300 ^[40]	Boko Haram attack on Christian villagers
2014 Kano bombing	23 June 2014	Kano , Nigeria	200+	Dozens of people were killed in a bomb blast at Kano State School of Hygiene. The blast was attributed to militant group Boko Haram by the locals. ^[41]
2015 Baga massacre	3–7 January 2015	Baga , Borno	At least 100, over 2,000 "unaccounted for"	
2015 Zaria massacre	12 to 13 December 2015	Zaria , Kaduna State	700-1000	Nigerian army open fire on the Shiite minority when they are setting up for a religious function. ^[43]

APPENDIX D: Popes and Documents of the Roman Catholic Church on “Salvation Outside the Church”

SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH?

http://traditionalcatholic.net/Tradition/Information/Salvation_Outside.html

The Popes through the centuries have defended the doctrine "outside the Church there is no salvation."

Pope Pelagius II (A.D. 578 - 590): "Consider the fact that whoever has not been in the peace and unity of the Church cannot have the Lord. ...Although given over to flames and fires, they burn, or, thrown to wild beasts, they lay down their lives, there will not be (for them) that crown of faith but the punishment of faithlessness. ...Such a one can be slain, he cannot be crowned. ...[If] slain outside the Church, he cannot attain the rewards of the Church." (Denzinger 246-247)

Pope Saint Gregory the Great (A.D. 590 - 604): "Now the holy Church universal proclaims that God cannot be truly worshipped saving within herself, asserting that all they that are without her shall never be saved." (Moralia)

Pope Innocent III (A.D. 1198 - 1216): "With our hearts we believe and with our lips we confess but one Church, not that of the heretics, but the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, outside which we believe that no one is saved." (Denzinger 423)

Pope Leo XII (A.D. 1823 - 1829): "We profess that there is no salvation outside the Church. ...For the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth. With reference to those words Augustine says: `If any man be outside the Church he will be excluded from the number of sons, and will not have God for Father since he has not the Church for mother.'" (Encyclical, Ubi Primum)

Pope Gregory XVI (A.D. 1831 - 1846): "It is not possible to worship God truly except in Her; all who are outside Her will not be saved." (Encyclical, Summo Jugiter)

Pope Pius IX (A.D. 1846 - 1878): "It must be held by faith that outside the Apostolic Roman Church, no one can be saved; that this is the only ark of salvation; that he who shall not have entered therein will perish in the flood." (Denzinger 1647)

Pope Leo XIII (A.D. 1878 - 1903): "This is our last lesson to you; receive it, engrave it in your minds, all of you: by God's commandment salvation is to be found nowhere but in the Church." (Encyclical, Annum Ingressi Sumus)

"He scatters and gathers not who gathers not with the Church and with Jesus Christ, and all who fight not jointly with Him and with the Church are in very truth contending against God." (Encyclical, Sapientiae Christianae)

Pope Saint Pius X (A.D. 1903 - 1914): "It is our duty to recall to everyone great and small, as the Holy Pontiff Gregory did in ages past, the absolute necessity which is ours, to have recourse to this Church to effect our eternal salvation." (Encyclical, Jucunda Sane)

Pope Benedict XV (A.D. 1914 - 1922): "Such is the nature of the Catholic faith that it does not admit of more or less, but must be held as a whole, or as a whole rejected: This is the Catholic faith, which unless a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved." (Encyclical, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*)

Pope Pius XI (A.D. 1922 - 1939): "The Catholic Church alone is keeping the true worship. This is the font of truth, this is the house of faith, this is the temple of God; if any man enter not here, or if any man go forth from it, he is a stranger to the hope of life and salvation. ...Furthermore, in this one Church of Christ, no man can be or remain who does not accept, recognize and obey the authority and supremacy of Peter and his legitimate successors." (Encyclical, *Mortalium Animos*)

Pope Pius XII (A.D. 1939 - 1958): "By divine mandate the interpreter and guardian of the Scriptures, and the depository of Sacred Tradition living within her, the Church alone is the entrance to salvation: She alone, by herself, and under the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the source of truth." (Allocution to the Gregorian, October 17, 1953)

Then, as though to set this constant teaching of the Fathers, Doctors and Popes "in concrete," so to speak, we have the following definitions from the Solemn Magisterium of the Church:

Pope Innocent III and Lateran Council IV (A.D. 1215): "One indeed is the universal Church of the faithful outside which no one at all is saved..."

Pope Boniface VIII in his Papal Bull *Unam Sanctam* (A.D. 1302): "We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff."

Pope Eugene IV and the Council of Florence (A.D. 1438 - 1445): "[The most Holy Roman Church] firmly believes, professes, and proclaims that those not living within the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics cannot become participants in eternal life, but will depart into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matt. 25:41), unless before the end of life the same have been added to the flock; and that the unity of the ecclesiastical body is so strong that only to those remaining in it are the sacraments of the Church of benefit for salvation, and do fastings, almsgiving, and other functions of piety and exercises of Christian service produce eternal reward, and that no one, whatever almsgiving he has practiced, even if he has shed blood for the name of Christ, can be saved, unless he has remained in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church."

The following quotations are presented in chronological order so that the continuity of the Church's understanding of the dogma may be clearly shown.

Saint Irenaeus (died A.D. 202): "[The Church] is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers. On this account we are bound to avoid them... We hear it declared of the unbelieving and the blinded of this world that they shall not inherit the world of life which is to come... Resist them in defense of the only true and life giving faith, which the Church has received from the Apostles and imparted to her sons." (*Against Heresies*, Book III)

Origen (died A.D. 254): "Let no man deceive himself. Outside this house, that is, outside the Church no one is saved." (*In Iesu Nave homiliae*)

Saint Cyprian (died A.D. 258): "He who has turned his back on the Church of Christ shall not come to the rewards of Christ; he is an alien, a worldling, an enemy. You cannot have God for your Father if you have not the Church for your mother. Our Lord warns us when He says: 'he that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.' Whosoever breaks the peace and harmony of Christ acts against Christ; whoever gathers elsewhere than in the Church scatters the Church of Christ." (*Unity of the Catholic Church*)

"He who does not hold this unity, does not hold the law of God, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation." (*Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Latina*, Father Migne)

Bishop Firmilian (died A.D. 269): "What is the greatness of his error, and what the depth of his blindness, who says that remission of sins can be granted in the synagogues of heretics, and does not abide on the foundation of the one Church." (Anti-Nicene Fathers)

Lactantius (died A.D. 310): "It is the Catholic Church alone which retains true worship. This is the fountain of truth, this is the abode of the Faith, this is the temple of God; into which if anyone shall not enter, or from which if anyone shall go out, he is a stranger to the hope of life and eternal salvation." (*The Divine Institutes*)

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (died A.D. 386): "Abhor all heretics...heed not their fair speaking or their mock humility; for they are serpents, a 'brood of vipers.' Remember that, when Judas said 'Hail Rabbi,' the salutation was an act of betrayal. Do not be deceived by the kiss but beware of the venom. Abhor such men, therefore, and shun the blasphemers of the Holy Spirit, for whom there is no pardon. For what fellowship have you with men without hope. Let us confidently say to God regarding all heretics, 'Did I not hate, O Lord, those who hated Thee, and did I not pine away because of Your enemies?' For there is an enmity that is laudable, as it is written, 'I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed.' Friendship with the serpent produces enmity with God, and death. Let us shun those from whom God turns away." (*The Fathers of the Church*)

Saint Ambrose (died A.D. 397): "Where Peter is therefore, there is the Church. Where the Church is there is not death but life eternal. ...Although many call themselves Christians, they usurp the name and do not have the reward." (*The Fathers of the Church*)

Bishop Niceta of Remesiana (died A.D. 415): "He is the Way along which we journey to our salvation; the Truth, because He rejects what is false; the Life, because He destroys death. ...All who from the beginning of the world were, or are, or will be justified - whether Patriarchs, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or Prophets, whether Apostles or martyrs, or any others - make up one Church, because they are made holy by one faith and way of life, stamped with one Spirit, made into one Body whose Head, as we are told, is Christ. I go further. The angels and virtues and powers in heaven are co-members in this one Church, for, as the Apostle teaches us, in Christ 'all things whether on the earth or in the heavens have been reconciled.' You must believe, therefore, that in this one Church you are gathered into the Communion of Saints. You must know that this is the one Catholic Church established throughout the world, and with it you must remain in unshaken communion. There are, indeed, other so called 'churches' with which you can have no communion. ...These 'churches' cease to be holy, because they were deceived by the doctrines of the devil to believe and behave differently from what Christ commanded and from the tradition of the Apostles." (*The Fathers of the Church*)

Saint Jerome (died A.D. 420): "As I follow no leader save Christ, so I communicate with none but your blessedness, that is, with the Chair of Peter. For this, I know, is the rock on which the Church is built. ...This is the ark of Noah, and he who is not found in it shall perish when the flood prevails. ...And as for heretics, I have never spared them; on the contrary, I have seen to it in every possible way that the Church's enemies are also my enemies." (*Manual of Patrology and History of Theology*)

Saint Augustine (died A.D. 430): "No man can find salvation except in the Catholic Church. Outside the Catholic Church one can have everything except salvation. One can have honor, one can have the sacraments, one can sing alleluia, one can answer amen, one can have faith in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and preach it too, but never can one find salvation except in the Catholic Church." (*Sermo ad Caesariensis Ecclesia plebem*)

Saint Fulgentius (died A.D. 533): "Most firmly hold and never doubt that not only pagans, but also all Jews, all heretics, and all schismatics who finish this life outside of the Catholic Church, will go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (*Enchiridion Patristicum*)

Venerable Bede (died A.D. 735): "Just as all within the ark were saved and all outside of it were carried away when the flood came, so when all who are pre-ordained to eternal life have entered the Church, the end of the world will come and all will perish who are found outside." (*Hexaemeron*)

Saint Thomas Aquinas (died A.D. 1274): "There is no entering into salvation outside the Church, just as in the time of the deluge there was none outside the ark, which denotes the Church." (*Summa Theologiae*)

Saint Peter Canisius (died A.D. 1597): "Outside of this communion - as outside of the ark of Noah - there is absolutely no salvation for mortals: not for Jews or pagans who never received the faith of the Church, nor for heretics who, having received it, corrupted it; neither for the excommunicated or those who for any other serious cause deserve to be put away and separated from the body of the Church like pernicious members...for the rule of Cyprian and Augustine is certain: he will not have God for his Father who would not have the Church for his mother." (*Catechismi Latini et Germanici*)

Saint Robert Bellarmine (died A.D. 1621): "Outside the Church there is no salvation...therefore in the symbol [Apostles Creed] we join together the Church with the remission of sins: 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins'...For this reason the Church is compared with the ark of Noah, because just as during the deluge, everyone perished who was not in the ark, so now those perish who are not in the Church." (*De Sacramento Baptismi*).

APPENDIX E: Islamic Studies (ISS) Single Major Curriculum for NCE



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PHILOSOPHY

Islam is a comprehensive religion that pervades all aspects of life including matters of faith and practical living. For a Muslim to conduct his personal and social life in accordance with the tenets of Islam, there is need for him to acquire an in-depth knowledge

of Islam. Islamic studies at the NCE level is therefore directed towards the development of

a balanced personality that is socially accommodating, intellectually alert, morally sound and spiritually dedicated to the cause of Allah. As a religious study, the focus is towards the achievement of social solidarity, ethical harmony, human equality and brotherhood in the society, particularly the Nigerian society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

- i) To acquaint the students with the broad outlines of Islam.
- ii) To prepare the students to understand Islam as a culture and civilization
- iii) To provide high quality training to enable graduands make rigorous and scholarly approach to the contemporary problems of the Muslim community with particular reference to Nigeria.
- iv) To instill in the students the spirit of God consciousness, to lead them to appreciate and uphold the values and teachings of Islam, and to live by it.
- v) To adequately prepare students to teach at the Basic Education level
- vi) To give the students adequate intellectual exposure that will enable them pursue further education in Islamic studies particularly at the B.Ed degree level.

MODE OF TEACHING

A combination of various methods is recommended. These include lecture, narration (story), discovery, dramatisation, assignments, discussion, recitation, field trips and distant learning.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Distribution of minimum credits required for:

- a. Education courses - 30 Credits
- b. General Studies courses - 18 Credits
- c. Teaching Practice - 6 Credits
- d. Islamic Studies course - 32 Credits
- e. Second Teaching subject - 32 credits.

TEACHING PRACTICE

Every student is required to do Teaching Practice and be supervised by subject specialist in

his course of study and the credit earned recorded in EDUC 324.

PROJECT

Every student is required to write a project in either Islamic Studies or Education and the credit earned recorded in EDU 323.

SUBJECT COMBINATION

Islamic Studies as a Single Major subject may be combined with any of the following subjects: English, Hausa, Yorùbá, Igbo; Social Studies, Arabic, Special Education.

COURSE CONTENTS

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year I, First Semester			
ISS 111	Iman in Islam (Articles of faith)	1	C
ISS 112	Taharah (Purification)	1	C
ISS 113	Arabic I	1	C
ISS 114	-Karim	2	C
ISS 115	Pre-Islamic Arabian History and the Life of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W)	1	C
TOTAL		6	Units

Year II, Second Semester			
ISS 121	As-Salah	1	C
ISS 122	Introduction to Hadith	1	C
ISS 123	History of Khulafau Ar-Rashiduna (Rightly Guided Caliphs)	1	C
ISS 124	Teaching Methodology	2	C
ISS 125	Introduction to Tajwid I	1	C
TOTAL		6	Units

Year II, First Semester			
ISS 211	Zakat and Sawm	1	C
ISS 212	Arabic II	1	C
ISS 213	Introduction to Islamic Law	1	C
ISS 214	Islamic Philosophy	1	E
ISS 215	Muslim Thought	1	E
ISS 216	Textual Study of Hadith	2	C
ISS 217	Research Method	1	C
TOTAL		8	Units

Year II, Second Semester			
ISS 221	Islamic Personal Law (Nikah and Talaq)	1	C
ISS 222	Islamic Ethics and Morality from Selected Suwar	2	C
ISS 223	Hajj In Islam	1	C
ISS 224	Tajwid II	1	C

ISS 225	Islam in West Africa	1	E
ISS 226	The Role of Some Muslim Organisations in the Spread of Islam in Nigeria	1	E
ISS 227	Mirath	1	C
TOTAL		8	Units

Year III, First Semester			
See EDUCATION	TEACHING PRACTICE	6	C

Year III, Second Semester			
ISS 321	Texts of the Qur'an	2	C
ISS 322	Textual Study of Hadith	1	C
ISS 323	Comparative Religion Studies	1	C
ISS 324	Introduction to Sufism	1	C
TOTAL		5	Units

Summary

NCE YEAR	COMPULSORY	ELECTIVE	TOTAL
Year One	12 Credits	-	12 Credits
Year two	12 Credits	4 Credits	16 Credits
Year three	06 Credits	-	06 Credits
Overall Total	30 Credits	4 Credits	34 Credits

Minimum credits required for graduation

Compulsory - 30 Credits

Elective - 2 Credits

Total - 32 Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ISS 111 Imam in Islam (1 Credit) C

- This is a general course aimed at introducing students to an in-depth study of the articles of faith in Islam. It is intended to cover the following areas:
- Unity of Allah
- The names and attributes of Allah and their implications Asmahullahil Husnah (99) names of Allah.
- Kalimat al-shahada and its significance
- Belief in the prophets and its significance with particular reference to prophets Adam, Nuhu, Musa, Ibrahim, Yusuf, Isa (Alayhimus Salam) and Muhammad (S.A.W).
- Belief in the angels and their functions
- Belief in the Holy Books sent by Allah and their significance
- Belief in the last Day and its significance
- Belief in al-Qadar and its significance
- The concept of al-Ghaib and its significance
- The concept of al-ikhlas in contrast to shirk (polytheism)

- The concept of Taubah (Repentance)

ISS 112 Taharah (Purification) (1 Credit) C

The course examines the whole concept of Taharah, its kinds and performance.

The course intends to acquaint the students with the following:

- Taharah and its significance
- Major and minor impurities
- Water and its classifications
- Istinja'a and Istinjmar
- Ritual Bath (Al-Ghuslu)
- Al- significance and performance.
- Fard, Snnah, and Mustahab steps of wudhu'u and Tayammum
- Things which vitiate Al-wudhu'u and Tayammum
- Environmental Sanitation

ISS 113

It is observed that most often two categories of students are encountered by course lecture in this class; a group of students with fair knowledge of Arabic and those with no knowledge of Arabic. It was suggested therefore that the course should have no two syllabuses. Regular syllabus (to be known as Syllabus A) to be offered by the group with fair knowledge of Arabic while Syllabus B be offered by Arabic beginners.

Syllabus A

The importance of Arabic in Islamic Studies - Word formation in Arabic - Simple sentences structure - Teaching of simple Arabic sentences The importance of Arabic in Islamic Studies

- Word formation in Arabic
- Simple sentences structure
- Teaching of simple Arabic sentences

Syllabus B

- Introduction to Arabic alphabet
- Vocalization of signs
- Formation of words
- Formation of short sentences
- Nominal phrases
- Verbal phrases

ISS 114 Introduction t -Karim (2 Credits) C

This course deals with a general introduction to the Qur'an and a textual study of few Suwar. The students should be acquainted with the following: -

- A historical survey of how the Qur'an came into existence
- An examination of the contents and divisions of the Qur'an
- The development of Tafsir
- A study of the text of the following Suwar with their translation and commentaries:

- a) Suratul-Fatiha (Chapter 1)
- b) Suratul-Kafirun(Chapter 109)
- c) Suratul-Nasr (Chapter 110)
- d) Suratul-Lahab (Chapter 111)
- e) Suratul-Ikhlās (Chapter 112)
- f) Suratul-Falaq (Chapter 113)
- g) Suratul-Nas (Chapter 114)
- h) The role of some women mention in Q 66:10 to 12

**ISS 115 Pre-Islamic Arabian History and the Life of Prophet Muhammad (Saw)
(1 Credit) C**

- This is a general introduction to the history of Arabia before Islam to the early stages of Islam. The following areas are expected to be given coverage.
- The names and detail life history of the first five prophets of Allah e.g. Adam, Nuhu, Ibrahim, Ismail, Musa, Yusuf and Isa
- Outline history of the Jahiliyyah period viz
- The social, political, economic and religious conditions in Pre-Islamic Arabia.
- Birth and childhood of the Prophet (S.A.W.)
- Marriage of the Prophet (S.A.W.)
- The call to Prophethood
- Persecution of the Prophet (S.A.W.) and his followers
- Hijrah to Abyssinia and Madinah and their importance
- The establishment of Muslim Ummah in Madinah relationship between Non-Muslims and Muslims
- The causes and consequences of the battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq
- The treaty of Hudaibiyya and its significance to the spread of Islam.
- The conquest of Makkah and its effects
- Farewell pilgrimage of the Prophet (S.A.W.) and its lessons
- The death of the Prophet (S.A.W.) and the lessons of his life time.

2ND SEMESTER

ISS 121 As-Sallah (1Credit) C

- Definition
- Difference between Salah and Du'ah
- Importance of Salah
- Types of Salah
- Adhan and Iqamah definition, times, texts and significance
- Far'id, Sunan, Mustahabat and Makruhatus-Salah
- Things that vitiate Salah
- Detailed study of performance of Salah
- Five obligatory Salawat and their times
- Salatu Al-Jamaa'ah congregational prayer
- How to join congregational prayer
- Qualities of an Imam
- Sujud al-sahawi
- Salatul Safar

- Salatul Janazah

ISS 122 Introduction to Hadith (1 Credit) C

The course is a general survey of the historical development of Hadith, its aims and functions. The students should be acquainted with the following:

- A historical development of Hadith.
- The aims and significance of Hadith
- Introduction to the science of Hadith (Mustalahil Hadith)
- The biography of compilers of Sihah as-Sitta and Muwatta
- A study of the specially selected Hadith of an-Nawawi's collection Hadith 1-5.

ISS 123 History of Khulafau Ar-Rashiduna (Rightly Guided Caliphs) (1 Credit) C

The study of the Islamic history from the period of the death of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) to the end of the Caliphate of Aliyu Ibn Abi Talib. It is intended to cover the following:

- Institution of Khalifah (Caliphate) and Shurah (consultation) in Islam
- The period of Khalifah of Abubakar as-Siddiq
- The period of Khalifah of Umar bn al-Khattab
- The period of Khalifah of Uthman bn Affan
- The period of Khalifah of Aliyu Ibn Abi Talib Hjirah calendar and its importance

ISS 124 Teaching Methodology (2 Credits) C

- Aims and objectives of Islamic Education
- Brief history of Qur'anic, ilm and Islamiyyah Schools in Nigeria
- The problem in Islamic teacher education
- The qualities of a good Islamic Studies teacher
- Lesson planning and preparation
- Selection and use of audio visual aids
- Special methodology approaches e.g. in Salah, Hajj, Fiqh, Tawhid, etc.
- A study of National Curriculum for Primary 1-6 and JSS 1-3 on Islamic studies

ISS 125 Introduction to Tajwid I (1 Credit) C

This is an introductory course to enable the students learn about the development of the Science and importance of Tajwid. The areas to be covered should include the following:

- Definition of Science of Tajwid
- Development of Science of Tajwid
- The importance of Tajwid
- Makharijah and wasifat huruf (manner and places of articulation)

ISS 211 Zakat and Sawm (1 Credit) C

Section A: ZAKAT

- Definition of Zakat
- The significance of Zakat
- Beneficiaries of Zakat
- Items on which Zakat is paid (Livestock, farm produce, precious metals or Bank notes).
- Items on which Zakat is not paid (non-taxable items)

- The principles of economic system in Islam

Section B: SAWM

- Fasting in Islam and its significance
- Types of Fasting
- The fast (Ramadan) and its conditions
- People exempted from Fasting Muftiratis-Sawn (Vitiation of Fasting)
- The Fasting and Atonement (Kaffarah) and the fasting of vow (Nadhr)
- Expiation and compensatory fast
- Recommended acts during Ramadan -Suhur, Iftar,
- Tarawih and I tikaf Laylatul-Qadr, Zakatul-Fitr and Idul-Fitr.

ISS 212 Arabic II (1 Credit) C

- Drills in letter writing
- Further sentence structure
- Short comprehensive passages in Arabic
- Short composition exercises in Arabic
- Reading and writing of full vocalised Arabic passage
- Reading, writing and translation of some Ayat and Suwar of Al Qur'an
- Reading, writing and translation of Ahadith.

ISS 213 Introduction to Islamic Law (1 Credit) C

- Pre-Islamic Arabia' Customary Law
- Islamic reform of the customary law
- The definition and scope of Shar'ah
- Historical development of Shari'ah
- The sources of Shari'ah: Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma and Qiyas
- The four Sunni schools of law
- The importance of Shari'ah to the Muslims
- Shari'ah in Nigeria
- Implementation of Shari'ah in Nigeria: Issues, problems and prospects

ISS 214 Islamic Philosophy (1 Credit) E

- Relationship between Islam and Philosophy
- Definition of Islamic philosophy
- Qur'anic verses on reasoning
- Islam and science
- The study of the following
 - (a) Al-Tawhid
 - (b) Al-Imam
 - (c) Al-Khalq wa-I-kawn
 - (d) Al-ruh
 - (e) Al-Akhirah

ISS 215 Muslim Thought (1 Credit) E

The doctrines of Ah-lus-Sunnah and the following sects:

- Shi'ah
- Khawarij
- Murji'ah
- Mu'tazilah

ISS 216 Textual Study of Hadith (2 Credits) C

In-depth study of Hadith from ALNawawi's collection Nos. 6 - 20. i.e. General meaning, message and application to Muslims daily life of the above Ahadith

ISS 217 Research Method (1 Credit) C

- Definition of the concept Research
- Types of research methodology
- Choosing of research topic
- Elements of research
- Data collection
- Referencing/Bibliography

221 Islamic Personal Law: (Nikah, Talaq) (1 Credit) C

a) Islamic Concept of Marriage

- Essentials of marriage
- Rights and responsibilities of husband and wife
- Legal prohibitions of marriage in Islam
- Polygamy - Islamic point of view
- Family Planning: Islamic point of view

b) Divorce (Talaq)

- Methods of divorce in Pre-Islamic Arabia
- Islamic View on divorce
- Forms of divorce
- Iddah period etc.

ISS 222 Islamic Ethics and Morality from Selected Suwar (2 credits) C

A study of the texts, translation and commentaries of the following Suwar:

- Suratul-Kauthar (Chapter 108)
- Suratul- (Chapter 107)
- Suratul-Fil (Chapter 105)
- Suratul-Humazah (Chapter 104)
- Suratul-Asr (Chapter 103)
- Suratul - Luqman (Chapter 31:12-21)
- Suratul-Hujurat (Chapter 49) Miral (*sic*) Lessons
- Suratul-Muttaffifin (Chapter 83)
- Ethical concept on the following Punctuality, trustfulness, good relationship, brotherhood, Intoxication and Addiction, Child right
- Suratul Quraish
- Suratul Tin
- Health in Islam

- Family planning in Islam
- Rules of conduct governing sneezing, greetings, eating,
- Social responsibility e.g. justice, equity, and fair play

ISS 223 Hajj in Islam (1Credit) C

- Definition of Hajj and its significance
- The Ka'abah: its description, history and importance
- Conditions governing Hajj
- Different kinds of Hajj e.g. Tamattu, Ifrad and Qiran
- The pillars of Hajj
 - Ihram
 - Tawaf
 - Sa'ay
 - Wuqf bil'arafat
 - Ramyul al-Jamar
- The performance of Hajj in chronological order (practical demonstration)
 - Hajj Badal (Hajj by representation) and its conditions
 - The Umrah (Lesser Hajj)
 - Recommended acts of Hajj

ISS 224 Tajwid II (1 Credit) C

- Special Hafs and Warsh types of recitation
- Conditions for reciting and Basmalah
- Al-alif-alShamsiyyah and alif-al-Qamariyyah
- Ahkamu an-Nun as-Sakinah:
 - Al-Izhar (Pronunciation)
 - Al- condition)
 - Al-Idgham (Assimilation)
 - Al-Iqlab (Depolarization)
- Al-Qalgalah (Intensification)
- Al-min Al-Sakinah
- Al-minwal-Nun Al-Mushaddadatayni
- Al-Ral Al-muraggahah and Al-mutahakamah
- Detailed discussion on al-mudud (prolongation) its types and conditions

ISS 225 Islam in West Africa (1 Credit) E

- Spread of Islam in West Africa
- The role of traders, teachers, Murabitun and Sufi orders
- Intellectual activities and centres of learning e.g. Sankore, Timbuktu
- Literary contributions of the Jihadists e.g. Uthman Ibn Fudi, Abdullah Ibn Fudi, Muhammad Bello and others Mohammed Al-Kanem, Muhammad Shitta Bey
- The impact of Islam on the political, economic and social life of the people of
- West African empires such as:
 - Ghana

- Mali
- Songhai
- Borno

Note: Excursion to historic places like Sokoto. National Mosques and History Bureau should form part of the course.

ISS 226 The Role of Some Muslim Organizations in the Spread of Islam in Nigeria (1 Credit) E

The contributions of some Muslim organization in Nigeria: -

- Ansar-ud-deen
- Jamaatul Nasrul Islam
- Nawair-ud-deen
- Ansarul Islam (etc.)
- Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN)
- Izalatul Bid'ah Wa'iqamatus Sunnah Movement
- The role of some women in early Islam e.g. Khadijah, Aishah, Hafsa, and Fatima

Note: Visit to the mosques, hospitals, offices and headquarters of these organizations should be encouraged.

ISS 227 Mirath (1 Credit) C

- Pre-Islamic customary/convention of inheritance
- Introduction to basic principles of Islamic law of inheritance
- Dhawul-Arham
- Impediments/exclusion from inheritance
- Qur'anic shares and shares
- Justification for Islamic formula of an inheritance.

Year III, First Semester TEACHING PRACTICE

ISS 321 Texts of the Qur'an (2 Credits) C

Study of the texts, translations and commentaries of the following Suwar:

- Suratul-Duha (Chapter 93)
- Suratul-Inshirah (Chapter 94)
- Suratul-Qadr (Chapter 97)
- Suratul-Zilzilah (Chapter 99)
- Suratul- Qari'ah (Chapter 101)
- Suratul- Takathur (Chapter 102)
- Suratul-Isra'I (Chapter 17, Verses 23-19)
- Suratul-Ali-Imran (Chapter 3, Verses 151-153)
- Suratul Alaq
- Suraltul Luqman 12-19
- Suratul Jumua
- Suratul Adiyah

ISS 322 Textual Study of Hadith (2 Credits) C

Study of the texts, translation and commentaries of Hadith 21 - 42 of Al-Nanwawi collection.

ISS 323 Comparative Religion Studies (1 Credit) C

- a) A comparative study of the origins of Islam, Christianity, Judaism and African Traditional Religion.
- b) God in Islam, Christianity, Judaism and African Traditional Religion.
- c) Life and works of Jesus Christ (Isa Ibn Maryam) from the Islamic point of view.
- d) Belief of the Muslims on Jesus Christ (Isa Ibn Maryam) compared with that of the Christians.
- e) Atonement/Original sin, capital punishment in the Bible and Crucifixion / Resurrection.
- f) Causes of misunderstandings and conflicts among the various religious groups in Nigeria and possible solutions to them.

ISS 324 Introduction to Sufism (1 Credit) C

The course introduces the students to the concept and practice of Sufism in Islam.

- The definition and origin of Sufism in Islam
- The stages and states
- Study of some Sufi orders e.g. Qadiriyya, Tijjaniya e.t.c.
- The impact of Sufism and Sufi Orders in Nigeria

APPENDIX F: Adjusted course contents for CRS NCE program

* Adjusted Titles, course title, credit and status are highlighted in red

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
	Year I, First Semester		
IRPC 112	Religion in the Globalized world	2	C
CRS 112	History and religion of Israel from Genesis to the Judges	1	C
CRS 113	Introduction to the Bible	1	C
CRS 114	Early church history	1	C
CRS 115	Introduction to the study of elementary Greek	1	E
IRPC 111	Religious Identity	1	E
CRS 117	African Traditional Religion	1	E
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 2: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 1, First Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
	Year I, Second Semester		
CRS 121	The life and teachings of Christ	1	C
CRS 122	Introduction to the study of the Pentateuch	1	C
CRS 123	From the Monarchy to the fall of Judah	1	C
IRPC 121	The Bible and the religious other	2	C
CRS 124	Introduction to the study of elementary Hebrew	1	E
CRS 125	Introduction to the theology of the Old Testament and the Prophets	1	E
CRS 126	Introduction to the study of Islam	1	E
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 3: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 1, Second Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year II, First Semester			
CRS 211	Paul in his writings	1	C
CRS 212	Methodology of Christian Religious Studies	2	C
CRS 213	Research methods	1	C
CRS 214	Biblical world of the Old Testament	1	E
CRS 215	The church from the Reformation to the Evangelical revival of the 18 th century	2	C
CRS 216	Christian doctrine	1	C
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 4: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 2, First Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year II, Second Semester			
CRS 221	The synoptic Gospels and St. John Gospel	2	C
CRS 222	Introduction to Biblical ethics	1	C
CRS 223	Exilic and post-exilic Judaism	1	E
CRS 224	Biblical world of the New Testament	1	E
CRS 225	The history of Christianity in West Africa to the 19 th century	1	C
IRPC 226	New Religious Movement: Africa and Global Perspectives	2	C
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 5: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 2, Second Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year III, First Semester			
EDUC 324	Teaching practice	6	C
EDUC 323	Project	3	C
	TOTAL	9	Units

Table 6: List of courses, course code and credit designation for NCE 3, First Semester

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	STATUS
Year III, Second Semester			
IRPC 321	Dialogue in Nigeria's Pluralistic Society	2	C
IRPC 322	Inclusive Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Dialogue	2	C
CRS 324	Acts of the Apostles	1	C
CRS 325	Philosophy of religion	2	C
	TOTAL	7	Units

Table 7: List of courses, course codes, and credit designation for NCE 3, Second Semester

APPENDIX G: A sample of an IRP Syllabus for NCE 3 students in Nigeria

**Federal College of Education, Zaria
Department of Christian Religious Studies
First Semester, 2017**

Course Syllabus:

IRPC 112: Religion in Globalized world 2 credit C

Instructor:

Ilesanmi G. Ajibola

Contact Information:

Office location: Chief Lecture Block Room XX

Office Telephone: 123 4567 8900

Email: gabajibola@gmail.com

Office Hours:

T 10:00 AM – 12 PM

Th 10:00 AM – 2PM

By appointment

Class schedule:

Wednesday 10:00 AM – 2:00PM

Required background:

To successfully complete this course, the student should have a clear religious identity; he/she must understand that beyond his/her religious location are others' authentic and valid religious expressions.

Required reading materials:

Text books

Samovar, Larry A. and Richard E. Porter. *Communication between Cultures*. Canada: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004

Sullivan, L. E. (Ed.). (2013). *Religions of the World: An Introduction to Culture and Meaning*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Additional texts

Awolalu, O. J. (1976). What Is African Traditional Religion? *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 10 (2).

Huber, W. (2011). Religion and violence in a globalized world. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 32(2). <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4102.ve32i2.581>

Mehrabani, M. F. (2017). Religion in Itself or Exclusivist Interpretation: Is Religion Inherently Violent? In M. Masaeli & R. Sneller (Eds.), *The Root Causes of Terrorism: A Religious Studies Perspective* (pp. 46–61). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Platvoet, Jan G. “Contexts, Concepts & Contests: Towards a Pragmatics of Defining ‘religion.’” In *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts, and Contest*, edited by Jan G. Platvoet and Arie Leendert Molendijk. Danvers, MA: Brill, 1999.

Learning Resources:

Maps, video clips, visit to selected worship centers

Contact methods:

The class is designed to be primarily interactive. It shall therefore proceed in a composite of lectures, small-group discussions, in-class written exercises, students’ active participation in enlarged class discussions, and the use of relevant audio-visual materials.

Course Description

This focuses on the dialectics of human responses to issues of social, cultural and global concerns through religious contingencies. The course shall study basic tenets of some of the world's great religions vis-à-vis their relevance to the contemporary world of the 21st century. Attention shall be paid to certain cultural and religious differences and how such differences influence social and cultural understanding of individuals’ and groups’ worldviews and ideologies, and underlie conflicts in the world.

Rationale

Emergent religious eventuality in countries and among nations as primarily necessitated by global interconnectivity and the imperativeness of inter-cultural and interreligious engagement is the *raison d'être* for this course. Religion has continued to play major role in local, national, and world politics. Migration of people (with their religious beliefs and influences) is also on the increase. No one in this century is under any illusion about the role of religion in terror attacks and in humanitarian services around the world. These factors are reasons for people to get to know about each other’s religion and culture for improved relationship, better understanding, and joint cooperation in peace building around the world.

Course Objectives

It is expected that by the end of the course, the students would value the contributions of various religious traditions to global peace and stability. Further, students will be able to identify and discuss key concepts in the studied religions, as well as demonstrate how the possibility of global peaceful coexistence is a function of understanding the others’ cultural and religious perspectives.

Policies and Procedures:

1. Assessment:

➤ Assignments and paper presentations

- a. Students are expected to read the assigned text materials and make personal notes that highlight the important points of the assigned texts. Familiarity with the general sense of the passages vis-à-vis personal views in relation to the author's thoughts are expected for each class.
- b. Two essay papers are expected in the course of the semester. The papers shall be presented in Times New Roman Font, double line space, and 12 font sizes. Submission shall be through Google classroom platform. Grades shall be awarded according to clear demonstration of accurate grasp of text's contents (understanding), interpretative skills (reasoning), creativity and personal appropriation (originality), and clear writing and style (mechanics). You may consult other sources other than the primary text for your references. **Note** that the total words required for each essay include references, title page and everything as may relate to the assignment.
 - i. **First paper:** 350 - 500 words - Write an essay on the theme: *Dialogue is essential to peaceful coexistence in a culturally and religiously diverse society*. Hint: Define what is meant by dialogue; explain what is meant by culturally and religiously diverse society; discuss at least two ways by which dialogue may be used to promote peaceful coexistence in a culturally and religiously diverse society. **Due date: Week 5.**
 - ii. **Second paper:** 800 -950 words: Visit a worship center other than the one to which you are familiar or religiously affiliated (alternatively, you may watch a documentary that details the religious beliefs/worship of a religion). Describe **two key practices** which attract your interest in the worship procedure/belief of your chosen religion, and explain how the identified points may advance the quest for peaceful co-existence and better interreligious relations with other compatriots. **Due date: Week 11.**
 - iii. Three students shall be jointly responsible for a **10 – 15 minutes presentation** (documented in 2 - 3 pages) on the assigned text of the day. The students are expected to work in team and appoint one person among them to present the collective work. The content of the presentation shall highlight minimum of three key points of the assigned text in relation to the day's theme. The students are to discuss at least two relevancies of the observed points to contemporary perception of the role of religion in the society. In addition to these, each of the students shall raise an open thought-provoking question on the global and cultural implications of the discussed religion; together, they shall lead the class in a brief discussion of the questions. However, each group member is advised to have an answer to his/her question; suggested answer shall be read after the class discussion of the questions. The presentation and the questions, as well as the suggested answers shall be mailed to me no later than **6 pm** of the day prior to the presentation. Note that late submissions will attract loss of 2 points. Grading of the presentation shall be based on the content of the presentation, quality of question and answer provided, paper delivery, and class management.

Note:

If for any serious reason/s such as sickness, death (family member), and sports, you will not be able to turn in assignment on a due date, do kindly notify me ahead of time through an email. Note that an excused absence does not in any way exempt a student from fulfilling the assigned course requirements. In this regard, it is the responsibility of the student to provide related documentations, initiate make-up arrangement with me, and to complete assigned make-up assignment. In all instances, late submission of assignment will attract loss of 2 points.

5. Attendance/ participation in class

- A total up to 5 bonus points will be awarded for class attendance; however 1.5 points will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Excused absences refer to serious sickness, death (of a family member), and sports for which notification is received **in advance of the class**. All other reasons will be considered unexcused.
- Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. If a student comes late to class, the late days will be converted to unexcused absences at the rate of 3 late days = 1 unexcused absence.
- Participation is defined as responding to questions, speaking up in class in ways that clarifies; shed new insight, and/or offers constructive criticism of the subject being discussed. 5 bonus points shall be awarded for regular class participation, and 5 regular points for participating in group discussions. **Note** that speaking up in class will not count as participation if uttered in a manner that neither reflects the defined criteria for participation, nor respects the dignity of other members of the class.

6. Academic/Class Misconduct

- plagiarism or cheating of any kind in an assignment will result in a failing grade “F” for that assignment.

7. Exams: Midterm and Final

Make-up exams will not be offered except in extreme necessity. Where the latter should be the case, the intervention of your academic advisor may be required.

8. Grades and Evaluations

Attendance	5 bonus points
Class Participation	5 bonus points
Group Discussions	5 points
Paper Presentation	5 points
Paper #1	10 points
Paper #2	10 points
Midterm Exam	10 points

Final Exam	60 points
Total	100 points

Final grades will be calculated on a total of 100 point basis and will be calibrated as follows:

9. *Grading Scale:*

70-100 = A 60-69 = B 50-59 = C 45-49 = D
40-44 = E <39= F

10. Except for note-taking, **the use of electronic devices** for whatever purpose is absolutely disallowed in class.
11. **Disability:** Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations. If needed, please contact the Academic Secretary Office as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

- Week 1: Introduction: Concept, characterization and function of religion in a society
Read: Jan G. Platvoet in Jan G. Platvoet and Arie Leendert Molendijk
- Week 2: Religion, Globalization and Cultural Differences
Watch: *The Dangers of a Single Story* by Novelist Chimamanda Adichie,
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story
Read: “Religion and Globalization” Samovar, L.A and Porter, R.E. pp. 81 – 92
- Week 3: World religions and their global relevance: Indigenous /African Trad.
Religion
Read: Sullivan. Pp. 31 – 66 & Awolalu J. Omosade, “What is African Tr. Rel”
- Week 4: Hinduism
Read: Sullivan. Pp. 61 -78
- Week 5: Buddhism (1st paper due date)
Read: Sullivan. Pp. 79 – 94
- Week 6: Mid-term exam
- Week 7: Mid-Term Break**
- Week 8: Visit to a worship centre
- Week 9: World religions and their global relevance continues: Sikhism
Read: Sullivan. Pp. 109 -127

- Week 10: Judaism
Read: Sullivan. Pp. 177 – 198
- Week 11: Christianity
Read: Sullivan. Pp. 217 -264
- Week 12: Islam
Read: Sullivan. Pp. 265 – 281
- Week 13: Religion and violence in a globalized world
Read: Huber, W. “Religion and violence in a globalised world.”
- Week 14: Terrorism is not a religion (2nd Paper due date)
Read: Mehrabani, Pp. 46 - 61
- Week 15: Revision and concluding remarks
- Week 16 Semester Examination**

APPENDIX H: A sample of an IRP Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan for IRPC 112: Religion in Globalized World

Lecture's Name:

Ilesanmi G. Ajibola

Date:

30/10/2017

Course:

Christian Religious Studies (CRS)

Duration:

2 hours

Subject/Unit:

IRPC 112 Religion in Globalized world 2 credit C

Level:

NCE 1

Topic:

Religion and Globalization

Aims of lesson:

To encourage the integration of global perspective of religion in teaching

Lesson objectives: Students will be able to

1. Discuss problems and challenges in religion and cultural diversity.
2. Demonstrate the need for interreligious dialogue for global peace.

Assumed prior knowledge:

Students have encountered people of other religions at varied fora. Their previous encounters might have exposed them to various perspectives of interreligious encounter, hence to some knowledge about the Aims and Objectives of this session.

Resources:

1. PowerPoint presentation
2. Copy of PowerPoint as handout
3. Computer & projector to be booked
4. Assignment handout.

Assessment:

1. List three reasons why religious diversity as a global phenomenon is important to the Nigerian society.
2. Discuss some ways to cope and relate with adherents of other religions.

Differentiation:

1. Visual needs:- Watch and discuss video clips in pairs
2. Auditory needs: - listening and speaking in pairs on voluntary sharing of interreligious engagements.
3. Feedbacks from pair discussions

Skills for Life:

An understanding of the connection between religions and the inevitability of the need to cooperate with the religious others in attaining national and global peace.

Number/ numeracy:

30

APPENDIX I: Basic Education Curriculum (Primary 1 – 3)



NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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E-CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

Print Date : 10/23/2017

EDUCATION LEVEL : PRIMARY

BASIC EDUCATION (PRIMARY 1-3)

Minimum of 6 subjects; Maximum of 7 subjects

Subject Group	Explanatory Notes
English Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Official National Language ii. Medium of Instruction in schools iii. The subject predisposes itself for the infusion of the following Road Safety Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education, Consumer Education. iv. Subject include Literature - in - English
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Fundamental discipline for science and technological development ii. Important for everyday life
Nigerian Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. National Policy on Education (NPE) stipulates that the medium of instruction should be the language of the immediate environment of the child. ii. Schools are free to select such Nigerian Language to be taught.
Basic Science and Technology (BST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Each of the listed components will serve as themes for the Basic Science and Technology curriculum ii. Climate change is part of Basic Science theme iii. Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Consumer Education are infused into Basic Science and Technology Curriculum iv. Create enabling environment for the subject in all schools by making computers available in schools
Religion and National Values (RNV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Listed components will serve as themes in the Religion and National Values Curriculum ii. Contents are planned for all children to take Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education themes iii. Separate classes should be run for CRS theme and IS theme iv. Consumer Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Peace and Conflict Resolution curricula are infused into the Civic Education, Social Studies and Security Education Themes. v. Create enabling environment for the subject in all schools
Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Important for preservation of our cultural Heritage and fostering Creativity.

APPENDIX J: Basic Education Curriculum (Primary 4 – 6)



NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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E-CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

Print Date : 10/23/2017

EDUCATION LEVEL : PRIMARY

BASIC EDUCATION (PRIMARY 4-6)

Minimum of 7 subjects; Maximum of 8 subjects

Subject Group	Explanatory Notes
English Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Official National Language ii. Medium of Instruction in school iii. The subject predisposes itself for the infusion of the following Road Safety Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education, Consumer Education. iv. Subject include Literature - in - English
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Fundamental discipline for science and technological development ii. Important for everyday life
Nigerian Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Schools are free to select such Nigerian Language to be taught.
Basic Science and Technology (BST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Each of the listed components will serve as themes for the Basic Science and Technology curriculum ii. Climate change is part of Basic Science theme iii. Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Consumer Education are infused into Basic Science and Technology Curriculum iv. Create enabling environment for the subject in all schools by making computers available in schools
Religion and National Values (RNV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Listed components will serve as themes in the Religion and National Values Curriculum ii. Contents are planned for all children to take Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education themes iii. Separate classes should be run for CRS theme and IS theme iv. Consumer Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Peace and Conflict Resolution curricula are infused into the Civic Education, Social Studies and Security Education themes. v. Create enabling environment for the subject in all schools
Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Important for preservation of our cultural Heritage and fostering Creativity.

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Source: eCurriculum (NERDC),
<http://www.nerdc.org.ng/eCurriculum/CurriculumStructure.aspx>

APPENDIX K: Basic Education Curriculum (JSS 1 - 3)



NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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E-CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

Print Date : 10/23/2017

EDUCATION LEVEL : PRIMARY

BASIC EDUCATION (JSS 1-3)

Minimum of 9 subjects; Maximum of 10 subjects

Subject Group	Explanatory Notes
English Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Official National Language ii. Medium of instruction in schools iii. The subject predisposes itself for the infusion of the following Road Safety Education, Disaster Risk Reduction Education, Consumer Education. iv. Subject include Literature - in - English
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Fundamental discipline for science and technological development ii. Important for everyday life
Nigerian Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Schools are free to select such Nigerian Language to be taught.
Basic Science and Technology (BST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Each of the listed components will serve as themes for the Basic Science and Technology curriculum ii. Climate change is part of Basic Science Theme iii. Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Consumer Education are infused into Basic Science and Technology Curriculum iv. Create enabling environment for the subject in all schools by making computers available in schools
Religion and National Values (RNV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Listed components will serve as themes in the Religion and National Values Curriculum ii. Contents are planned for all children to take Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education themes iii. Separate classes should be run for Christian Religious Studies theme and Islamic Studies theme iv. Consumer Education and Disaster Risk Reduction Education are infused into the Civic Education, Social Studies and Security Education themes. v. Create enabling environment for the subject in all schools vi. Important for preservation of our cultural Heritage and fostering Creativity.
Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tourism is a theme in Cultural and Creative Arts Curriculum

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Source: eCurriculum (NERDC),
<http://www.nerdc.org.ng/eCurriculum/CurriculumStructure.asp>