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Interfaith Education and the Quest for Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria

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INTERFAITH EDUCATION AND THE QUEST FOR PEACEBUILDING IN
NORTHERN NIGERIA

A Dissertation Presented

by

EZEKIEL ABDULLAHI BABAGARIO

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY 2019

College of Education

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DEDICATION

*I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for His protection and guidance.
To my wife Veronica and children- Blessing, Joseph, Ayoub and Abed for their patience,
thank you for your love and sacrifices.*

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The incessant religious crises in Northern Nigeria prompted me to venture into interfaith dialogue. My desire and passion for this work is to bring peace in my little way in this troubled region. Many people and organizations have helped me tremendously in achieving this goal. I want to first thank God almighty for giving me the opportunity to embark on this study. I am very grateful to my hearthrob and children Veronica, Blessing, Joseph, Ayoub and Abed for their understanding and the pains they went through because of my academic pursuit in this discipline. I will not forget my mother and siblings, my mother-in-law and my other in-laws; you are all supportive of my cause.

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My quest for scholarship began at the Baptist Theological Seminary Kaduna where the desire to learn about the dynamics of religion and politics in Nigeria started. I long for admission in a Nigerian university for Peace Studies/Education but it was not possible. When I contacted Hartford Seminary in 2006 Vanessa Avery-Wall was very helpful with the admission process the rest is history (as it is often said), I am highly indebted to her.

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Jos. I am grateful to the entire members of ECWA Church Anglo-Jos, Plateau State Nigeria; you are my first family after my nucleus family.

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For many out there whom I forgot to mention, please forgive me, I appreciate your contribution. The Lord who sees the heart will reward you for your effort. Thank you all.

ABSTRACT

INTERFAITH EDUCATION AND THE QUEST FOR PEACEBUILDING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Over the past thirty years, relationships between ethnic and religious groups in the northern regions of Nigeria have deteriorated. Conflict occurs on an almost daily basis between Christians and Muslims. Most Nigerians consider themselves very religious which often leads followers of the major religions to fight to protect the teachings of their faith. The high level of illiteracy and lack of interreligious understanding between the faith groups contributes to the propensity for violent clashes in the region. The literature review discusses the concept of religious education, interfaith dialogue and interfaith education as models for peacebuilding in various contexts around the world.

This study examined an interfaith education (IFE) pilot program as an approach for peacebuilding in two parts of Kaduna City, one predominantly Christian and the other predominantly Muslim. The study used a qualitative research method to collect data, analyze and interpret the perceptions and experiences of students, religious education teachers and parents with the IFE pilot project, which was introduced in their schools and communities. The study also investigated how students embraced the IFE curriculum in schools and the reactions of youth to interfaith activities in the community, like visiting places of worship of the other religious group. In addition, the study collected information on the perceptions of religious leaders and parents about IFE programs.

Part of the research methodology involved asking students in small focus groups to draw an ideal community or a picture of their homes or a place of worship before conflict. Then the students were asked to turn the paper over and draw something they had witnessed during interreligious conflict in their communities. Most students either sketched their homes on fire or destroyed. Some portrayed perpetrators of the violence as standing with a weapon or even stabbing someone. The sketches were then used to stimulate discussion about interreligious conflict and its causes.

A majority of the participants indicated their support of IFE curriculum in schools and Community Peace Action Networks in the communities. The participants highlighted several problems that they felt contributed to the conflicts. The use of the term “*arni*” or infidel was cited as often triggering violence because it is such a derogatory term. Other participants pointed to poorly educated, untrained and unsupervised religious leaders who incite their followers. Participants also suggested that the IFE curriculum be used outside of schools in order to reach the many out-of-school youth who are involved in interfaith violence. The research recommended that education, regulating religious preachers, promoting reconciliation efforts, good leadership and a nationwide campaign on interfaith dialogue would contribute to peacebuilding in northern Nigeria.

Key Words: Religious education, Conflicts, Interfaith dialogue, Peacebuilding, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Interfaith education, Infidel, CPAN, Kaduna, and Nigeria.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAPW	-	Academic Associates Peace Works
ACMMRN		Association for Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations in Nigeria
ACRA		Advisory Council on Religious Affairs
AOAV		Action on Armed Violence
ATR	-	African Traditional Religion
CAN	-	Christian Association of Nigeria
CBCN		Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria
CHAIN	-	Christian Awareness Initiatives of Nigeria
CMS	-	Christian Missionary Society
CPAN		Community Peace Action Network
DO	-	District Officer
ECWA	-	Evangelical Churches Winning All
FCS	-	Fellowship of Christian Students
FOMWAN	-	Fellowship of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria
IAP		Islam in Africa Project
IMC-MCDF	-	Interfaith Mediation Centre-Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum
IFE	-	Interfaith Education
INEC	-	Independent Electoral Commission
IPL	-	International Peace League
JIBWS	-	Jama’atil Izalatil ‘Bidah Wa Ikamatil Sunnah
JNI	-	Jama’atil Nasril Islam
KPC	-	Kaduna Peace Committee
KPD	-	Kaduna Peace Declaration
LRA		Lord’s Resistance Army
MRC	-	Muslim Rights Concern
MSS	-	Muslim Student Society
NACOMYO	-	National Council of Muslim Youth Organization
NACRA	-	National Advisory Council on Religious Affairs
NBC	-	Nigerian Baptist Convention
NCC	-	National Communication Commission
NCCA		National Council of Churches in Australia
NIFCON		Network for Interfaith Concerns
NIREC	-	Nigeria Inter-Religious Council
NIV	-	New Internal Version
NSCIA	-	Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
NWGAV		National Working Group on Armed Violence
OIC	-	Organization of Islamic conference
PBUH	-	Peace Be Upon Him (used after mentioning or writing the name of Prophet Muhammad)
PCID		Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
PFN	-	Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
PMSA	-	Professional Muslim Sisters Association
PROCMURA	-	Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
RE		Religious Education

SCSN	-	Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria
SIM	-	Sudan Interior Mission
U.S DoS		United States Department of States
UNICEF		United Nations Children Education Fund
USAID		United States Agency for International Development
USIP	-	United States Institute for Peace
VAT	-	Value Added Tax (a tax system on goods and services in Nigeria)
WOWICAN	-	Women Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria
YOWICAN	-	Youth Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria

CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW AND SIGNIFICANCE

Hans Kung (1991, p. 130) once said, “There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions, and there will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among religions.” Kung, a great advocate of interfaith understanding, emphasized the need for dialogue among the various religions of the world. Research has shown that in the last 40 years, religion has contributed to the rise in conflict more than any other cause (Fox, 2014). Religious militancy has been on the rise, with many youth standing up to fight and defend their faith. There are pockets of such militancy in parts of each continent, either defending their faith or fighting to preserve their faith.

In Africa, there is the case of al-Shabab in Somalia who are advocating for an Islamic State in the region. The group initially represented the militant youth within the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) but today, the group has transformed into a terrorist organization with members and leadership from outside of Somalia (Wise, 2011). The story of Religious militancy in Africa cannot be complete without a mention of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) of Uganda. This group was first known as United Holy Salvation Army, it then transformed to Uganda Christian Army/Movement, it finally metamorphosed into the Lord’s Resistance Army. The terrorist group’s main aim was to remove President Yoweri Museveni from power and introduce theocracy, then rule the country based on the ten commandments of the Bible (Aljazeera News, 6 May 2014).

In northern Nigeria, a group of Muslim scholars started a faith organization. The leader of this organization preached against injustice in northern Nigeria. There was also a campaign by this cleric for the public to shun patronizing politicians because they

looted the country's treasury, causing the poverty Nigeria is experiencing. The organization is *Jama'atul Ahli Sunnah Lil Da'awati Wal Jihad* or "People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad" (Chothia, 2015). The organization follows the ideology of the Wahabis of Saudi Arabia. They recruited members to pursue the cause of establishing a 'just society' governed by the Sharia legal system. However, when the police killed its leader, Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, it was considered an extra-judicial killing by civil society organizations. This action prompted members of the group to metamorphose into a terrorist group in Nigeria called 'Boko Haram', which translates "Western education is sin" (Chothia, 2015).

Research has shown that education was used to create awareness among children and youth towards peace building in some countries that experienced crisis and wars in the past. Northern Ireland, France, Britain, Indonesia, Ghana, Liberia, Rwanda and Senegal are few countries that used education for peace building (Itin, 1999; Wedge, 2008; Richardson, 2011; Jemadu, 2012).

According to Puett (2005, p. 1) "Education is our hope for the future; it is the best resources and means for countering these dangerous trends of prejudice, violence and exclusion that plague our society." Puett's position came as a result of the current trend with the increase in discrimination, prejudice and insurgencies in parts of the world. In most cases, perpetrators of these vices are either ignorant or extremists who are unaware of their actions. However, experts are of the opinion that education has a great role to play in combating some of these excesses. Gienger (2013, p. 120) opines, "Education is that process by which we learn new ways of thinking and believing, a very significant component of the transition- transformation processes. Education is that process by which

we glimpse what might be and what we ourselves can become.” The role of educators cannot be over emphasized in tackling some of the many challenges in the 21st century. Puett (2005, p. 2) posits that, “As educators strive to meet the challenges of the 21st century; many also recognize the critical role that religion plays in the world.” If religion will play a critical role in the world, then there is the need for religious educators and interfaith education practitioners to contribute in shaping the values of upcoming youth and leaders.

Pakistan and Indonesia lately introduced awareness in schools for students to learn how to convert hatred, religious bigotry, and indoctrination into peaceful coexistence within the community (Lie, 2000; Begum, 2012; and Gienger, 2013). Johnson-Sirleaf (2005, p. 3) posits, “Education – the right kind of quality education – can give children hope and opportunities and heal divisions and the traumas of war. A school can and should be a place of peace.”

Brief Background of the Context

In Nigeria, there are religious crises in most parts of the country; religious conflicts are perpetrated by youths of each faith (Sampson, 2012 and NWGAV & AOAV, 2013). Wherever particular faith adherents are in the majority, the majority tends to have advantage over the minority when there is an outbreak of religious conflict. The return to civilian rule in 1999 gave some governors from northern Nigeria the opportunity to prove their allegiance to their religion. They did this through the implementation of the Sharia legal system in their States regardless of protests against it by civil society organizations (Ostien & Dekker, 2010). Some Muslims saw the governors as heroes of a long-awaited effort that came a little late.

However, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), an umbrella body of Christians in the country, opposed such a move, reasoning that Nigeria is a secular State. The constitution of the country allows for the establishment of sharia courts to entertain cases brought to it by Muslims who want to be tried under Islamic law. However, the constitution did not approve full implementation of Sharia law in a State or the country (Ostien, & Dekker. 2010). The Sharia controversy was resolved when the Supreme Court pronounced that such implementation can only take place in a State where Muslims are in the majority, and Christians should not be subject to such laws. The ruling of the Supreme Court was violated in some States where some Christians were prosecuted in Sharia courts, with the excuse that other parties in the cases were Muslims (Ohadike, 1992). Such incidents did not go down well with CAN in some States in Northern Nigeria.

The religious population of Kaduna State cannot be ascertained since the 1991 census did not make provision for a religious affiliation question in the collation (Okolo, 1999). However, it is believed that the population is equally divided among the Christians and Muslims. In February 2000, the governor of Kaduna State after much pressure gave approval for the implementation of a Sharia legal system in the State. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) organized a peaceful protest against the implementation in Kaduna town; they were confronted by Muslim youths on a solidarity march celebrating the implementation. This clash resulted in the deaths of about 5,000 people according to Human Rights Watch (2003).

The past religious conflicts in Kaduna Township prompted the division and settlement of the people based on religious line. Kaduna north and south is divided by the

Kaduna river; initially it was considered one local government area. The incessant religious conflicts and urban migration prompted the division of the local government into two. Kaduna North has a majority of Muslims while Kaduna South has a majority of Christians. Each area enjoyed support from foreign religious organizations based on the majority of such faith in the area. While Kaduna North controls the commercial aspect of the state, Kaduna South control the industrials area of the State. The central market, banks and commercial offices are mostly located in Kaduna North, while majority of the industries are located in Kaduna South.

The Interfaith Mediation Center (IMC) in collaboration with the Kaduna State government introduced interfaith education/networks in some selected schools and communities in Kaduna North and South in 2010. Interfaith education was introduced to enable secondary schools to learn about each other's faith tradition. The normal practice in schools about Religious education (RE) curriculum is that students are separated into two classes one for Islam and the other for Christianity. With the introduction of IFE students can now sit in the same class to discuss religion together, mainly looking at similarities between the two faiths. At the same time students are taught about peacebuilding among them drawing examples from the two faiths. In the communities, Community Peace Action Networks (CPAN) was introduced to create awareness among youth in those communities on peacebuilding. Youth serve as peace ambassadors and early warning advocates for conflicts in their communities. Youth are drawn from the two faiths. In addition, the peace ambassadors organize awareness in the communities using some of the resources suggested by Interfaith Mediation Center-Muslim Christian dialogue (IMC-MCD). Some of the resources are organizing football competition in the

communities, social gatherings in the town halls. The network encouraged visitation to places of worship and religious gatherings, such as marriage and naming ceremonies. In addition, youth are encouraged to attend each other's religious festivities such as Christmas, Easter and the many Eid Fitr, Eid Maulud and Eid Kabir.

Statement of the Problem

Lately, interfaith dialogue has become an integral part of Nigeria's social life as a result of the incessant religious conflict in the northern region (Smock, 2006; & Omotosho, 2014). Youth between 12-18 years often perpetrate the conflict since most of them are out of school. The high level of illiteracy and poverty among parents is likely the greatest contributing factor on why they cannot send their children to school. In some cases, parents allowed their children to attend Quranic schools where they are often radicalized. Some politicians and religious clerics have not helped matters; the politicians connive with religious leaders of their own faith to incite their followers against their opponents (Usman, 1987, and Ekanem, 2013). Religious conflicts are mostly visible in the northern region; there are fewer tensions in the southern region, which may be a result of high level of literacy in that region. Religious education curricula has been part of the education system in Nigeria at all levels. However, the curricula are only focused on students' own faith; leaving the students ignorant of other faiths. Research has shown that most of the youth who perpetrate acts of religious conflict are either ignorant or illiterate (Gwamna, 2010). According to UNICEF (2015) Nigeria accounts for the highest number of children out of school in the world, with a greater percentage of this number from northern Nigeria.

The long period of military rule in Nigeria is believed to have contributed to the

decay in the education sector. Since October 1st, 1960 when Nigeria gained independence from the British, the military ruled Nigeria for 28 years. During the times that the military ruled the country, democratic governments or processes were disrupted to enable dictators to come to power. The military dictatorship is believed to have contributed to the decay in many spheres of the country ranging from economy, infrastructure to education (Usman, 1987). Since the people cannot hold these dictators accountable for their actions, they have helped plunged the country in many crises. On many occasions, the military junta accused the politicians of mismanaging the resources of the country. However, before the tenure of one dictator ends, the country always falls into more crises. Yousuf Gilani a former Pakistani Prime Minister was credited with saying “The worst form of democracy was far better than the best form of dictatorship” (Ani 2010, n.p). According to Gilani, rarely do people rise up to challenge dictators, however, in a democratic era leaders are voted out of power when it is discovered that they are underperforming (Ani 2010).

According to Hook (1939, p. 45) “Democracy is more than a pattern of institutional behavior. It is an affirmation of certain attitudes and values which are more important than any particular set of institutions; for they must serve as the sensitive directing controls of institutional change.” In Nigeria, the education sector just as other important sectors were underfunded by the military dictators. This action contributed to an increased number of children out of school. This is because most parents could not afford the school fees charged in schools which are purported to be free. In addition, the neglect or underfunding of the social security sector contributed to the high rate of poverty in the country. Within the periods of military regimes there was an increased in

militancy in various part of the country, however, the dictators used military might to quell such uprising. However this is a short-lived solution to the problem of militancy. According to Usman (1987) “Dictators provide temporary relief but true progress of country lies through democracy because it confirms freedom of speech, law acuity and economic equity.”

Purpose of the Study

This study addresses the concept of interfaith education/network as a tool for peacebuilding in Kaduna Nigeria. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine the perception of students, parents, religious leaders and RE teachers about the introduction of interfaith education/networks in schools and communities within Kaduna North and South area in northern Nigeria. The curriculum and networks were introduced as factors to achieve inter-religious peace, tolerance and understanding among the youth through education and awareness in schools and communities. The study will examine the response of both religious education teachers and students to the IFE pilot project that was introduced in their schools, and to gather the opinions of parents about the curriculum in schools as well. Since interfaith education is a new concept (Ezegbobelu 2009), this study is to help readers understand how IFE seeks to address interfaith relationship and foster peaceful coexistence. Overall, this study is to understand through the research questions if and how the students’ embrace the IFE curriculum in schools and how the youths in the communities are involved in interfaith activities. In addition, the research is to understand the perception of religious leaders and parents about IFE curriculum and interfaith activities in the communities.

Research Questions

This study will examine the understanding of interfaith education and peacebuilding among secondary school students and youth in Kaduna North and South. In addition, the study will also explore the effectiveness of interfaith education in promoting religious harmony and peaceful coexistence within the communities. The following research questions will guide my understanding of the above concept, which is the purpose, and rationale of the study:

Main Research Question

How have interfaith education/networks contributed to religious understanding in Kaduna Nigeria?

Sub Questions:

- A. What is the perception of students about the pilot program on interfaith education that was introduced in their schools?
- B. What is the perception of parents and religious leaders about the introduction of interfaith education in schools?
- C. What is the attitude of youth towards the Community Peace Action Network (CPAN) network in their communities?

Significance of the Study

According to Sampson (2011, n.p.), the only way to establish a desirable scenario of religious harmony within Nigeria is through "...the creation and sustenance of a neo-religious educational praxis." Such a measure would create a culture of multi-religiosity for children to understand, pursue, and appreciate. By establishing a neo-religious educational praxis, it would also be able to re-orient and re-educate the adult population as well. In most countries where conflicts or crises are experienced education has been used to create enlightenment among the youth who are mostly used as combatants. With

the increase in out-of-school children in the northern region, there has also been an increase in religious militancy. To help reduce youth militancy, the government and international agencies are strategizing on modalities to combat the rise in militancy. The northern region also needs to educate the populace about the rise in religious militancy.

President Buhari reported in 2016 that majority of the leaders of the deadly Boko Haram sect in the north-east region are former fighters from Libya who crossed the Sahel. According to Buhari, these fighters joined forces with leaders of the Boko Haram in Nigeria to recruit available youth who are mostly illiterate and ignorant of their religious faith. Majority of these youth are those who were left out of the schools system in the past. To help combat militancy in the future, the position of Sampson (2011) needs to be taken serious by the government to provide avenues for education for the children. Albert (1999, p. 5) posits, “Education is seen as one of the cornerstones of peace building process.” Education often serves as panacea for peace if used in the right way. Johnson-Sirleaf (2008, p. 3) asserts, “Quality education is central to peace, and peace should be at the heart of education. We owe it to all our children to make both a reality.”

To help counter religious extremism there is the need to create an environment where the concept of interfaith education can be introduced in both formal and informal settings. According to Puett (2005, p. 7) “Interfaith education has an important role to play in the search for new methods of education that will foster broad transformation.” The author is of the opinion that interfaith education will help faith adherents to acknowledge the importance of others. The fragility of religion in Nigeria calls attention to the need for new methods of educating the children and parents about interfaith harmony and understanding. To help foster peaceful coexistence among the people, there

is a need for paradigm shift in education by promoting curriculum that will create awareness among the youth about the different religions of the world. Study has shown that countries that are divided on religious lines tend to disintegrate more easily than a country divided by political ideology (Reynal-Querol, 2002).

Definitions of Terms

Religious Education (RE)

To understand what RE is all about, there is the need to first understand what religion is all about. Over the years, religion is viewed as a unifying factor among adherents; it helps in building harmony among people of different cultures or races. According to the Department of Religious Studies, University of California (2015), religion has and continues to be a powerful force within the lives of human beings. Throughout the history of man, including the present-day world, religious agendas have fueled conflict and encouraged acts of terrorism such as ethnic cleansing, dislocating populations, and destroying economies. This may not necessarily define what religion means to all adherents of faith traditions, because some adherents view religion as a moral institution that shapes their beliefs and spirituality (Fagan, 1996). The Department of Religious Studies, University of California (2015, n.p) went further to state: "...but religious traditions have also laid foundation for human rights, social justice, toleration and international peace."

Gwamna (2010) is of the opinion that religious education is a curriculum used to teach about world religions in formal and informal settings. According to the Encyclopedia of Religion (2005) "Religious education is an issue of considerable controversy and debate in Western societies, for some reason. There is a conceptual

problem, depending on whether it is perceived as a religious activity or an educational activity.”

The approaches to religious education vary from one country to another. In some countries, it is collaboration between the State and religious communities, while in others the State relinquished such responsibilities to religious organizations, where instruction takes place only at various places of worship outside of the schools. There are countries where religious discourse is not allowed in government and the public spheres because the government has adopted a policy of separation of Church and State (Alavi, 2010).

Interfaith Dialogue (IFD)

According to Ayoub (2011) interfaith dialogue is an important way for people from different faith traditions to agree on peaceful coexistence. The author posits further,

Interfaith dialogue is also a way to try and create better relations among people who will eventually become friends through contact. In this regard then, interfaith dialogue could serve a very important purpose, which is peaceful coexistence particularly in a world that is made up of what we call the nation-states where I should not be treated as Muslim minority person in a predominantly Christian or Buddhist country, or a minority Christian and Jew in a Muslim country (p. 6).

The term interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative, constructive and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions and/or spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional levels. It is not an alternative religion, interfaith dialogue often involves promoting understanding between different religions to increase acceptance of others, rather than to introducing new beliefs (CSIME 2010; USIP 2011). According to Onal (2010), “Inter-religious dialogue requires three steps: First, to know the other religions, their members or representatives and their rituals, and to accept each other reciprocally. Second, to study the shared beliefs such as belief in God, the

prophets and beliefs about the afterlife. Third, one is to see the common aims of religions, such as behaving wisely.”

Interfaith Education (IFE)

According to Kamara (2010) “Interfaith education seeks to equip learners with the histories, practices, beliefs and values of various religions to of the world, comparing the common goals and mutual benefit.” Interfaith education does not just teach the students understanding of other faiths, it help them develop their own consciousness of what religion is all about. Interfaith education can be compared to peace education in some contexts. This is because religious extremism tends to pitch the people against one another. Awareness in the field of education and religion would be a helpful to enable adherents learns about other faiths and practice the concept of peaceful coexistence.

According to Engebretson, Durka and Gearon (2010, p. vii),

The rise of multicultural, multi-faith, and multi-linguistic societies in countries that were once mono-cultural and mono-religious and, for the most part, mono-linguistic is evident in classrooms and other learning environments around the world. Good pedagogical practice in interreligious education helps students acquire an empathetic understanding of others, their histories, the countries they have come from, and the role religion plays in their lives.

Intergroup Contact Theory

Intergroup contact theory is believed to be among the best options in improving relationship between two or more groups that are experiencing conflict. Allport is of the opinion that communication with one another helps breakdown the issues related to stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. However, Allport did not just propose that every contact or communication will break down these barriers. The author is of the opinion that only properly managed interactions among groups may reduce the prejudice,

discrimination and stereotypes. Contact among the groups may not yield positive result when such exercise leads to anxiety among the participants.

Experiential Education

According to Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman (1995) experiential education is based on the premise of learning from an experience a learner encountered in the past. The conceptualization of past experiences often stems from the reflection on such experiences which in turn will lead the participants into taking actions that may address such experiences either positively or negatively.

The Association of Experiential Education (2015, n.p) also defines Experiential education as a “...philosophy that informs many methodologies, in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities.” Experiential education is utilized in virtually all fields both in formal and informal settings such as “...non-formal education, place-based education, project-based learning, global education, environmental education, student-centered education, informal education, active learning, service learning, cooperative learning and expeditionary learning.”

Prejudice

According to Allport (1954, p. 7) Prejudice is: “an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group.” Prejudice is defined as preconceived feelings towards a person or group members based on their

membership. Such action is often considered a negative evaluation of another person or a group based on the preconceived ideas about the person or group. In addition, Allport (1954, p. 73) posits “Prejudice is a direct result of generalizations and oversimplifications made about an entire group of people based on incomplete or mistaken information.”

Discrimination

According to the United Nations 2(016, n.p), “discrimination is the selection for unfavorable treatment of an individual or individuals on the basis of: gender, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, social class, age, marital status, or as a result of any conditions or requirements that do not accord with the principles of fairness and natural justice.” Allport (1954) also discussed discrimination as the act of targeting a person or group of people because of their affiliation. Allport gave examples of discrimination in education, religious institutions and other places where discrimination is experienced according to the United Nations charter on discrimination.

Overview and Organization of the Study

This study is categorized into seven chapters. The chapters comprise the general introduction of the study, literature review, a discussion on religion and politics in Nigeria, the research methodology used for the data collection, the result of the data collection, discussion of the findings and finally the conclusion and recommendations for further study.

Chapter one introduces the study; it includes a brief background of the study, the statement of the problem, and purpose of the study. This chapter also presents the research questions, significance of the study and definition of some key terms.

Chapter two presents discussions on the topic of the study through review of relevant literature. The review of literature comprises issues on Religious education (RE) in some context. This chapter also presents literature review pertaining to RE in Nigeria and northern Nigeria. The literature then presents discussions on the concept of interfaith in several countries including Nigeria and northern Nigeria. In addition, the literature review discusses interfaith education in schools and its contribution to peacebuilding. Finally, the review examines the relationship between the relevant literature and theories of “intergroup contact theory” by Allport (1954) and “experiential education” by Dewey (1939).

Chapter Three provides a brief history of religion and politics in Nigeria. The chapter discusses the historical background of Nigeria and its evolution as a sovereign nation-state over the years. The chapter also discusses the geo-political distribution and progress towards statehood amidst ethno-religious conflicts and competition for power and limited resources. In addition, the chapter presents Nigeria’s peculiar challenge as a multi-ethnic, post-colonial entity, and the efforts to foster integration among her many federating units of diverse culture and heritage. The chapter also discusses the issue of religion and politics as it affects the unity of the country and how politicians use differences to their advantage by encouraging division among the people on religious and ethnic lines.

Chapter four discusses the research methodology for the study. In addition, it outlines the research design and the rationale for selecting the design, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation methods. The research used qualitative research methodology to collect information from students, parents and religious leaders from four

selected schools and communities, two each from Kaduna North and South respectively. The chapter also discusses the sampling process, data collection procedures. It comments on the validity of the study and ethical considerations for the protection of the respondents' identity against harm because of the study. Finally the chapter discusses the stance and positionality of the researcher, in addition, the limitations and constraints that were encountered in the course of the study.

Chapter five discusses the findings with reference to the literature review, research questions and theoretical framework. Discussion in this chapter covers the themes which came up during the interview. It discusses themes such as discrimination, religious tolerance and understanding, education, interfaith dialogue, interfaith education and peacebuilding.

Chapter six discusses the findings on the interfaith education/network in the communities based on the data collected from the students, parents, religious leaders and RE teachers. It first discusses some of the general issues that came up during the study. It then discusses the findings relevant to the research questions. An analysis of the findings will follow the discussion to link it with the theoretical framework used earlier in the study. This analysis will help understand whether the findings of the research support or disagree with the theoretical framework.

Chapter seven presents the conclusions and recommendations for the study based on the outcome of the findings and discussions. This chapter summarizes the entire study and presents various recommendations. The chapter also presents recommendation for future research in the field of IFE/networks in the communities.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will review relevant literature to help understand the concept and background of interfaith dialogue/IFE. The literature review is divided into four sections to help me explore interfaith dialogue and IFE.

In section one; I focus on the historical background of Religious education. This section gives an overview of Religious education in some countries in Europe, Asia and West Africa. The section will conclude by discussing RE in Nigeria schools with emphasis on northern Nigeria.

In the second section, I will review literature on interfaith dialogue and its importance to peacebuilding. In addition, I will discuss interfaith dialogue from the perspectives of the two major religions in Nigeria (Christianity and Islam). I will conclude this section with a focus on the concept of interfaith dialogue in Ireland, Britain, France, Indonesia, Senegal and Ghana.

In section three, I focus on interfaith dialogue in Nigeria. Though, it is a new concept, it is widely accepted by the people as a result of the incessant interreligious conflicts. I will conclude this section by discussing IFE curriculum and its introduction in Nigerian schools.

In section four, I will explain how I use Allport (1954) ‘intergroup contact theory’ to ground my literature on the theoretical framework of reducing prejudice among people through frequent contact with each other. In addition, I will discuss John Dewey’s (1934) theory of ‘experiential education’ to understand how the students used their experience of

conflict in the past to shape how they view interfaith harmony in their schools and communities.

Overview of Peace Education and Peacebuilding

According to Rogers (1991), as a direct result of the violent civil conflict in Northern Ireland throughout 1969, some have suggested the need to pursue and maintain a long-term role for peace education. Peace education is a concept and an educational curriculum that was introduced in schools both formally and informally at the beginning of the twentieth century (Harris, 2008). Since then every facet of our lives has an aspect of peace education. With the advent of technology helping to turn the world into a global village, a nation does not necessarily need to invade another physically before it is considered a threat. There are cyber threats and cyber/attacks on another country's defense system or economy without entering the country. With these inventions peace education is needed to help resolve some of the conflict that may arise because of globalization (Basiga, 2004; Biswas, 2013; Brock-Utne, 1998).

Harris says that in order to achieve the benefits of peace; individuals must first learn how to manage their own violent tendencies. Peace educators can help us understand how conflict is initiated. By taking such courses, students can learn about peaceful strategies that may be used both at a macro or micro level in an effort to reduce suffering caused by violent wars and ethnic conflicts. Such an education can also help us to understand what structural domestic and civil violence is, as well as environmental destruction. Each of these different forms of violence threatens the entirety of the human race. According to Annan (2014), one of the pressing needs of the United Nations is about bringing peace to countries that are taken over by religious extremism. Each region

of the world has its peculiar need in terms of the crises that are ongoing there; peace campaign or education is needed to meet the requirement of each region.

Kefa and Moses (2012) posit that interreligious dialogue is one aspect of peace education that can be applied in countries where religious violence is prevalent. According to Benneth (2008), there are cases of interreligious dialogue between Christians, Muslims and Jews that have taken place in the past. One such prominent dialogue during the earlier period of Islam that resulted in a pact between Muslims, Jews and Christians under the second Caliph Umar, the so-called ‘pact of Umar’. Still, violence is all too often perpetrated in the name of religion, despite the campaign by various religions of the world to preach peace (Landau, 2003). The increased awareness of religious diversity prompted the hosting of the first gathering of World’s religious leaders that took place in Chicago in 1893. Religious leaders gathered to find a common ground for mutual understanding and religious tolerance which continues today. The Parliament of World Religions meet every year to strategize on how to combat interreligious conflict in the world.

In the next section, I will discuss religious education in some countries in Europe, Asia, and West Africa

Overview of Religious Education

Religious Education in some countries in Europe

According to Peter Schreiner (2005, p. 3) “There is widespread provision of Religious Education as a school subject in most countries of Europe.” In UK, Religious education (RE) is given special consideration in the school curriculum. Also, Christianity was given special privilege over other faiths because the country views religion as part of

government where church and state are directly related (Bingham, 2014). David Cameron once described the UK “a Christian country” (BBC, 2014). He went further to elaborate how important religion is, as part of the British system. He proudly attested that “...we should be more confident about our status as a Christian country and Christians should be more evangelical about how they make a difference to people’s lives” (BBC, 2014). However, the former Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg had a contrary view when he discussed the issue of ‘Christian country’ as he asserts: “I’m slightly nonplussed by people getting very worked up about it. We have important Christian identity in terms of our history and heritage and so on. That is not to say that somehow, we are exclusively Christian...” (BBC, 2014). RE in the UK has two-fold approach according to the Religious Education in English School: Non-Statutory Guidance (2010). The legal document that authorized it in the school curriculum, states that: “Every locally agreed syllabus must reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain” (p.14).

One of the major aims of RE in UK schools is to promote spiritual lessons, morals, nationalism and cultural awareness to equip the students for leadership responsibilities (Religious Education: The Non-Statutory Framework, 2004). As the UK’s diversity grows over time, the education ministry is aware of the enrollment of pupils and students who are not Christian, who either immigrated or had parents who are of other religions. To accommodate all of them in schools, their needs related to RE needs to be taken into consideration. Hence, the RE guideline for schools clarified other needs or the importance of RE in schools by emphasizing that schools should encourage

students to participate fully in their own religious learning (Religious education Core Syllabus in Classroom, 2007). For example, as learners, they can develop skills, ask questions, and explore various truths. As individuals, they can use their own experiences to reflect on questions of truth and morality, ultimately assisting them in understanding the deeper meanings of life and death. As citizens, they can promote dialogue and thus debate one another; they can celebrate diversity, take appropriate action, and finally, put principles into action (Religious Education: The Non-Statutory Framework, 2004).

Religious Education in France was abolished in 1882. Since then, there has been a strict separation of Religion and State, a concept that is termed 'laïcité' or secularism. Laïcité grants religious freedom to citizens, who can choose whether they want to engage in religious activities or not (Winchester, 1917; Benavot & Resnik, 2006; and Beraud, Massignon, & Mathieu, 2008).

However, such acts are confined to their private life. In 1905, an act of parliament was enacted for the separation of Church and State (Liogier, 2009). Since then, religion or RE was never an issue in the country. Schreiner (2005) further explained that there were a series of debates in parliament about RE in public schools. He pointed out that in the late 1980s; a debate began on whether or not individuals should participate in religious teachings and followings in school. Some parents and teachers saw a need for religious inclusion, so that students can understand the history, art, and language of their religion. History and geography were replaced with education about religions. Schreiner further stated that, in 2001, Jack Lang, the Minister of Education, asked Régis Debray, a former adviser to President Mitterrand to produce a report about the present situation, as well as give series of recommendations on how to change the current path. The title of

the report is ‘Teaching Religious Facts in a Laïcistic School.’¹ Since the attempt by the ministry of education to look into possibilities of a RE curriculum, efforts have been ongoing to produce documents that will be used for RE teacher training.

In Northern Ireland, Religious education is defined and implemented by the Department of Education alongside the four main Christian churches in Northern Ireland. A revised curriculum presents young students with the opportunity to further develop their personal understanding and enhance their spiritual and ethical awareness (Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance, 2007). There was a long period of conflict in Northern Ireland perpetrated in the name of religion. The conflict reflected divisions between the Roman Catholics and Protestants, leading to the establishment of two separate school systems: the religious based schools and the government-established schools. Though RE was taught in the different denominational schools, the curriculum only covered the knowledge and understanding of that particular denomination alone (Coolahan, Hussey, & Kilfeather, 2012). However, in 1981 and 1985 integrated schools were established to accommodate students from both the Catholic and Protestant side of the faith divide (Smith, 1999). With the integrated school system, RE became one of the required courses/subjects in schools. According to the Religious Education Core Syllabus in the Classroom (2007), the objectives of the RE are to enable students to have knowledge, understanding and awareness of their faith tradition, revelation of God, the Christian Church, Morality, and world religions. Students are also expected to recognize themselves as individuals, contributors to society and contributors to the economy and

¹Laïcité ([la.i.si.te]), literally "secularity", is a French concept of secularism. It discourages religious involvement in government affairs, especially religious influence in the determination of state policies; it also forbids government involvement in religious affairs, and especially prohibits government influence in the determination of religion.

the environment. The learning outcomes of RE is the expectation that students should be able to understand RE as it affects their daily lives. Students should be able to “Research and manage information effectively to investigate religious, moral and ethical issues...” (Religious Education Core Syllabus in the Classroom, 2007, p. 1).

The conflict of Northern Ireland prompted the Department of Education to introduce another curriculum that addressed certain controversies that affected some of the issues in religious education. Since Northern Ireland had a long history of conflict between the two major denominations, curriculum in ‘Controversial Education’ was introduced (Richardson, 2011). According to Richardson, controversial issues historically are those which people feel are important to themselves and those close to them. Controversy and conflict arise when people hold opposing views. People can maintain strong beliefs about a particular issue, which can invoke a complex emotional response. In Northern Ireland, many controversial issues relate directly to the more recent past and more specifically to religion, culture, and identity. According to the curriculum, controversial issues can give rise to aggressive emotional responses from people often creating barriers to resolving the issue through reason and rationality (Teaching Controversial Issues: Northern Ireland, 2007). According to Richardson, this curriculum helped to play down heightened tension among students resulting from the division they found themselves in as a result of the conflicts among their parents. Since religion is one of the factors that led to an escalation of the prolonged conflict, this curriculum in schools along with RE is believed to have helped the students understand the techniques of engaging controversial issues relating to religion without leading to conflict.

Religious Education in Asia and Africa

According to Ashraf (1985), the World Conference of Islamic Education in Saudi Arabia concluded that Islamic Religious Education should aim to provide a balance in the growth of any individual, especially within the areas of the individual's spirit, intellect, rational, emotional and physical senses and feelings. With this in mind, education must cater to the growth and enhancement of an individual in all aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, and linguistic. This must be accomplished individually and collectively, with the intention of motivating all participants towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. In regard to Islam, the ultimate aim for Muslim education lies in the realization of submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.

Amin (2013), an official at the Religious Affairs Ministry in Indonesia, once expressed his views while applauding RE in the UK that, religious education is not used as a tool for indoctrination but as a means for students to be critically reflective about religious teachings and practices. Hashim & Hasan (2008) argue that RE curriculum in Indonesia is fashioned in a manner that students are expected to grasp a deep understanding of their faith and internalize its teachings. RE is not restricted to formal schools; various Islamic religious organizations established religious training centers that included boarding schools for religious studies. Since Islam is the dominant religion in Indonesia, efforts have been made by religious leaders to teach children about their faith tradition not just as a curriculum, but for propagation of the religion of Islam. However, other faith traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism are also taught in schools in Indonesia (Schonhardt, 2013). Regardless of the place of RE in

the education curriculum in Indonesia, some experts still asked the question as to what extent have they achieved the objectives of the curriculum. Amin remarks further that religion is expected to transform and enhance a student's behavior. It is also seen as an avenue to build the character of an individual. To what extent these goals have in fact been achieved remains a challenging and immeasurable question.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs realized that the expected goals for introducing RE in schools have not been achieved; hence the clamor for a reduction in science courses and an increase in RE. According to Schonhardt, Musliar Kasim who was then Deputy Minister of Education, defended the proposed plan to increase RE hours in schools because according to him, "Right now many students don't have character, tolerance and empathy for others" (para. 6). Kasim believed an increase of hours for RE will create "balance between attitude, skills and knowledge" (para. 8). Though parents were against the proposed changes as initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the ministry is determined to implement them. Schonhardt reported in *The New York Times* that a survey conducted in Indonesia in 2012 discovered that there were religious conflicts between the main leading Islamic sects and other religious faith traditions. The increase in this conflict is attributed to the lack of enough hours of RE in schools. Bambang Widianto who was a senior staffer in the Vice President's office asserts: "You can see that we are getting more intolerant, students cannot accept that there are people that have different religions and come from different background" (para. 7). The results of the proposed increased in RE hours in schools by the Ministry of Religious Affairs helped to answer the question posed by Amin earlier when he discussed the UK's RE curriculum in comparison to Indonesia's. Amin (2013) poses the question as to why other

religions have not been taught to students. He continues that a proper understanding of other religions could potentially promote virtues of respect and overall social cohesion, an environment that is incredibly important in a diverse society, such as Indonesia's. He is of the opinion that the UK experience can assist Indonesia with understanding the concept and practice.

Senegal is a Muslim-dominated country like Indonesia. It is one of the Franco-phone countries in West Africa. Unlike Indonesia, Senegal is considered a secularist country regardless of its rich Islamic heritage. The elementary education system is built on the cardinal principles of being free, secular, and compulsory (Mbow, 2011). Like France, Senegal does not allow religion in the public sphere (Marshall, 2008). However, in 1981 there was agitation by some stakeholders on the need to introduce RE into public schools. According to Mbow, President Wade established an Islamic institute with the responsibilities of fashioning informal Islamic religious education for students. Unlike most Islamic-dominated countries' policies toward non-Muslim religious practices, Senegal, according to the U.S Department of State, has complete religious freedom. Religious education is taught in public elementary schools for up to 4 hours per week. Parents determine which type of religious education their children/wards participate in, either Christianity or Islam (U.S DoS, 2015). Christian denominations established various schools in the country and RE is part of their curriculum. Christian students are taught Christian Religious Education, non-Christian students in these Christian schools are taught moral lessons (Camara & Seck, 2013). According to Andre and Demonsant (2009), there is competition between formal schooling and informal Koranic religious schools because some parents prefer to send their children to Islamic Koranic schools as

against the formal schooling. Most countries in the Sahel region promote Islamic religious education though they are not mostly compulsory in schools.

Religious education in Ghana has a long history; it could be traced right from the first contact between Christian missionaries who first established schools as a way of proselytizing (Kudadjie, 1996). Many Christian organizations established schools in the country, and each of these schools teach RE curriculum. At some time in the history of education in Ghana, some schools did not distinguish who would be taught Christian RE. Christians and non-Christian students are expected to take courses in Christian RE. In schools established by Islamic organizations, Islamic RE is taught to every student regardless of the student's faith. Many parents were not comfortable with the system. Also, there are cases where these religious organizations that established schools tend to discriminate regarding who to admit in their schools if students or parents refuse to conform to the school's policy on RE (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010).

The government of Ghana enacted an Education Act in 1961 to address cases of discrimination against students' admission into religious based institutions. The Education Act 1961 states that no individual shall be refused admission or attendance at any institution on account of religious persuasion, nationality, race, or language. Also, no tests or inquiries shall be made in regard to an individual's religious beliefs prior to their admission to any religious institution. Since the enactment of this act, there have been amendments in the years following. The debate is on the divide between the introduction of RE in schools as accepted by some parents on the one hand, and those who are opposed to RE because of the claim that Ghana is a secular state. According to Addai-Mununkum, (2004), there is no equality in the dispensation of RE in Ghana. RE teachers

were provided for Christianity and Islam only, but the African Traditional Religion (ATR) is neglected. While defending the teaching of RE in schools, Ellis (2010) at an inaugural lecture called on schools to place more importance on religious and moral education. According to him, some of the younger individuals were confused because of the information delivered to them from various sources. As a result, stakeholders in the education sector should provide youth with holistic religious education that would ultimately instruct students to care for each other, show genuine love, respect authority, be courteous, time conscious, and stick to doing what is right when confronted with challenges.

Religious Education in Nigeria Schools

When the British arrived the southern region in present day Nigeria, schools were established side by side with the missionary schools. According to Kaunda (as cited by Ivorgba 2006) many different factors and motives were behind the original introduction of education in Nigeria. The missionaries, for example, saw the education of the indigenous people as a means of facilitating their conversion to Christianity. The Colonial administrators believed that education could produce a literate population that could serve in various capacities, including running errands as a domestic hand messenger or a clerk. Both approaches to education were based on giving the African what was considered best for him and not necessarily an education system that was in accordance with their cultural heritage, sociological environment, or one that was aimed at projecting and promoting any sort of African personality.

According to Jawoniyi (2009), Christian missionaries established schools and built health clinics and roads; Christian Religious Knowledge known then as Bible

Knowledge was included in the school curriculum. Most of the Bible knowledge lessons were for conversion to the Christian faith or for proselytization. The missionaries needed to train indigenous lay readers to help them with the spread of their mission in the region. There were however, conflicting religious education curricula depending on which denomination the missionaries who established the schools belonged to, catholic or protestant. The colonial administrators and missionaries worked side by side on the issue of education, the administrators offered grants to schools to encourage education where religious education is part of the curriculum. Ivorgba (2006) remarks that the British administrators later withdrew such grants to schools, because the missionaries were more concerned with training evangelists; while the administrators were concerned with intellectualism.

According to Ilechukwu and Ugwuozor (2014), religious education has been one of the most important subjects for Nigerian students because it helps them to truly understand and pursue thought, character, morality, and aspiration. Most parents are more concerned about their children's performance in Religious Education than other subjects because the thought that one's child does not know his religion is considered a failure on the part of the parent. According to Campbell (2014), despite corruption of religious leaders in Nigeria, Nigerians boast about being one of the most religious countries in the world. To express solidarity about their faith, some Nigerian parents insisted upon informal religious education for their children out of school. Ilechukwu and Ugwuozor further state that it is believed religious education helps the student understand their relationship with God and RE is said to help students/children shape their life through morally upright living. Also, some parents are of the opinion that RE helps to tutor

students in the right attitude towards others and to have an intelligent understanding of their role in contemporary society (Igwe, Rufai, & Olufemi, 2013). This is because religion is viewed as an institution that improves the lives of the adherents; parents want their children to be of good behavior in the community. In an example of uprightness, they are encouraged to participate in religious education. Pope Pius XII (as cited in Krupp, 2012) once encouraged the training of faith-based education to the children or else they may be retarded in their moral life thereby jeopardizing their spiritual upbringing.

Experts on religious education are often consulted to offer solutions to moral decadence on the part of students (Aleyomi, 2012 & Oloidi, 2014). This seems similar to the case in Indonesia where a government official affirmed that fewer hours in religious education is the cause of conflict in the country (Schonhardt, 2013). While defending RE, Igwe, et. al (2013, p. 13) assert: “The various types of indiscipline perpetrated in schools is a function of religious laxity.”

Religious Education in Northern Nigerian Schools

Since the advent of formal education in Nigeria, religious education has been part of the curriculum. Although Muslim emirs from the northern region were initially against western education within their domain, they were convinced that Islamic religious education should be prominent in the curriculum (Jawoniyi, 2009). Islamic religious education flourished in northern Nigeria because of the interaction between Arab traders and scholars from the Hausa and Kanuri tribes of the region. There was movement of Islamic scholars in the Sahel region of West Africa comprising present day Senegal, Mali, Timbuktu, Niger and Chad (Larémont, 2011). According to Bugaje (1979), the

Jihad of Sheikh Uthman Danfodio gave more credence to the proliferation of Islamic religious education. This jihad spread across the entire Hausa lands and beyond, though some of the minor tribes in the region resisted the imposition of the religion of Islam. In places where the religion of Islam was established, parents endeavored to send their children to Arabic and Quranic schools to learn how to read and write in Arabic. At the same time emphasis was placed on the knowledge of the Qur'an. Quranic recitation competition is an annual event within the community, district and regional levels where young men and women compete. The British administrators allowed the practice of Islamic religious education to continue even when they conquered the region (Lemu, 2001).

Religious education in northern Nigeria, both formal and non-formal, has a long history of dedication by the teachers and students. In the non-formal area, some Muslim parents send their children from one part of the region to another to study under a religious scholar (Yusha'u, Tsafe, Babangida and Lawal, 2013). This type of Islamic religious education is known as the Almajiri Schools. "Almajiri education is an aspect of Northern Nigeria Islamic education system. It is a semi-formal non-secular education in which children between the ages of four and eighteen are assigned to wandering Islamic teachers..." (Yusha'u, et. al. 2013, p. 127). In this type of religious education, pupils read from wooden slates that have religious writings. Children, mostly boys, gather around a fire in the evenings or mornings to memorize or recite what was written on the slate (Ross, 2014). According to Yusha'u, et. al., for some of these boys that may be the only form of education they will ever access, since their parents considered it an act of piety to send their children to learn about their faith. The Almajiri religious education system is

believed to have contributed to the high number of children out of school in northern Nigeria (Kriesch and Scholz, 2014), which was put at about 10.5 million children according to USAID in 2013. Though there is a high rate of children out-of-school in northern Nigeria, adherents of the Christian faith have a lower percentage of the children in this category (Antoninis, 2012). This may be a result of the literacy campaign adopted by missionaries when they first arrived Nigeria. They encouraged school enrolment and also introduced literacy education in churches.

Yusha'u, et. al., states that there are thousands of Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria. When the government realized that neglecting those children might have adverse effect on the country, the government embarked on a school project to address the situation. The government launched an Almajiri Education Program to integrate both religious and western education curricula. This development helped reduced the number of children out of school; it also helped to move some of the children away from religious scholars who were only bent on indoctrinating them. The overall goal of Almajiri Education program according to Taiwo (2014, p. 247) is: "To ensure that Almajiris are provided with opportunities for access to Basic education;" not neglecting religious education which is of most importance to the parents.

According to Dahiru (2011) Islamic religious education has a complete pattern of grooming children to absorb moral values and obedience to the tenets of the religion. According to the author, children will have the opportunity to read their sacred texts in the original language. This is very important to every Muslim. Also, it gives the children the opportunity to understand or study the contribution of Islamic sciences to society and inculcate in the children moral values that are aligned to the teachings of Islam. Bello,

Yusuf, and Olatunji (2013) outline the benefit of integrating Almajiri education with western education so that the students will have the opportunity to learn and better understand Islamic rites that will be taught from the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Surah, and Tahdhib.

According to Okoro (as cited in Taiwo, 2014), the Almajiri system was originally designed to instill in young minds the doctrines of Islam as specified in the Quran. The goal is to teach children the basic spiritual, moral, and social values as a way to enhance and strengthen their sense of responsibility. It was also meant to teach them the value of caring for those in need. However, Lemu argued that it is unfortunate that these esteemed goals have been defeated over and over again throughout the years by some dubious modern-day Islamic scholars who oversee these groups of children. Since most of the non-formal Almajiri schools in the past did not help in educating the children about the importance of western education or literacy, this program according to the government is channeled toward achieving that. Experts are of the opinion that when the children acquire formal education, they can comfortably read and understand the Qur'an better (The Economist, 2014).

In churches, religious education is given priority too. Most women who are illiterate try to learn how to read and write to enable them to teach their children about the Christian faith. This is because they are of the opinion that religion or religious education is one of the legacies they can leave for their children (Lemu, 2001). Most Christian parents encouraged RE in schools because they see the teaching of RE as a means of liberation. Since most parts of northern Nigeria have a Muslim majority population, the Christian parents fear forceful conversion of their children through

Islamic religious education classes (Umaru, 2014). Apart from this fear, since Christian religious studies is not taught earlier, parents are of the opinion that lack of Religious education in the lives of their children has been a major contributor to vices in society such as sexual immorality, smoking, drunkenness, cultism, drug trafficking, drug addiction and examination malpractices. A strong biblical teaching is believed to further build sound morality among the children according to parents (Ilechukwu & Ugwuozor, 2014). Thus, parents encouraged Christian religious education in schools; however, in some States where Christian religious education is not allowed, the parents organize such non-formal classes in the churches (Jawoniyi, 2009).

When the missionaries established schools, Christian religious education was part of the curriculum, whereas those established by the British colonial government did not enforce the subject in all schools. Certain areas of the far north such as Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, Borno, Jigawa, Kebbi, Zamfara, Adamawa, Gombe and Bauchi were exempted from introducing Christian religion education in public schools (Gwamna, 2010). After the departure of the British, subsequent governments continued the practice until the government of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979) enacted a decree in which the government took over schools (both private and missionary funded). The government then adopted a national curriculum for all schools in Nigeria (Adeyinka, 1988). However, some of the northern States listed above still refused to include or accept Christian religious education in their schools. Christian parents who reside in these States resolved to teach their children about religion in churches and at home (Okoh, 2012). In most cases, mothers strived to learn how to read and write to enable them to teach their children about religion, since they spend more time with the children than the fathers.

Also, various Christian denominations organized Sunday school classes for the children at their various churches. Parents encouraged these classes so that their children would be firmly grounded in the Christian faith (Ilechukwu & Ugwuozor, 2014).

When Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1979, the government encouraged the teaching of religious education in schools. This period also marked the acceptance and approval for Christian religious education in some of the States, including Bauchi, Adamawa, Southern part of Borno, and Gombe (Gwamna, 2010). With this new development parents seized the opportunity and encouraged their children to participate in religious education activities in schools. Ilechukwu & Ugwuozor are of the opinion that Christian religious education is used as a way to produce strong men and women, with strong character and personalities. This is because Christian parents see religious education as an avenue where children will understand their relationship with Jesus Christ and in turn become good disciples. Ilechukwu & Ugwuozor further conclude that religious education helps students to grasp an understanding of their role in the society by developing a sense of responsibility in their daily endeavors.

However, there is no difference between the Islamic religious education way of indoctrination and that of the Christian Religious education since all of them always lay claim to be superior over the other (Faleye, 2013). Lemu (2001) explained further that the concern of parents and teachers both in formal and non-formal settings is to inculcate in their children/students the notion and techniques of being pious and how to propagate their religion. Each religion has the concept of reward for their followers who win more persons from the other faith to their own. And that is the struggle in which each adherent

tries to achieve the goal of being superior to the other (Jawoniyi, 2009 and Haynes, 2009).

The struggle for supremacy by each faith tradition in northern Nigeria is mostly believed to have political undertones (Adogame, 2005). Omotosho (2014) is of the opinion that since Nigerians claimed to be religious people, religious organizations will definitely be rich source for interfaith dialogue. This is because most adherents rely on the teachings of their religion to strengthen their faiths. According to Bennett and Dubensky (2007, p. xv) “Religion is a powerful force in societies around the world and in the lives of people everywhere.” As such, experts on interfaith dialogue are of the opinion that there are teachings in the various faiths that will point adherents to interfaith harmony that could help to arrive at a common ground (Little, 2007). The United Nations 62nd General Assembly in 2007 adopted a resolution for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The resolution encouraged member States to consider and initiate dialogue where necessary. The UN goal for interreligious dialogue is to promote “...tolerance, understanding and cooperation among religions of the world” (p. 2). According to Patel (2013), diversity is the existence of different people, groups, identities or religious beliefs living within a close circuit. Gulen (2006) posits that diversity is important and can be used to unify a group, people or countries in conflict as a result of agitation between different camps. Northern Nigeria is experiencing such differences that have resulted in increase of religious extremists who caused havoc in the region. What then can be introduced in northern Nigeria since there is no respect or love among some of the adherents of Christianity and Islam?

Ziebertz (2005) outlined three distinctive aspects of religious education that may help in understanding interfaith dialogue. The author listed them as ‘mono-religious model’, which lays claim to only one true religion with basic truths adopted by other religions. There is the ‘mono-religiosity’ which lays claim to the ultimate and authentic single true faith. Lastly, there is the ‘multi-religiosity’ that has no basis for classifying religion into any category but relates to each faith objectively without judging it. The latter according to Ziebertz is the model that all religions should adopt so that interfaith dialogue would be taught from within the faith as against learning it from outside. In my opinion, to relate to each faith without judging it may only be possible when people accept that there are other views different from theirs. Just as Freire (1998, p. 107) states, “If the structure of my thinking is the only correct one, accepting no criticism, I cannot listen to anyone who thinks or elaborates ideas differently from me.”

In the next section, I will discuss interfaith dialogue and its importance to peacebuilding. I will also look at the efforts of interfaith dialogue in some countries in Europe, Asia, and West Africa. I will finally discuss the concept of interfaith dialogue in Nigeria and the efforts of interfaith dialogue NGOs towards peacebuilding in northern Nigeria.

Interfaith Dialogue and its Importance for Peace-Building

As seen in the contribution of experts in the field of religious education in Nigeria, the goals of teachers and parents can be summed up under: allegiance to the religion and moral righteousness in the society. These tend to point the children/students toward a selfish and self-centered view of their faith even though the religions may lay claim to teaching/preaching peaceful co-existence. However, Blair (2015) argues that

when students are taught that their faith and ideologies are more important than others, it tends to breed animosity against the other. This has contributed to religious extremism among the students who look down on the others and refuse to accept the diversity in the community.

Patel (2013) is of the opinion that interfaith studies can bring about the needed awareness among people of different faiths who live together. He further argues that the prevalence of high-profile religious extremism prompted the need for interfaith studies. Merdjanova and Brodeur (2009, p. 13) argue, “Inter-religious dialogue increases awareness about how to improve human interactions on multiple levels (locally, regionally, or globally) by recognizing the importance of integrating religious identities into inter-group dialogue.” According to Blair (2015, n.p) “The more the people know about the other, the more people come to accept one another.” Interfaith education may contribute to awareness among learners/adherents about the beliefs and practices of each other’s faith. In situation where such learning environment is absent, it leads to conflicts. If each faith only recognizes their own tradition then the effect of teaching such religion is to portray the other faith in a bad light. The result is for such faith to become violent. Hamza (2015, n.p) is of the opinion that “When religion loses its metaphysic, it loses the ability to defend itself intellectually, its defense becomes violence.”

Blair (2015, n.p) opined, “Education is security”. However, he was quick to point out that religious education is often taught to children with a focus on the locality as opposed to reframing the education in a global context. When religion is taught with closed ideology, the actors mostly justify conflicts perpetrated under the name of religion. Interfaith dialogue is very important in areas where religion is a sensitive issue; when

such dialogue is neglected it usually leads to tension. Rabbi David Rosen (2015, n.p) once pointed out “Evil people can do evil things, but only good people do evil things in the name of religion”. Also, Kadyifci-Orellana (2013, p. 150) posits, “The majority of conflicts in the world today are identity conflicts, in which identity is defined according to ethno-religious lines, or where religious traditions are used to justify violence and depict negative enemy images”. Markham (2013) pointed out that religion just like language is an important aspect of an individual identity. Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke (2007) stated that anyone who desires to search for peace in the world must not ignore religion. He further emphasizes that “Today, religious and ethnic identity plays a huge role in setting the world’s agenda.... If today’s leaders are going to be effective, they must learn how to respond to personal and group religious identity” (p. xi).

Since religion is considered a form of identity, many adherents’ actions turn to violence when such identity is threatened without recourse to the rights of others. The inability to recognize the rights of others is something that is somehow inbuilt within the teachings of some faith traditions, which is transferred to the adherents (Ekanem & Ekefre, 2013). Cornille (2013, p. 21) remarks, “Religions tend to claim the fullness of truth and the definitive and unquestionable way to the highest goal. Most religions refer to a transcendent source for their fundamental teachings and practices, which forms the basis for religious confidence and certainty.” Gulen (2006) is of the opinion that despite the certainty and beliefs of any religious tradition, they definitely have concepts of love, respect, forgiveness, peace and human rights. In addition, no faith can lay claim to be perfect and the best, since religion is an avenue that brings all races together in

brotherhood. The author further states that each religion has a lot to learn from the other.

According to Lochhead (1998), at the center of interfaith dialogue is the notion that we all have something to learn as well as something to teach. It is important to understand that interfaith dialogue is not intended to create a new one-world religion. We celebrate the idea that religious diversity exists and that it is here to stay. However, we aim to work together for the betterment of our future, rather than pursue paths that lead to isolation, conflict or competition. When respect for diversity is not included in modern day religious education, such curriculum would lose its value, with adherents having faith without reason, instead of having reason with faith (Susan, 2015).

According to Blair (2015, n.p), “In some cases when religion is taught badly it contributes to poverty.” This may be as a result of indoctrination whereby adherents are made to undergo certain rituals, beliefs or practices whereby they do not want to make decisions for themselves; they prefer listening to their religious scholars. Instead of developing themselves either through education or wealth creation, they look up to these religious scholars to provide for them. Some adherents view religion as a solution to all their problems, because to them religion tends to proffer solutions to life issues regarding right and wrong or good and evil. (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009).

De Laval (2009, p. 5) stresses that “Dialogue refers to the mutual exchange of experience, ideas and opinions between two or more parties; i.e a conversation. Dialogue is a two-way or multi-way communication”. Sharing of ideas and opinions are important factors when two or more people from different backgrounds meet. It helps in educating each other about one’s concepts, ideology and beliefs.

For the purpose of this study, the concept of interfaith dialogue will be considered. The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCID, 1991, n.p) defines interfaith dialogue as “All positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of faith, which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect to freedom...” Forde (2013) stated that interfaith dialogue encourages human interactions and relationships in multifaceted and diverse ways beyond the discourse. This is because interfaith dialogue involves individuals and communities working on different levels, not only mere talk or words. This helps to create awareness and understanding among people of different faiths, identifying causes of tension or conflict between the faiths. It also helps in building confidence, thereby doing away with stereotypes, which culminate in distrust of each other. Ayoub (2011) opined that interfaith dialogue is an avenue for different faiths to know more about each other. The author called this opportunity a “fellowship of faith” (p. 5). The increase in religious tension and conflict in the latter part of the twentieth and early twenty-first century has prompted the need for more dialogue among different faith traditions (Yablon, 2010). Shafiq and Abu-Nimer (2007) remark that the purpose of dialogue is to help fight against negative conditioning and fanaticism, with the hopes of opening the door for listening, communication, and mutual respect.

World religious leaders are increasingly participating or encouraging interfaith dialogue. To have a peaceful world, all religions must be at peace with each other. Lately, there has been clamor for peaceful coexistence among the various religions of the world (Al-Nasser, 2013). Though there are fears in some quarters about the genuine nature of interfaith dialogue, Cilliers (2002) argued in favor of interfaith dialogue. The author

posits that by participating in interfaith dialogue, no one is in anyway undermining or blaspheming one's own religious practices. Interfaith dialogue is only successful and constructive when people are willing to listen and respect the beliefs of other religions.

According to Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 88) "It is apparent that all must live together in perpetual co-existence or all will perish," because of lingering inter-religious conflicts experienced in many parts of the world. The authors are of the view that dialogue among religious adherents is an opportunity for the adherents to prove to their Creator or their covenants of respect for other creatures. One great way of achieving this is through interreligious education; Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 85) continue, "Interreligious dialogue and interreligious education are privileged moments when God calls human beings to greater fidelity to their commitments and covenants". D'Costa (1998) once said that every religion has a form of legitimacy and validity most especially when viewed from within a particular context by its adherents.

Since each faith is seen as genuine, every effort according to experts must be channeled towards a peaceful coexistence with others. Ehrenkranz and Coppola supported this claim, that nurturing a strong platform of diversity, pluralism, and equality is essential for creating a peaceful coexistence. It is not essential that in such an existence all parties completely agree and assimilate each other; indeed, that would defeat the purpose of dialogue. Studying, living, working, and especially the sharing of food and safety help to cultivate this community of peace. While discussing the commitment of individuals toward dialogue, Hall (2005) remarks that when pursuing interfaith dialogue, we must remember that it is the meeting of people(s) who believe in a greater power, not the meeting of systems in which that belief is practiced or explained. Experts are of the

opinion that inter-religious dialogue needs to start from within, that whoever wants to be involved in dialogue must first internalize the acceptance of other people's views. When one cannot acknowledge the existence and importance of others, then involvement in dialogue may be futile (Gulen 2006; Ezegbobelu, 2009; Yoffle, 2011; and Cornille, 2013).

In addition, Hall argues that interfaith dialogue is human communication that seeks to create and advance a world of shared meaning among those that participate. It is also a sacred communication where all parties can witness the truth of their own faith while at the same time, become open to a set of experiences related to the truth of that faith. He further stressed that, it is not to assume an uncritical approach to other faiths or belief systems; rather it espouses a willingness to set aside any and all previous judgments that arisen from ignorance. Ego, the real enemy of truth, can lead one to believe that their beliefs are the final arbiters of what is true. As it is taught in interfaith dialogue, Yahweh/God/Allah alone is absolute. Therefore, all other efforts, both theological and religious systems fall short of naming the Ultimate Reality. Since dialogue has to start from within, it means that religious leaders and educators have an enormous task of teaching their followers the rudiments of dialogue, which they should internalize just as the statements of their faith. Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 89) remark, "Religious educators and leaders have special opportunity to create space for learning and teaching about the other and finding common ground to do God's will together."

Forms of Interfaith Dialogue

According to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Council (1991), there are many forms of interfaith dialogue. The council was quick to point out that interfaith dialogue should not be viewed as ‘a one size fits all’ kind of model. The council proposed four forms of interfaith dialogue, which are:

- a) The dialogue of life: where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations.
- b) The dialogue of action: in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people.
- c) The dialogue of theological exchange: where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values.
- d) The dialogue of religious experience: where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute (para. 42).

Virtues of Interfaith Dialogue

Cornille (2008) listed some virtues that participants of interfaith dialogue need to display while engaging the other. There are five of such virtues: humility, commitment, trust, empathy, and hospitality. The author is of the opinion that participants engaging in interfaith dialogue must be humble about what they already know and be ready to listen and learn from the other. Dialogue is not child-play, participants must be committed to the cause and be ready to be held accountable for their actions. They must hold firm the belief of their religion at the same time be open to avenues for new learning. Regardless of the opinions and assumptions about other faith by the adherents, participants in interfaith dialogue must be ready to trust each other. Trust is very important in dialogue;

it helps participants to overcome obstacles of suspicions and negative assumptions.

According to Cornille, the virtue of empathy calls participants to view dialogue as an intimate venture. This is an avenue for participants to view the other from an insider's perspective. Finally, the author posits that hospitality is pivotal among all the other virtues. Cornille (2008, p. 177) regards it as the "the sole sufficient condition for dialogue." The main point here is for participants to be good hosts to their visitors or they will miss the opportunity for meaning dialogue.

Principles of Interfaith Dialogue

Ayoub (2011) emphasize that interfaith dialogue helps people of different religious faiths to understand more about their own spiritual life. Differences in ideology and belief systems of believers are considered the catalysts that often trigger religious conflicts. According to Panikkar (1999), success in regard to interfaith dialogue requires that people of all religious affiliations meet in an atmosphere of openness, honesty, and trust. A few procedures to aid in this process may include: trust; ability to learn, listen, speak and correct; presume the equality and legitimacy of dignity; the ability to be critical regarding one's faith as well as questioning that of the other; being prepared to explore new manifestations of divine mystery; respecting tradition; allowing discussion and debate; recognizing that symbol and ritual demonstrate the divine mystery more powerfully than doctrines; respecting the place of silence; and allowing time for dialogue to come to fruition. Also, Swindler (1983, p. 1) remarks that:

In dialogue each partner must listen to the other as openly and sympathetically as s/he can in an attempt to understand the other's position as precisely and, as it were, as much from within, as possible. Such an attitude automatically includes the assumption that at any point we might find the partner's position so persuasive that, if we would act with integrity, we would have to change, and change can be disturbing.

Abu-Nimer (200, p. 686) pointed out that “The goal in training for interreligious peacebuilding, as in conflict resolution and intercultural intervention in general, is to facilitate a change from the participants’ narrow, exclusionist, antagonistic, or prejudiced attitudes and perspectives to a more tolerant and open-minded attitude.” Experts suggest that with the understanding of other people’s ideology and respect for one another, there might be decrease in religious conflict (Ashafa & Wuye, 2007; Ezegbobelu, 2009; and Omari, 2015). Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 89) are of the view that “Respecting the value and dignity of human life implies a high esteem for human rights and all religious and cultures have some process by which to teach their responsibilities towards others”. Swindler (2000) posits that interfaith dialogue should not be seen as a form of debate; rather, it should be an interaction on a subject among people with different views. The author further outlined ground rules for engaging in interfaith dialogue. These ground rules were tagged “The Dialogue Decalogue” or the ten commandments of dialogue. In this Decalogue, Swindler listed ten possible processes of engaging people of other faiths in dialogue. They are:

- First Commandment: The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn, that is, to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality, and then to act accordingly.
- Second Commandment: Interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue must be a two-sided project--within each religious or ideological community and between religious or ideological communities.
- Third Commandment: Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity.
- Fourth Commandment: In interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue, we must not compare our ideals with our partner's practice.

- Fifth Commandment: Each participant must define himself. Only the Jew, for example, can define what it means to be a Jew. The rest can only describe what it looks like from the outside.
- Sixth Commandment: Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are.
- Seventh Commandment: Dialogue can take place only between equals, or *par cum pari* as the Second Vatican Council put it. Both must come to learn from each other.
- Eighth Commandment: Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust.
- Ninth Commandment: Persons entering into interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious or ideological traditions.
- Tenth Commandment: Each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner's religion or ideology "from within"; for a religion or ideology is not merely something of the head, but also of the spirit, heart, and "whole being," individual and communal (pp. 174-178).

Brief analysis of Swindler's Dialogue Decalogue

According to Swindler, in a debate, one hopes to influence the mind of another, but not so in dialogue. In dialogue, the purpose is to learn, change, and grow, widening our own worldview beyond what we may currently understand to be real. Since interfaith dialogue is a two-way affair, honesty is paramount because the participants are representing a religious ideology and not personal views. Participants need to open up to each other. Swindler is of the opinion that comparisons must be equal, but a question one may ask is, if dialogue is for peaceful co-existence is there any need comparing ideals or ideologies? A beautiful point raised author is the fact that another participant may not define their partner's identity. The cause of most religious conflicts is because one person or faith often times tries to define who and what the other person or faith looks like. This action invariably brings assumptions and stereotypes to play. Doing away with

assumptions and stereotypes creates an environment of respect and equality, because if one party comes to dialogue with the view that their partner is in any way beneath or above them, they have violated the principles of dialogue. Therefore, they cannot have a fully open and respectful dialogue; this will also affect the trust between them.

According to Swindler, an individual must be resolute in their own faith, but it is equally important that one be self-critical of their own tradition and of their understanding of it. So many adherents hardly see anything wrong with their faith tradition; they believe God ordained the practice of their faith. Such understanding and beliefs may affect engagement in interfaith dialogue, since one cannot learn if one assumes to know all. Having a greater understanding of their partner's faith by immersing in it will be helpful. This will help the practitioner to see the partner's faith from the lens of an insider as against watching it from a distance despite their closeness.

After going through an overview of interfaith dialogue, the forms, virtues and various processes of engaging in interfaith dialogue, in the next section, I will discuss briefly the perspectives of interfaith dialogue as outlined by experts in Islam and Christianity.

Interfaith dialogue Perspectives in Christianity and Islam

Christianity and Islam often preach the concept of love for fellow human beings and respect for another. (Abu-Nimer, 2003; Bartoli, 2004; and Gulen, 2013) The founders of the two religions, Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad PBUH enjoined their followers to adopt the concept of love for fellow humans, it is known as the golden rule. According to Kalman (2010), golden rule is ultimately an ethical and encompassing rule on morality. The author explained that the golden rule does not necessarily mean to be nice

to those nice to us or treat only people we like with compassion. Rather, the author states that the golden rule means we should treat people equally with love and respect irrespective of how they treated us. The author asserts, “What golden Rule really means is, we should be nice to people even when they are mean to us” (Kalman, 2010, n.p). Jesus Christ during the Sermon on the Mount states: “You have heard that it was said, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute.”² He went further to instruct his listeners to treat other people, as they would love to be treated,³ this saying has come to be known as the golden rule. It is seen as a commission on how to treat other people with love and respect. Also, in the forty Hadiths Collection of An-Nawawi, Zarabozo (1999, p. 493) outlined one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad PBUH thus: “On the authority of Abu Hamzah Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself’”. From the narratives above, it could be seen that Christianity and Islam promoted peaceful co-existence and love for fellow humans. I will now discuss interfaith dialogue from the perspectives of these faith traditions.

Christian Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue

Pope John Paul II enjoined Christians to embrace dialogue as a pathway to self-realization of oneself and others. He remarks that dialogue is an invaluable practice, particularly in the area of individual and collective growth amongst people. At times, the

²Matthew 5:43-44. Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.](#)

³Matthew 7:12. Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.](#)

idea of “dialogue” can seem to give priority to cognitive dimension, all dialogue links to global, existential dimension. The whole of a person must participate no matter if it is individual or within a collective. According to Arinze (1991, p. 201) “The attitude of the Catholic church to followers of other religion had taught clearly that dialogue is a part of the church’s evangelizing mission”. The author further questioned the rationale behind interfaith dialogue as Christians, since one of the missions of the church is to evangelize members of other faiths. Arinze asked, “if the church is engaged in dialogue does this mean that she has given up proclaiming salvation of Jesus Christ?” (p. 201). The answer to this question can be found in the resolution passed by the Second Vatican Council in 1962. The council recognized people of other faith and their religious beliefs; also, the council is of the view that there are positive values in the adherents of other faiths as well. As such, Pope John Paul II during this council encouraged dialogue with people of other faiths. The church assured adherents of other faiths of their willingness to cooperate with them to build bridges of unity and acceptance.

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (2008, n.p) posits that the goals of interfaith dialogue are “To promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religious tradition. Also, to encourage the study of religions; and to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.” Inasmuch as the Second Vatican Council encouraged dialogue with people of other faiths, there is a source of concern on the issue of evangelization as credited to Arinze, the head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the time. If the goals of dialogue as outlined by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue are to be achieved, the clamor for evangelization needs to be placed on the back burner. Dialogue

cannot promote mutual understanding, respect for other religions, encouraging the study of religions and be dedicated to interreligious harmony if adherents hold dearly to their principles of proselytization. Pope Benedict XVI in 2005 emphasized that interfaith and inter-cultural education and understanding is essential to be able to go forward in the world and into the future. It is not optional but necessary. Hall argue in the same direction while drawing attention of Christians towards dialogue. The author posits that interfaith dialogue is paramount in order to not only develop and maintain positive relationships among various religions, but also to serve as a catalyst for personal, social, and cultural transformation. Such development and practice can be seen in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, whose teachings promote peace, justice, and reconciliation among peoples, even though the followers of said religions have not always adhered to the core beliefs.

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) beautifully outlined the purposes and objectives of interreligious dialogue among Christian, Muslims and Jews in Australia. The purpose is “To provide opportunity for the national bodies of each faith to come together to build understanding and harmony in the Australian context” (NCCA, 2003). Unlike the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the objectives of NCCA clearly omitted anything that has to do with proselytization. The objectives are as follows:

- To be a model of how different faiths can live harmoniously together in Australia
- To build understanding, good will and a sense of community between people of different faiths
- To explore and learn about each other and our faith traditions
- To share our knowledge and insights with others
- To work together to achieve common goals in Australia

-To support each other in times of difficulty (NCCA, 2003, n.p).

This concept of dialogue is helpful for each faith community that is coming to the table. Each faith does not necessarily have to lay aside their teachings and values. At the same time such teachings and values are not supposed to be prominent while engaging in interfaith dialogue. Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 91) opined that “The kind of dialogue that we think is most fruitful is where the participants are freely invited into dialogue to learn about the other in a safe, respectful and trusting way. Debate, argument, and intellectual competitiveness are not helpful motives for dialogues”. Hall challenged Christians in Australia to extend the concept and practice of dialogue to the marginalized community. The author emphasizes that “...Christians are called to dialogue not only to learn about the positive value of other traditions but as a way of overcoming prejudice, purifying cultures of dehumanizing elements, upholding traditional cultural values of indigenous peoples and, purifying their own faith” (p.97).

The Anglican Communion remarks that interfaith dialogue started right with the beginnings of Christianity, since Christianity came out of a Jewish tradition. Regardless of the hostilities Christians experienced at the beginning from some Jewish sects, the Anglican Communion is of the belief that the peaceful manner as to which the early Christians conducted themselves clearly set the pace for dialogue (Lambeth Conference, 1988). The Lambeth Conference of 1988 did not just limit the promotion of interfaith dialogue with members of other faiths; it went further to appeal to governments in various countries of the world to encourage dialogue between Christians and other faiths. The Anglican Communion established the Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON)

to promote dialogue between Christians and other faiths. According to the Communion, the Network for Inter Faith Concerns was established to encourage:

- Progress towards genuinely open and loving relationships between Christians and people of other faiths.
- Exchange of news, information, ideas and resources relating to inter faith concerns between provinces of the Anglican Communion.
- Local contextual and wider theological reflection.
- Witness and evangelism where appropriate.
- Prayerful and urgent action with all involved in tension and conflict.
- Support for people of faith, especially Christians, who live as religious minorities in situations of discrimination or danger (NIFCON, 2015, n.p).

Like their Roman Catholic Church counterpart, NIFCON included the proselytization agenda in their concept of interfaith dialogue. The concern in cases like this is that it may affect the genuine intention or acceptance of interfaith dialogue by others. However, some Christian scholars are of the opinion that Christians need to engage more in dialogue and peacebuilding because of the history of oppression and war engaged by Christians on others. One of such scholars is Bartoli (2004) who pointed out a great example about Christianity and peacemaking. The scholar remarks that for hundreds of years, the advancement and expansion of Christianity around the world led to many violent and bloody altercations. However, contrary to the vicious actions pursued in the name of God, Christianity has also provided many insights and practical contributions to peacemaking. While the intolerant treatment of others left many scars, many have used Christianity as an avenue to transmit nonviolent practices in an attempt to combat the growing number of struggles that exist around the world. According to Markham (2013), Christians do not own the entire world, there are different classes of people who belong

to other religious faiths, and they are part of this world and need to be respected too. The author enjoined Christians “to share the planet with a whole range of different religions...” (p. 657).

Islamic Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue

According to Abu-Nimer (2003, p. 184) “Cultural and religious values are powerful means of mobilizing people in social and political movements. Islamic nonviolent and peace-building cultural and religious values are no exception to this rule.” Islamic scholars who have accepted interfaith dialogue or education as part of endeavor in their faith are quick to point to their critics a verse in the Glorious Qur’an that addresses interfaith harmony: “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted” (Q. 49:13). Ayoub (2011) elaborated further on this verse that the focus is not merely to accept or tolerate their neighbor or adherent of another faith but achieving proper understanding of the person’s beliefs and practices. The author added, “the purpose of dialogue is to know one another. And this should lead to, in the best-case scenario, what I call a fellowship of faith” (p. 5).

Islam supported and had a long history of engagement in interfaith dialogue. Abu-Nimer (2003, p. 185) supported this assertion that “Islamic religion and culture encompass values and norms that promote peace building as well as the use of force and violence”. The author was quick to defend the concept of violence in Islam as a stereotype toward the faith, since Islam had cordial relationship with people of other faiths in the past and present in some places. Scholars are of the opinion that it started

with the founder of the religion, Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The Medina charter is considered the first step in which the prophet of Islam took to extend a hand of fellowship to the Jews. Though Muslims were a minority at the time, the Prophet was accepted as the leader in Medina; this is a sign of acceptance for co-existence by the two faiths (Kurucan and Kasim, 2012).

Also, some Islamic scholars lay claim to the fact that only the religion of Islam has in its scripture a call for interfaith dialogue (Sanaullah, 2014). The above statement has the support of this Qur'anic verse: "Say: "O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)" (Q. 3:64). Also, mention is made of the effort by the Prophet Muhammad to save the lives of Muslims who were persecuted in Mecca by the non-Muslim Arabs. He sought refuge for them under a Christian King, Ashama ibn Abjar of Abyssinia, present day Ethiopia. There are also instances where interfaith harmony was extended to places of worship. Najran Christians allowed Muslims to use their church for prayers; likewise, Christians used Prophet Muhammad's mosque when they visited him (Funk and Said, 2009; Kurucan and Kasim, 2012). Prophet Muhammad gave a clear instruction to the Muslims about People of the Book⁴ thus:

No clergy's or monk's post shall be changed, nobody shall be denied travel, their places of worship shall not be destroyed or turned into Islamic *masjids* or added to Muslims' buildings. Whoever fails to follow these rules will be violating God's treaty and opposing His Messenger. No taxes shall be collected from priests,

⁴Muslims believe that God had previously revealed Himself to the earlier prophets of the Jews and Christians, such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Muslims therefore accept the teachings of both the Jewish Torah and the Christian Gospels. Hence Jews and Christians are considered or referred to as People of the Book.

clergy, people who dedicate themselves to prayer, monks, or those who occupy themselves with worship in isolated places and mountains... They shall be treated with compassion wherever they are; no harm shall come to them... If they (Christians) need help from Muslims with repairing their churches, monasteries or any other religious or worldly business, Muslims shall help them without placing them under any obligation; help and support for their religious needs shall be provided out of abiding by the promise of God's Messenger, as a donation and as God's grace (Sahih Hadith as cited in Kurucan and Kasim, 2012, p.79).

The narratives above are some of the steps scholars believed to be the foundation for interfaith dialogue in Islam.

According to Funk and Said (2009), another popular work on peacebuilding in Islam can be seen in the works of a classical Sufi⁵ poet Muslihuddin Sa'di. Funk and Said (2009, p. 212) states that: "Sa'di likens all of humanity to a single human body. If one limb of humanity's body experiences pain, others who make up the same body must feel pain also". According to the poet, the cosmos was created by God with everyone and everything in it, as such all humans need to strive to make it beautiful by respecting other people's rights.

A famous Islamic scholar from Turkey, Fethulla Gulen (2006) stated that interfaith dialogue is a tool not merely for media events and pockets of communities. It is a first step in establishing a peace, not to be derailed by polemical arguments and missteps, however severe, of those of the past, but a peace founded on the commonalities of faith, goodness, and a common future. In addition, Muslim scholars under the auspices of 'A Common Word between Us and You,' in a letter to Christian religious leaders also acknowledged the recognition of the growing religious diversity. The Muslim scholars pointed out that in a fight that would include vast numbers of the world's inhabitants, there can be no winner. Muslims and Christians constitute a great

⁵Sufi is a sect in Islam. They are often considered to be the mystical and ascetic branch of Islam.

majority of the global population, and a great deal of terrible and massively destructive weaponry is available to both. Both have a history of committing terrible acts when they believe they are guided by religion. Yet if these two groups were to be at peace with each other, it would constitute a peace unlike that of anywhere on Earth today and pave the way for a further peace within humanity (A Common Word between Us and You, 2007).

This is an indication that leaders of these two faith traditions that engage in conflict realized the need for peaceful co-existence. Funk and Said (2009, p. 215) stressed further “From the standpoint of Islamic spirituality, the ultimate purpose of religion is to make possible peace within the soul and peace with God”. The argument of the authors is that no Muslim can claim to be at peace with God without purging their souls of hatred for others. The authors also added “Many Muslims take pride in the ethics of coexistence they find in the Quran and the hadith and in what they regard as a largely positive historical record in the domain of Abrahamic interfaith relations” (p. 218). The concept of interfaith harmony is increasingly becoming a trend many religious leaders are following and preaching in favor of. According to Smock and Huda (2009, p. 6) “Many Imams across the world are making vigorous effort to educate the younger members of their mosques that extremist interpretations of Islam are inaccurate.” Also, Satha-Anand (2001) argues that the religion of Islam is a fertile soil for nonviolence because of the strong belief in discipline, obedience, sharing & social responsibility. Also, there is a belief in the unity of the Muslim community and the oneness of mankind.

Shafiq and Abu-Nimer, states the concept of interfaith dialogue for Muslims in the West remarks that, within the Western world, the Muslim community is still relatively new, but it is growing fast. They must be ready to combat specific challenges

and tests to secure a safe place for those who believe. The authors listed four practices that are necessary for the survival of this religious minority. These practices include unity among them at the same time to build strong ties with other faith traditions. Also, they should be proactive in addressing challenges as they arise, rendering their opinions to the political process, and building strong educational opportunities in Islamic studies in the context of a pluralistic society. Abu-Nimer (2003) encouraged more research on the field of peacebuilding by Islamic scholars. According to the author the records of wars perpetrated in the name of Islam portrayed the religion in bad light, and as a faith that is opposed to peacebuilding. In the author's opinion, "Islam does not need to be understood and interpreted as an absolute pacifist for Muslims to justify nonviolent resistance campaigns activities" (p. 182). Abu-Nimer believed there are teachings, rituals, values, and ethics in Islam that provide opportunities to encourage and engage in peacebuilding with people of other faiths.

In the next section, I will discuss the concept of interfaith dialogue in some countries in Europe, Asia and West Africa.

Concept of Interfaith Dialogue in some selected countries

In Northern Ireland, the recent increase in Muslim population and other beliefs prompted the need for interfaith dialogue. Also, there is a continual emphasis on intra-faith dialogue among Catholics and Protestants. The agency in charge of dialogue in Ireland classifies dialogue into different categories which includes theological dialogue or discourse for professionals in the field of religion; dialogue of religious experience such as interfaith prayers; dialogue of common action where all faiths work together to achieve a goal; and dialogue of life that has to do with daily living, interaction and co-

existence of people from different faith. These categories of dialogue are believed to be the major contributing factor to peacebuilding in Ireland (Forde, 2013).

According to Helfman (2015) the event of Charlie Hebdo clearly indicated there is need for interfaith dialogue in France regardless of the country's position on secularism. The author is of the opinion that interfaith dialogue or discourse should include secular people as well. The lack of interfaith education among all the people irrespective of religious affiliation will continue to heighten tensions among people. As stated above, the French consider themselves a secular nation, unlike Britain and Ireland. However, the influx of people from other parts of the world to France is making such a claim tenuous. Lately, there are cases of religious tension believed to be a result of extremism from both religious and secular people. In 2012, Salto-Youth Resource Center organized an interfaith dialogue-training course for youth leaders/workers in Lyon, France. Some of the objectives of this training are to help the youth leaders/workers understand the concept and importance of interfaith dialogue; exchange of ideas among people of different faiths; and equip them with the techniques of implementing interfaith dialogue activities within their communities (Salto-Youth Resource Center, 2012).

In Indonesia, the government sponsors the country's concept of interfaith dialogue. Jemadu (2012) clearly expressed it, that the government places much importance on interfaith dialogue to mediate between different religious groups. Though the author criticized the inability of the government to protect religious minorities, it is however commendable that the same government played key role in mediating between the different faiths. According to Lowry & LittleJohn (2006), an Interfaith Peacebuilding Institute was created to train leaders from Christianity and Islamic faith traditions on the

concept of peacebuilding in Ambon, Maluku province, Indonesia. The province experienced a series of religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims to the extent that schools, markets and other social amenities had to be used separately by each faith. This is similar to the case of Ireland where children attended separate schools because of religious affiliation.

Currently, through the effort of many NGOs and the support from religious leaders trained on interfaith dialogue, Ambon adopted interfaith education in schools. Parents and teachers agreed that children needed to be groomed in the techniques of peacebuilding to prevent re-occurrence of religious conflict (Buchanan, 2011). Also, in Aceh and Papua provinces, the Peace Brigade International (PBI) in partnership with some international organizations introduced Participatory Peace Education. The framework for this project was based on the UN Declaration of 13 September 1999. The Participatory Peace Education project is seen as an avenue to "...transfer the values, faiths and ways of life that empowers civil society to resolve conflicts peacefully (Peace Brigade International, 2008, p.18).

In 2008, the then-President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, emphasized the need for interfaith dialogue in the country. In his words "We have seen that dialogue can work miracles. Muslims and Christians should strive to coexist and not allow extremists to drag the world into a war of religions" (Iina, 2008, n.p). Though Senegal is adjudged as one of the most peaceful countries in West Africa, the President was concerned about the rising cases of extremism in Islam. He drew the attention of religious leaders to teach interfaith dialogue to educate people who are bent on stereotypes since the September 11, 2001 attack on the U.S. According to Mahmud (2013), Senegal enjoyed inter-religious

dialogue dating back to the colonial era. Religious leaders of all faiths organize debates on social and religious issues on how to confront bad governance. The author emphasized the contribution of religious leaders towards interfaith dialogue as enormous, compared to religious leaders in Nigeria. Mahmud states that religious harmony and peaceful coexistence came as a result of teachings on respect and tolerance for each other's religion. The result of this teaching prompted members of all religions to celebrate both Christian and Muslim festivals together. He narrated the account of a Christian visitor to Senegal in December 2006 thus:

The first Christmas I spent in the French-speaking West African country of Senegal, where 95 per cent of the population is Muslim, I'd wondered whether I'd feel as festive. I needn't worried. From the African Santa Claus that set up his grotto down the road to the nativity crib on a former slave Island, it was jingle all the way, culminating on Christmas eve when we were deafened by fireworks from our Muslims neighbors garden (pp. 80-81).

The author went further to discuss the harmony between Christian and Muslim women known as "Faas Joom Jappo – which translates as Let us have virtue together" (p. 81).

This program helped in building peaceful coexistence between religions. Mahmud gave credit to religious leaders especially the Muslim leaders and institutions, for the success of interfaith harmony in Senegal, which is a model in West Africa.

Interfaith harmony is celebrated at all levels in Ghana, both in government and private spheres. This, according to Abdul-Hamid (2011) is a result of interfaith awareness created and encouraged by the government. The author was proud to point out that Ghana is a country to be emulated by others when it comes to interfaith dialogue. He listed several ways interfaith dialogue was encouraged, but of great interest is the High school curriculum that addresses the issue. Abdul-Hamid (2011, p. 30) asserts:

Another way in which Ghanaians have ensured peaceful co-existence has been the crafting of religious studies syllabi from the Junior High School to the University. In the social Studies, Cultural studies and Religious Studies syllabi, Islam, Christianity and the African Traditional Religions are all taught. The effect is that by the time students get to the university, they understand the faiths that other Ghanaians live by. Thus, Muslims and Christians are able to empathize with one another and appreciate that the irreducible element in both Islam and Christianity is God.

To further encourage knowledge of each other's religion. The department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Coast only award a degree in Religious studies, unlike the practice in some countries where there is difference between Islamic religious studies or Christian religious studies. According to Abdul-Hamid most graduates of the department expressed a change of orientation toward the other religion after graduation because of the knowledge of that religion. The author emphasized the importance of education in interfaith harmony in Ghana: "Education is another instrument with which the Ghanaian nation has shaped the understanding of Muslims and Christians about each other's faith" (p.31). Samwini (2011) went further to discuss the peaceful harmony in Ghana by adopting and analyzing the concept of "dialogue of life" (p.1). This concept of dialogue was initiated by PCID as discussed earlier; the author interpreted this concept as a form of encouraging peaceful coexistence not just for Christians and Muslims, but to all humans. It is encouraged within Ghana society and the concept was promoted among the people since most families have adherents of both Christian and Islamic faiths. Samwini further remarks that dialogue of life has helped doused the tension of religious misunderstanding in the country because the concept was encouraged and taught within the community. All of these efforts helped in building bridges of peace within Ghana society.

In the next section, I will discuss the concept of interfaith Dialogue in Nigeria. In addition, I will look at the contribution of some interfaith NGOs towards peacebuilding in northern Nigeria as well.

Interfaith dialogue in Nigeria

The government of President Babangida in 1987 initiated the first interfaith dialogue at the national level with 12 representatives each from Christianity and Islamic faith traditions (ACRA Act, 1987). However, this body was ineffective because according to Lewis, Robinson & Rubin (1998); and Igwara (2007); there was not much success achieved by the body. The outbreak of religious conflicts in 1999 prompted President Obasanjo to inaugurate an interreligious body at the national level known as the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council – ‘NIREC’ (McGarvey, 2009). The religious conflicts in northern Nigeria have succeeded in dividing the people on religious line, and the need to rebuild the trust among the people is one effort that is championed by interfaith advocates (Little, 2006; Omotosho, 2014; and Kukah & McGarvey, 2013). According to Omotosho (2014, p. 14) “The various religious conflicts have brought economic and political instability, despite the abundant natural resources in the country”. Experts are of the opinion that religious institutions should be involved in building bridges of trust and peaceful coexistence (Kung, 1990 and Omotosho, 2014). That may possibly explain the reasons why many religious organizations are involved in peacebuilding in the country. According to Princen (1992), involvement of various religious groups towards the effort of peacebuilding clearly showed how religion could educate their community and foster peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths through interfaith dialogue. Omotosho (2014) also is of the same opinion that religious organizations involved in

interfaith dialogue in Nigeria have played leading role in conflict resolution. These organizations encouraged increase in dialogue across religious divisions by mobilizing politicians and policy makers towards that direction. He further asserts, “They use their resources to establish peace forces, fostering favorable environment for negotiations and strengthening weak peace processes” (p. 142).

An interesting scenario worthy of mention here is the effort of two former combatants who were archrivals and religious leaders in their communities. They now use their religious teachings to promote peace in the country and some countries in Africa (Haynes, 2009; and Griswold, 2010). According to Little (2007), Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa were former archrivals and leaders of the youth wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and National Council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO) respectively. Wuye was believed to be the leader of a Christian youth militia group that killed Imam Ashafa’s spiritual mentor. In turn, Ashafa’s militia’s group attacked James Wuye’s; during the confrontation, Wuye lost his right hand (Ashafa and Wuye, 1999). Little (2007) states that these two warlords had the privilege to meet during an immunization program organized by UNICEF in 1995 as representatives of their various religions. The event took place at the Kaduna State Governor’s office. During a coffee break at the forum, a friend held them by their hands and remarked, “The two of you can pull this nation together, or you can destroy it. Do something” (p.261). After series of meetings, the two archrivals finally accepted to forgive each other. While regretting their past actions, Ashafa remarks, “We planted the seed of genocide and we used the scripture to do that” (Griswold, 2010. p. 67). They both embraced peace and seek forgiveness from each other; they later on established the

Interfaith Mediation Center (IMC) in Kaduna. IMC played prominent role in interfaith education in Nigeria (Smock, 2006; Little, 2007; Haynes, 2009; and Griswold, 2010).

Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon is currently the Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion, before his current appointment he was the Bishop of Kaduna Diocese of the Anglican Communion, Nigeria. Idowu-Fearon is an advocate of interfaith dialogue in northern Nigeria (Fieguth, 2015). In an interview with Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University, Idowu-Fearon remarks that “The Anglican position on Christian-Muslim relations is based on ‘Generous love,’ a booklet that states clearly our theological rationale on relating to our ministry to our Muslim neighbors” (para. 4). Idowu-Fearon emphasized that his mission is to educate his fellow Christians about Islam. He stressed further that there is the need to promote understanding and grace to live together in peace. Idowu-Fearon established the ‘Bridge Builders’ an interfaith organization of the Anglican Diocese of Kaduna. In 2013, the Archbishop of Canterbury awarded him the Cross of St. Augustine for his effort on interfaith dialogue. According to the Archbishop of Canterbury (2013, n.p) “he has worked indefatigably on Christian-Muslim relations, displaying extra ordinary courage and vision in often most difficult of circumstances”.

Interfaith NGOs and their Effort towards Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria

In 1999, the Nigerian government established the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC). The council comprised of 50 religious’ leaders from the Christian and Islamic faiths (Ezegbobelu, 2009). They are to advise the President on issues that are sensitive and can cause religious crisis. The objectives and functions of NIREC are:

- a. To honestly and endeavor by themselves and through them, their followership, to understand the true teachings of the two religions-

Christianity and Islam -including their peculiarities and personal mannerisms through dialogue discussions, work-shops, seminars, conferences, pamphleteering, etc.

- b. To create a permanent and sustainable channel of communication and interaction thereby promoting dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria so that the members of both faiths may have mutual understanding of each other's religious position, co-existence among all the people of Nigeria irrespective of their religious or ethnic affiliations.
- c. To promote and include moral, Ethical, social and cultural values of the two faiths for the rebirth and rebuilding of a better society.
- d. To provide a forum for mutual co-operation and promotion of the welfare of all citizens in the nation;
- e. To create for and channels for the peaceful resolution of any friction or misunderstanding that may arise from time to time.
- f. To serve as an avenue for articulating cordial relationship amongst the various religious groups and between them and the Government;
- g. To assist the Federal, State and Local Governments of Nigeria and the Populace by emphasizing and accentuating the positive roles religion should play in nation building and development;
- h. To serve as a forum to achieve national goals, economic growth, national unity and promotion of political stability;
- i. To consider and make recommendations to the Federal and other levels of Government on matters that may assist in fostering integral and spiritual development of Nigerians;
- j. To make recommendations on such other matters as the Federal and other levels of Government may from time to time refer to the Council;
- k. To network with organizations of similar aims at home and internationally, for the furtherance of the objectives of the Council (NIREC, 2010).

Though NIREC was established to champion the cause of initiating interfaith dialogue in the country and to promote peaceful coexistence, many people have different views about the achievements of this council. Some scholars are of the opinion that the

people did not feel the effectiveness of this council because they were considered government appointees. According to Paden, (2008); McGarvey, (2009); & Samu, (2013), there was no improvement on religious conflicts in the country after the constitution of this council. The council is seen as a rubber stamp or puppet of the government. Samu further states that there are divisions in NIREC on religious line, also interpersonal differences among members hampered the progress of the council. In some cases, nefarious activities of some adherents are overlooked because of their religious affiliation. The author remarks, “NIREC has failed to promote and inculcate moral, ethical, social and cultural values of the two faiths for the rebirth and rebuilding of a better society” (p. 7). Paden also attested to the lack of decentralization of the council as he asserts, “The idea of a National Peace Council, with representatives from both Christian and Muslim communities has been established in Abuja... the extension of such councils is most critical at the State and local levels, where much of the violence transpires” (p. 63). The lack of decentralization has affected the effectiveness of NIREC, since the members only meet quarterly, they could not respond to conflict and either avert it or quell it. Scholars are of the opinion that traditional local chief and tribal heads who sometimes serve as religious leaders would be better in handling the peace initiatives and responsibilities bestowed on NIREC (Paden, 2008; Ezegbobelu, 2009; and Aleyomi, 2014).

In Kaduna State northern Nigeria, two former archrivals reconciled and form an interfaith organization known as the Interfaith Mediation Center-Muslim and Christian Dialogue (IMC-MCD). Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye who are the co-directors of this organization played prominent role in initiating dialogue at different levels in the country

(Griswold 2010). According to Hackett (2011), this interfaith organization started as a local NGO in Kaduna by spreading awareness of peaceful coexistence through television program. The Imam and the Pastor respond to questions raised by viewers through a phone in program on issues centered on religious differences. This effort according to the author helped clarified certain contentions or assumptions of the other by the people. The IMC encouraged the formation of peace clubs at the grassroots level for young people of different faith to interact. Ashafa and Wuye (1999) further stress that members of the peace clubs in the communities are trained to respond and alert the authority immediately about the outbreak of conflict. This effort has helped in arresting situations that certain crises would have escalated. Hackett also pointed out that the initiative of this organization in establishing peace clubs in schools helped in creating interfaith awareness among students. Also, they introduced curricula for schools to help reverse the enmity among students based on religious differences, which they called “theology of hate” (p.128).

The Interfaith Mediation Center was credited with the effort of ending the bloody conflict in Kaduna through a peace effort they initiated. According to Smock (2006), the Kaduna Peace Declaration was initiated by IMC, which was adopted by the Kaduna State government. The declaration was signed by religious leaders with the promised to teach interfaith harmony and encourage their followers to respect each other’s tradition. This exercise marked the turning point in Kaduna State. This life changing experience was applied in the neighboring Plateau State, which was engulfed in ethno-religious conflict (Griswold, 2010; Hackett, 2011; Umaru, 2013; Omotosho, 2014; Babagario, 2016).

The Bridge Builders Network was established by Idowu-Fearon the Anglican Bishop of Kaduna Diocese. The NGO over years contributed towards peacebuilding in northern Nigeria by training religious leaders and youth from both Christianity and Islam in Kaduna, which was once considered a flash-spot for religious crises (Umaru, 2013). There are other NGOs that have ventured into promoting interreligious relations in northern Nigeria. Some of the faith-based NGOs are: The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN); the Anglican and Methodist Church in Northern Nigeria which is instrumental in establishing the Islam in Africa Project (IAP); and the Association for Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations in Nigeria (ACMMRN) founded by the Lutheran Church in Nigeria. According to Umaru, these organizations have contributed to the progress of interfaith dialogue in northern Nigeria. The overall goal of these organizations is to provide basic knowledge of the other faith to the youth. While emphasizing the necessity for interreligious education, Umaru further states, “Religious dialogue in northern Nigeria must encourage the education of the younger generation so that they grow with the basic knowledge and understanding of the religious other” (p. 175).

The Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) is an interfaith organization based in Kenya but it has affiliations in some countries in Africa, of which Nigeria is one. The organization has helped in building peaceful co-existence among Christians and Muslims. According to Akinade (2002, n.p) “PROCMURA has helped engender an impressive interreligious awareness among Africans. In many places in West Africa, churches and mosques are maintained in friendly proximity to each other”. The organization has helped in training specialist in Islam and Christian-Muslim

relations; it also helped Christian organizations and churches to reflect on their relationship with Muslims. However, not all can be said to be in support of interfaith dialogue, since there are Muslims and Christians' leaders who hold tenaciously to the ideology of proselytization.

In the next section, I will discuss the concept of Interfaith Education in schools and communities.

Interfaith Education and Peacebuilding

In this section, I will discuss the contribution of IFE in some contexts and its importance to interreligious harmony. In addition, I will discuss IFE curriculum in Nigeria with emphasis on Kaduna northern Nigeria.

According to Miranda (2010, p. 278), "Interreligious education to be personally meaningful to all participants must be dialogic in nature. This is its necessary condition. It is premised on acting toward others with utmost respect, assuming rationality of all, convictions, feelings, decency, etc". In Northern Ireland, the recent increase in Muslim population and others prompted the need for interfaith dialogue and subsequently teaching it in schools (Puett and Van Dyk 2008; Richardson, 2012). Also, there is a continual emphasis on intra-faith dialogue among Catholics and Protestants. The agency in charge of dialogue in Ireland classifies dialogue into different categories which includes theological dialogue or discourse for professionals in the field of religion; dialogue of religious experience such as interfaith prayers; dialogue of common action where all faiths work together to achieve a goal; and dialogue of life that has to do with daily living, interaction and co-existence of people from different faiths. These categories

of dialogue are believed to be the major contributing factor to peace building in Ireland (Forde, 2013).

According to Bouma, G. D., Ling, Rod., and Halahoff A. (2010, p. 1067) “Religion is becoming more diverse across the world and is in a period of revitalization. One consequence of diversity and revitalization is a rise in the demand for inter-religious education”. Religious extremism has prompted the need for interreligious education by religious educators. Before now, emphasis was on interfaith dialogue alone where adherent of different faiths come together to proffer solutions to a religious crisis. The September 11, 2001 attack on U.S soil drew the attention of religious educators all over the globe of the need to educate adherents on the need for peaceful coexistence and to shun extremism.

According to Blair (2015) position about education; he posits, “Education is security” (n.p.). He however, pointed out that religious education is most time taught to children with a focus on the locality as opposed to reframing the education in a global context. He also stressed that when religion is taught with closed ideology, the actors mostly justify conflicts perpetrated under the name religion. In the United States, students are given the opportunity to question certain ideologies either in their schools or places of worship because of the freedom of religion. Students also have the right to disagree among themselves, yet they are taught to respect each other’s view (Killman, 2007). To a large extent one could conclude that religious extremism and terrorism spun out of lack of respect and acknowledgement of another person’s faith as genuine. Experts are of the opinion that ignorance and misunderstanding of other people’s religion lead to the creation of a concept of ‘us’ and ‘other’ (Kamaara, 2010). Cornille (2008, p. 21) once

remarks that “Religion tend to claim the fullness of truth, the definitive and unquestionable way to the highest goal. Most religions refer to a transcendent source for their fundamental teachings and practices, which forms the basis for religious confidence and certainty”. If Blair’s statement about education is anything to go by, then religious educators need to heed the remarks made by Bouma, et. al above about interreligious education.

According to Kamaara (2010, pp. 669-670) “Inter-religious education seeks to equip learners with the histories, practices, beliefs and values of various religions of the world, ...comparing the common points along which religions may engage in common thinking and action towards common goals and mutual benefit.” To address issues concerning religious intolerance many countries adopted the inter-religious education curriculum in schools to train children and youths about religious harmony. According to Engebretson, Souza, Durka and Gearon (2010, p. vii)

The rise of multicultural, multi- faith, and multi-linguistic societies in countries that were once mono-cultural and mono-religious and, for the most part, mono-linguistic is evident in classrooms and other learning environments around the world. Good pedagogical practice in inter-religious education helps students acquire an empathetic understanding of others, their histories, the countries they have come from, and the role religion plays in their lives.

The authors are of the opinion that inter-religious education does not just teach the students understanding of other religions; it helps them to develop their own consciousness of what religion is all about. Since according to Blair, “Education is security”, it will be right then to imagine that the quest for interfaith dialogue should commence in the classrooms through inter-religious education. Roux (2010, p. 994) is of the opinion that “Responsible classroom spaces are needed as starting points for

constructing and understanding diversity, otherness and equality in religions regarding different world-views, belief systems and values.” However, the author was quick to point out a deficiency in this form of education when the religious educator is not grounded in the knowledge of inter-religious dialogue. This seems to be the major challenge the field of inter-religious education faces. This will lead me to the discussion of inter-religious education in Nigeria.

Interfaith education in Nigeria schools

As mentioned earlier, religious education is one of the compulsory subjects in the education curriculum in Nigeria. The subject is taught from elementary to secondary schools, with the option of specializing in the field in tertiary institutions. According to Ilechukwu and Ugwuozor (2014), religious education has been one of the most important subjects for Nigerian students because it helps them to truly understand and pursue thought, character, morality, and aspiration. Most parents are more concerned about their children’s performance in Religious Education than other subjects because the thought that one’s child does not know his religion is considered a failure on the part of the parent. Campbell (2014) argues that despite corruption of religious leaders in Nigeria, Nigerians boast about being one of the most religious countries in the world. To express solidarity about their faith, some Nigerian parents insisted upon informal religious education for their children out of school.

Ilechukwu and Ugwuozor further state that it is believed religious education helps the student understand their relationship with God. RE is also said to help students/children shape their life through morally upright living. Some parents are of the opinion that RE helps to tutor students in the right attitude towards others and to have an

intelligent understanding of their role in contemporary society (Igwe, Rufai, & Olufemi, 2013). This is because religion is viewed as an institution that improves the lives of the adherents; parents want their children to be of good behavior in the community. In an example of uprightness, they are encouraged to participate in religious education. However, no emphasis is made to teach the children/students interfaith relationship either in schools or places of worship. Religious education has the dedication of both teachers and students in both the formal and non-formal settings in Nigeria (Yusha'u, Tsafe, Babangida and Lawal, 2013). Though the religious conflicts in Nigeria are believed to have political undertones, experts are of the opinion that inter-religious ignorance among the youths provided the needed avenue for politicians to fan the ember further (Adogame, 2005; Paden 2008; Haynes, 2009; Jawoniyi, 2009; and Gwamna, 2010).

Since the advent of formal education in Nigeria, religious education has been part of the curriculum. As such all teachers training institutions in Nigeria have department of religious studies Christianity and Islam (Ilechukwu an Ugwuozor, 2014), on graduation, these educators are expected to teach students about their faith. Despite the commitment of the government and parents on religious education, there is high level of religious intolerance in the country. This intolerance led to many religious conflicts, some religious leaders and the government on several occasions have tried to broker peace among the adherents. However, there is a school of thought that believes that the high level of religious intolerance is a result of ignorance and illiteracy on the part of the perpetrators (Larémont, 2009 and Gwamna, 2010).

Religious leaders and some NGOs mostly conduct interfaith dialogue outside of the school or academic environments. Also, most religious educators have no knowledge

of interfaith dialogue or education (Ashafa and Wuye, 1999). According to Ashafa and Wuye, the most common challenge interfaith dialogue faces in Nigeria is the lack of RE teachers that are trained in interfaith education. The authors are of the opinion that since most of the perpetrators of religious violence in Nigeria are youths of school age, teacher training schools should endeavor to include interfaith curriculum into the education system. This way, religious educators will reach out to the students, and at a tender age, they will be groomed to respect each other's faith. Since religion is an integral part of the Nigerian society and research have shown that adherents could fight and die for their faith (Raji, 2009; Ekanem and Ekefre, 2013), it is imperative to introduce interfaith education in schools. This should be taught alongside Religious Education, which is currently one of the compulsory subjects in schools in the country. Also, teacher training institutions need to embark on research for the necessary curriculum that will be used to train teachers of RE or teachers who will want to specialize in interfaith education.

The role of RE teachers and religious leaders towards a successful interfaith dialogue/IFE

Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010) outlined six philosophical frameworks for participating in Interreligious dialogue and education. They are of the opinion that religious leaders and educators have a great role to play in educating their followers and students. Ehrenkranz and Coppola listed six philosophical convictions borne out of observance of religious educators. According to authors, this will help in passing down the basic knowledge of how to engage in interreligious dialogue. They argued that the theory is for interreligious educators and their desire for coexistence and mutual respect for each other. The philosophical convictions include: 'creating a safe place for peaceful

coexistence and practice; cultivating community by valuing of human life; commitment to dialogue and sharing of religious worldviews; working for the repair of the world through justice; consistently proposing a realistic vision of peace and hope; and commitment to life-long learning in the pursuit of truth and wisdom.

To create a safe place for peaceful coexistence and friendship

It was Martin Luther King (1964, n.p) who once said: “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools”. According to Ehrenkranz and Coppola, religious educators have the opportunity than anyone else to create a beautiful space to teach about other faith traditions. They have a special role in developing programs in schools that will provide resources for the promotion of dialogue among students. They claim that “Pedagogy that models deep respect for students, learning, commitments, friendship, community and honesty imbues in students the knowledge, skills, strategies, sensibilities and manner for respectful dialogue” (p.98).

Cultivate community by valuing the dignity of Human Life

Teachers in most communities are viewed as the class of people who helped in shaping the values of a community. Teaching in most case is believed to be a noble vocation, especially religious teachers and interreligious. Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 90) argued “We have all been brought to deeper belief, compassion, and ethical insights by our teachers, mentors and sages. Any pedagogical processes of humiliation and master-servant models are longer appropriate”. Religious education teachers have the responsibility of teaching about the value and dignity of every human. In the process, they challenge the acts of aggression and violence towards others in the name of religion.

Commitment to dialogue and to sharing a religious worldview

Interreligious educators are in better positioned to participate in interreligious dialogue. Not just that but they stand at a vantage position to share with their student's commitment to interact with others of different faiths. Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 98) further states "They are in a unique position to promote understanding within their classes as well as participate in forums for dialogue and study in the larger community to advance greater knowledge, understanding and harmony among people of good will".

Work for the repair of the world through justice

Interfaith educators should not only focus on building bridges according to Ehrenkranz and Coppola, rather they should strive to guide their students to look at how to repair the world. They assert, "...religious educators in their teaching and daily living can work for the repair of the world through justice and education" (p.99).

Consistently propose a realistic vision of peace and hope

Interreligious educators are enjoined to propose "...a realistic vision of peace and hope..." by bringing together participants or students and allowing them to recall past experiences of religious conflicts. This is to enable the students/participants to shape the path for a lasting peace.

Commitment to life-long learning in the pursuit of truth and wisdom

Interfaith educators can serve as initiators of life-long learning among the students. According to Ehrenkranz and Coppola (2010, p. 99) "Continuous learning and teaching can free the mind and body to humbly seek God and imagine a better world".

In the next section, I will discuss some of the challenges confronting interfaith dialogue and IFE.

Challenges of interfaith dialogue

Interfaith dialogue comes with its challenges. In this section, I will discuss some of the challenges interfaith dialogue practitioners' faces. Interfaith dialogue is as complex as religion in some context. Going by the contribution of experts in the field of interfaith dialogue, one would conclude that complexities tend to affect the process of engaging people from different faiths for a meaningful dialogue. The challenges below are just few out of the many; also, some of the challenges are peculiar to particular context.

Lack of focus by interfaith dialogue practitioners

According to Hussain (2014), one of the challenges that confront interfaith dialogue are lack of focus by interfaith practitioners; the author is of the opinion that most interfaith activities are conducted without set goals. The concentration of most practitioners is to reduce tension at a time or try to play down certain issues that are of conflict to both faiths.

Proselytization by some participants

Another challenge is the issue of proselytizing by participants. Some of the participants see interfaith dialogue as an avenue to convert others to their religion. Also, some religious traditions usually find it difficult to accept the position of others. Some individuals are of the opinion that accepting to learn from or about another religion through dialogue shows a sign of weakness. Issues such as this, increase the hostility towards interfaith dialogue. Abu-Nimer argued in this direction stating the fear of the Muslims when it comes to interfaith dialogue. The author remarks that one other fear of some Muslims is that non-Muslims who participate in interfaith dialogue are actually missionaries trying to improve their evangelization efforts.

Claim of superiority over others

Some religious leaders tend to preach about the supremacy of their faith thereby encouraging their followers towards that direction. Many religious leaders felt their faith is the most perfect while others are adulterated and cannot learn anything from such faith. One of such scholars is Sanaullah (2014, p.88) who states that because “Islam is a missionary religion”, the preference for Muslims should be missionary activities rather than interfaith dialogue. The author went further to list certain impediments of interfaith dialogue to Muslims such as the assumption that all religions are equal and point to the same truth. According to Sanaullah, “Islam is a complete religion...” (p. 89). The author relied on a Qur’anic verse to stress this point “...I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (Q. 5:3). The author also listed certain issues like compromise, which is not accepted in Islam since interfaith dialogue may involve compromising one’s beliefs and practices. Also, interfaith dialogue may be a barrier for mission work, since Muslims will not be allowed to embark on missionary endeavor (Sanaullah, 2014, pp. 89-90). To such misconceptions, Abu-Nimer posits that by continuous misinterpretation of various parts of the Qur’an, some Muslims believe that interfaith interaction is only designed to expand the politics, military control, economic might, and cultural influence of the Western world.

Kilpatrick (2014) once criticized Cardinal Dolan of New York for addressing the Muslim community of Tompkinsville on Staten Island as his friends. The author went further to inquire if the church in the U.S has finally succumbed to the charms of Islam. Kilpatrick tried to draw a distinction about the two faiths by questioning the statement by Cardinal Dolan as to worshipping the same God with the Muslim Allah. He is of the

opinion that the concept of common values and beliefs of Muslims and Christians as stated by Cardinal Dolan is misleading. These misconception or misrepresentation according to Abu-Nimer prompted the different interpretation and understanding of interfaith dialogue.

Religious Hegemony

Another major challenge interfaith dialogue face is the challenge of convincing some religious leaders to be part of the process. These leaders believe their authority will be questioned if they engaged in interfaith dialogue, they prefer to maintain the status quo. According to Moraes (2003) Gramsci advanced further with Marxist philosophy of bourgeois dominance in the society. He is of the opinion that a few individuals often use their position within the society to create a ‘class’, which translate to hegemony, thereby dominating others. The religious leaders prefer to maintain the hegemony within their religious faith; any counter-hegemony is resisted using any force available. For them, interfaith dialogue may challenge or question their ideology. It is always difficult to bring such religious leaders to the table, they are afraid of being called traitors or willing to compromise their religious stance. In addition, in some cases, these religious leaders tend to preach against the other faith thereby making interfaith effort difficult for the adherents. Mack (1997, p. 149) asserts, “Inter-religious dialogue becomes almost impossible if the religious other is considered a demonic force”.

Financial Challenge

Financial challenge is another aspect that has been a source of concern for practitioners of interfaith dialogue since adherents would not donate their money for

interfaith work. In addition, international NGOs that are involved in interfaith work are few, as such funding is always hard to come by.

Religious Extremism

According to Omari (2015), religious extremism is another challenge from the two faith traditions. Many adherents are totally against engaging in dialogue or in support of people from their faith to be involved in dialogue. Such people are of the belief that their religion is the only true and right way and thus engaging in dialogue with the other is of no use but a betrayal to their faith. Ramadan (2004) also remarks that those who engage in interfaith dialogue are often left alone without support from members of their faith. As Ramadan puts it, they end up moving from one interfaith conference to another without the support of their faith tradition. This, according to the scholar is one of the disturbing challenges confronting interfaith dialogue.

Lack of Enlightenment

The Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) is of the opinion that self-sufficiency, the inability to allow other people know more about one's religion sometime lead to defensive and aggressive attitudes. Also, the lack of conviction by religious adherents about interreligious dialogue that sometimes is left for the specialists alone. The lack of forgiveness and wrong interpretation of other people's beliefs or practices; and intolerance, which in some cases are believed to have link with political, economic, racial and ethnic struggles are some challenges interfaith practitioners encounter (Declaration and Proclamation, 1991).

Challenge of different Ideologies within the same faith

The conflicting ideology of most adherents is another challenge interfaith dialogue face. Many faith traditions either adopted the concept of inclusivism or exclusivism in determining how they view other faiths. While some adherents have the notion that every human being is somehow a part of their religion regardless of the person's faith; others are of the opinion that when one is not part of the faith, it means such person is out of the fold. Those who believe others are out of the fold often see no reason to engage in interfaith dialogue. Diversity/varieties are said to be the spice of life, it takes the efforts of different walks of life which include religion, ethnicity, race, gender orientation and cultural background to make up a society. These differences and varieties need to be respected. Freire (1998, p. 107) has this to say about respect for differences, he posits:

We can see that respecting differences and, obviously those who are different from us always requires of us a large dose of humility that would alert us to risks of overvaluing our identity, which could on the other hand, turn into a form arrogance and, on the other promote the devaluation of other human beings.

Lack of support from parents

Some parents also contribute to the challenges interfaith dialogue faces. Umar (2013) points out that some parents in Nigeria object in totality to allowing their children/wards to engage in interfaith activities. This is because of the lack of trust for each other which built over the years. Such parents are convinced by the teachings and pronouncements of their religious leaders to make such decision. As stated earlier, some religious leaders connive with politicians of the same faith to instigate the perpetration of crisis in some areas to their benefit.

In the next section I will discuss some of theories which support interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will discuss some theories and examples that will help to understand the concept of interfaith education in schools and communities.

Some experts in the field of interfaith dialogue over the years build their findings or arguments on existing theories of learning depending on where the curriculum was introduced. One of the theories I will discuss among others briefly is Allport's (1954) "Intergroup Contact Theory" which was built on the assumption that when people from different sides of a conflict come together more often, there is a better chance of breaking down the negative ideas and prejudices towards one another.

Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory

During the Second World War, it was believed that the shortage of white soldiers to be recruited resulted in the recruitment of Black soldiers to fight alongside the white soldiers. This action did not go down well with majority of the white soldiers. The majority of the soldiers who refused association with the Black soldiers are believed to be those who had little or no continuous contact with Black people in the past. The research conducted then on this particular incident led to the theory by Allport (Amir, 1976). According to Allport (1954, p. 281) "Prejudice may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional support, provided it leads to the perception of common interests between members of the two groups." Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) pointed out that many experimental research studies conducted about this particular topic tend to agree with Allport's theory. The authors remarked that the findings indicated that the more people had contact with each other from different groups

the more they reported reduction in prejudice and discrimination.

A study conducted by Brown, Brown, Jackson, Sellers and Manuel (2003) on athletes in the United States indicated that majority of the white athletes who had Black teammates have less prejudice towards their teammates. However, athletes who played individual sports were reported to have more prejudice and discriminated against Black athletes. Herek and Capitanio (1996) reported an increased acceptance of gay men by heterosexual men who had contact experiences with the gay men compare to those who have not. The research also reported the experiences of college students with their gay classmates. In some of the cases, these college students never had close contact with a gay person before; however, the interaction in school helped the heterosexual students to better accept their classmate's sexuality.

A study was conducted in Europe on prejudice towards Muslims. It was reported that in Netherlands, people who lived in areas that have high number of Muslims expressed less prejudice towards the Muslims. Savelkoul, Tolsma and Hagendoorn (2011) pointed out that frequent contact with Muslim colleagues in places of work or as neighbors in the communities helped some of the Dutch to accept the new Muslim communities in their region. In addition, Novotny and Polonsky (2011) reported that frequent contact with Muslim students by Czech and Slovak college students helped to reduce the prejudice and discrimination towards the Muslim students. The authors further pointed out that visitation to some Islamic majority countries by some Czech and Slovak students helped them get a proper understanding of who the Muslims are. It also helped to understand their customs and religion, this effort increased positive acceptance of those Muslim students.

Intergroup contact is believed to be among the best options in improving relationship between two or more groups that experience conflict. Allport is of the opinion that communication with one another helps break down the issues related to stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. However, Allport did not just propose that every contact or communication would break down these barriers. The author is of the opinion that only properly managed interactions among groups may reduce the prejudice, discrimination and stereotype. Contact among the groups may not yield positive results when such exercise leads to anxiety among the participants. That was why Allport suggested that the contact should be for a long period to enable participants earn the confidence of each other. According to Allport (1954, p. 73) “Prejudice is a direct result of generalizations and oversimplifications made about an entire group of people based on incomplete or mistaken information”. To help change such perception, the author suggested frequent contact involving meaningful dialogue to better understand each other. Direct communication with a different group will help modify the thought process of participants towards one another. Allport further pointed out that “Intergroup contact facilitates learning about the outgroup, and this new outgroup knowledge leads to prejudice reduction” (p. 42). Arguing in the same vein, Stephan and Stephan (1984, p. 283) say that “Intergroup contact is believed to reduce the fear and anxiety people have when interacting with the outgroup which in turn reduces negative evaluations of the outgroup”. The authors are of the opinion that lack of contact often results in “Ignorance” by those who discriminate against others. According to the authors, such “Ignorance promotes prejudice...” (p. 238).

Allport's Scale of Prejudice and Discrimination

According to Allport (1954, p. 68) “People who are aware of, and ashamed of their prejudices are well on road to eliminating them”. However, those who are unaware or choose not to be aware often draw a line with the concept of “us” and “them”.

According to Allport, when this way of thinking leads to greater prejudice between groups. The author proposed a scale where various levels of prejudice are described. The author argued that the scale is a measure of the manifestation of prejudice in a society. The scale has 5 levels of prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes ranked by the increasing harm they produce.

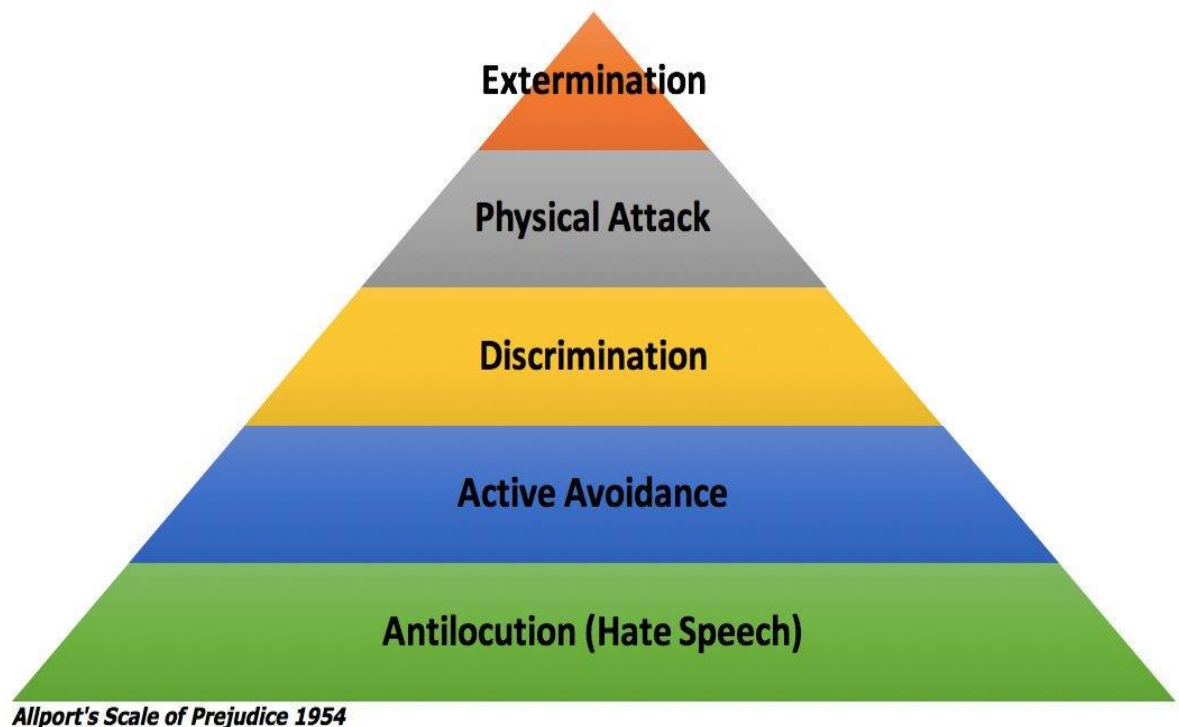


Figure 1. Allport's Escalation Model of Prejudice and Discrimination

Allport's scale of prejudice and discrimination is briefly explained below according to the stages:

❖ **Stage 1: Antilocution** (Speaking against or Hate speech) - According to Allport, antilocution refers to hateful opinions and speech towards another group. It may also mean making offensive jokes against such group. Though antilocution is believed to be harmless, it can cause harm to the self-esteem of the targeted group. Allport pointed out that hurting the self-esteem of a group often seems a self-fulfilling venture by the perpetrators.

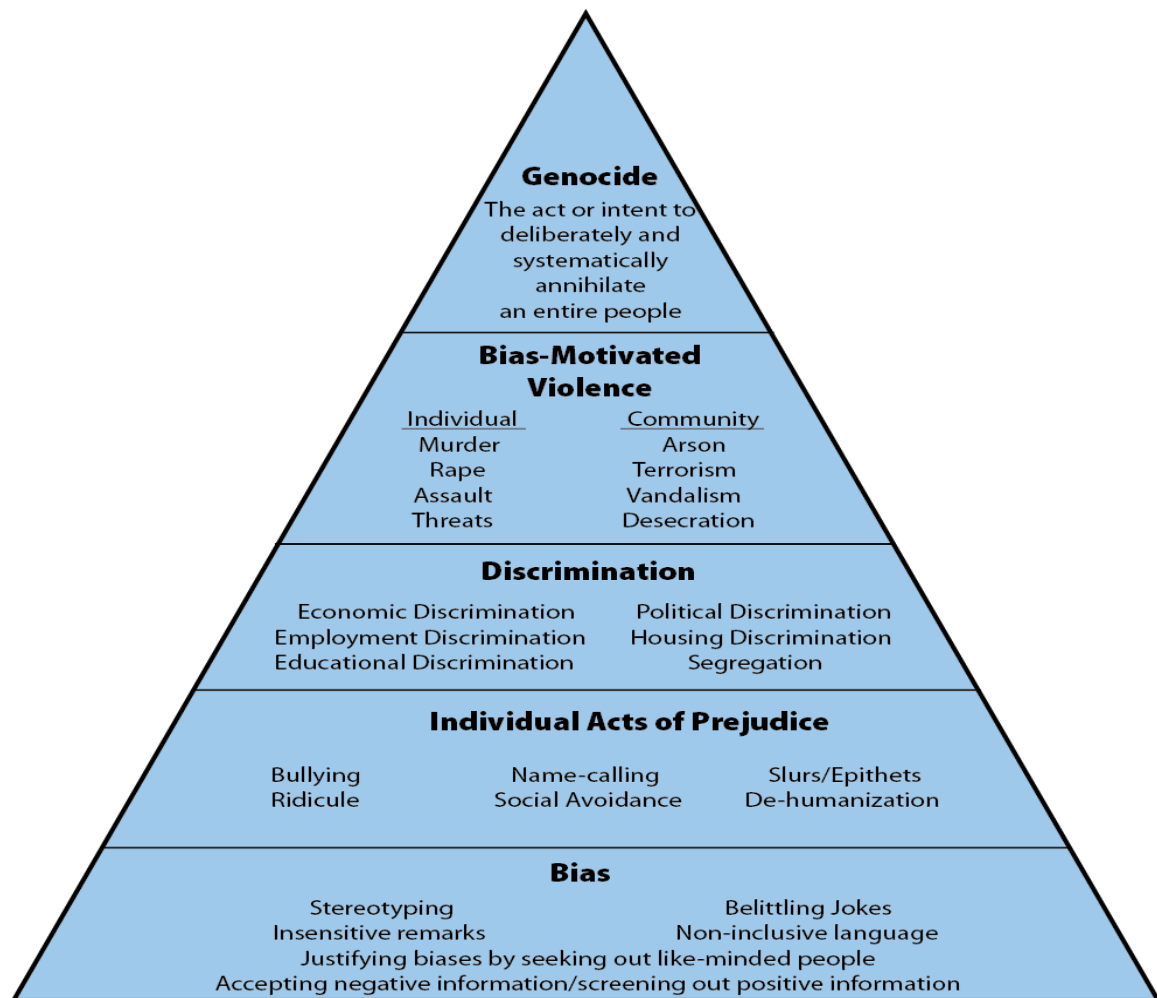
❖ **Stage 2: Avoidance-** The isolation of a particular group is considered discrimination or prejudice toward such group. Such isolation in some cases often leads to harmful acts. The act of avoidance further builds barriers of 'us' and 'them'. In some cases, xenophobic attacks stem from the concept of avoiding the 'other' who is not part of a group, race, gender, religion or sexuality.

❖ **Stage 3: Discrimination and Subtle Aggression-** When a group is discriminated against, they are often denied access to equal rights with the others. According to Allport, discrimination is intended with the sole aim to harm a group by denying the opportunity to achieve certain goals. Race, age, gender or religious beliefs may form the basis for discrimination because it is believed people from the listed classes cannot attain certain stage in their career or society.

❖ **Stage 4: Physical attack-** This is the stage whereby the discrimination leads to hate crime. At this stage, a group may be targeted for violent attack. Such attacks might include vandalism, burning of properties and lynching. According to Allport, at this stage, the group is viewed as threat and should be eliminated.

❖ **Stage 5: Extermination-** This is the height of prejudice and discrimination. In this stage the only option available is to completely wipe out the group.

These stages of prejudices and discrimination among groups can lead to the hate concept experienced daily among people from different sides of a divide. In some cases, when children experience such prejudice and discrimination, they often accept it as the norm in society. Research has shown that children often view people of other groups with a negative perception based on what they experienced in their communities and homes (Stephan & Vogt 2004 and Aboud 2009).



Pyramid of Hate, © 2005 Anti-Defamation League

Figure 2. Pyramid of Hate

Allport's Concept of Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination

Allport outlines five concepts, which could be used in understanding this theory.

These concepts are:

Common goals. the author is of the opinion that members of the groups concerned should work together on the common goal of attaining peaceful co-existence. It is also referred to as the superordinate goal, which can only be achieved when members of two or more groups work in unison through joint effort and resources.

Equal status of members. From each group engaging in the resolution of the conflict is important. Just as the common goals concept above, intergroup cooperation is important because members of both groups will work for the success of the exercise without competition.

Support of authorities, law and custom. Participating groups must take into cognizance law and customs of each party so that certain laws and rituals from another group will not be broken.

Personal interaction. This may be seen as the focal stance of this theory is very important. Participants from different groups need to interact with each other in formal and non-formal settings. A continuous contact with each other will help in dousing the differences among the participants as individuals and as groups.

Intergroup Cooperation. To achieve the result of reducing prejudice and discrimination, groups were encouraged to work together for purpose of achieving a common result. Such cooperation should be devoid of competition among members of the groups. The goal of achieving sustainable peace and equality is supposed to be the main concern of the groups.

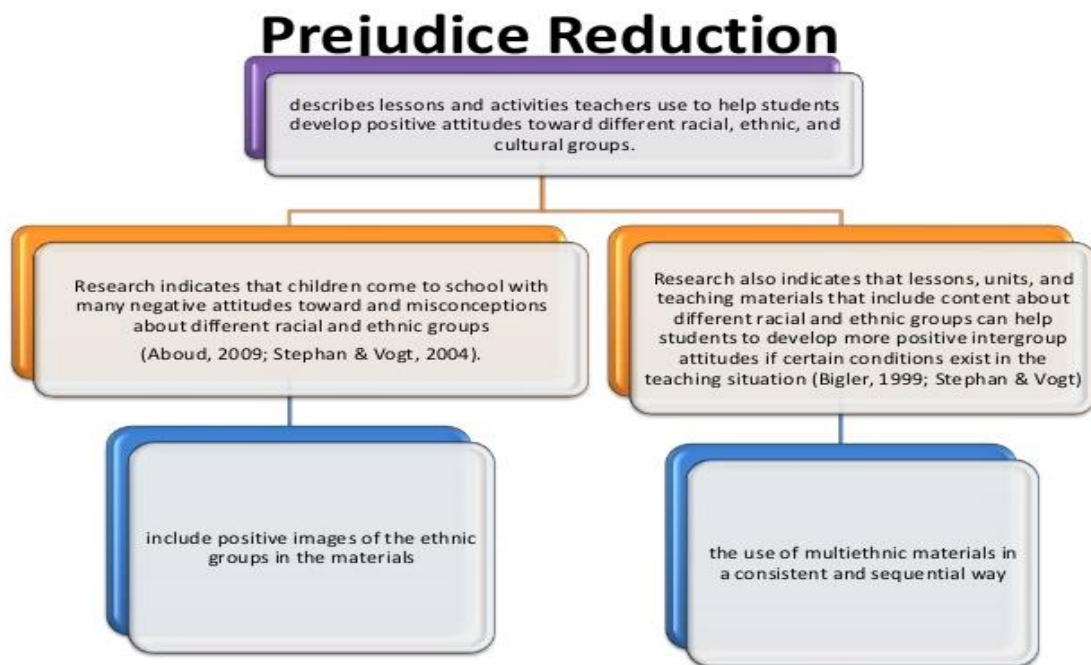
To help students understand the concept of intergroup contact theory, some experts suggested strategies in which teacher and school administrators could help reduce prejudice among students. These experts are of the opinion that children often come to school with certain misconception about others. The experts suggested that teachers are at a vantage position to design class lessons and activities that will help the children overcome such prejudice. They assert that learning materials should include contents that will help the children understand more about others to reduce prejudice and discrimination (Bigler 1999, Stephan and Vogt 2004 and Aboud 2009).

Allport (1954) pointed out that learning the concept of prejudice and tolerance may be a "...subtle and complex processes" (p. 511). He argued that though the home undoubtedly is of great importance in grooming the children, the school is of more importance in shaping the values of these children. According to the author, parents and home environments often inculcate in the children ideals that sometimes encouraged prejudice and discrimination towards other people or group. In such situation, teachers will need to put in more effort in disentangling such notions in schools. Allport outlined eight principles the schools environment could use to help the students understand the dangers of ill-conceived views or ideologies about others they learned at home. The principles include:

- Meaning of races;
- Nature of group differences;
- Nature of tabloid thinking;
- The scapegoating mechanism;
- Traits sometimes resulting from victimization;
- Facts concerning discrimination and prejudice;
- Multiple loyalties are possible.

The author suggested that the school environment will serve two purposes using the above principles in transforming the children. According to Allport (1954, p. 514) the two purposes include “...those stressing change in the school structures (e.g legislation, housing reform, executive fiat) and those stressing change in the personal structure (e.g intercultural education, child training and exhortation).” The author is of the opinion that the teachers and school environment need to be prepared to affect the needed change in the thought process of the children by addressing those issues that often divide them. In the case of Nigeria, it is the issue of interreligious differences among the adherents of the two major faiths in the country.

The diagram below suggested strategies and steps on how prejudice could be reduced among students in school environment.



Source: Fiktorius, Rini and Asmara (2013)

Figure 3: Steps in which school curriculum help to reduce prejudice

According to Pettigrew, learning new information about another group can eliminate stereotype or prejudice toward such group. Pettigrew (1998, p. 70) suggested that "...four interrelated processes operate through contact and mediate attitude change: learning about the outgroup; changing behavior; generating affective ties and ingroup appraisal". In addition, Jackman and Crane (1986) argued that there might be change of behavior in participants when a continuous process of contact is maintained to bring about reassurance among groups in contact. Pettigrew is not unmindful of the negative effect of anxiety during initial contact. The author is of the opinion that "Positive emotions aroused by optimal contact also can mediate intergroup contact effects. Empathy plays a role here"(p. 71). Pettigrew is of the opinion that In-group appraisal plays prominent role during intergroup contact. This is because it gives members of a group the challenge to look inward by accepting new perspectives on how others are viewed. In addition, in-group appraisal helps the various groups to understand that their norms and customs are not the only ways or channels acceptable in the society. Allport's theory was used in many settings and was said to have helped to reduce prejudice among people from different spectrum (Everett 2013).

Dewey's theory of Experiential Education

Another theory that may help address or investigate the success of interfaith education in educational environment is the theory of experiential education by John Dewey (1934). According to Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman (1995, p. 246) "Experiential education is transformational". They believe that experiential education is based on the premise of experiential learning; however, they drew a contrast with Kolb's experiential learning method. Experiential learning, from Kolb's position is said to be the

process of learning from experience by oneself. While experiential education (when experiential learning is mentioned) informs educational learning where learners learn from their experience but structured by another person. Itin (1997, p. 93) defines

Experiential learning as:

...a holistic philosophy, where carefully chosen experiences supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis, are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results, through actively posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, constructing meaning, and integrating previously developed knowledge.

For Dewey (1938 as cited in Itin, 1999) education is a central part of what prepares an individual for participating in democracy and community building. The author is of the opinion that education be designed on the basis of past experience which is believed to shape the current and future endeavors within the community. According to Dewey (1916, p. 104)

When we experience something we act upon it, we do something; then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return: such is the peculiar combination. The connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness of experience. Mere activity does not constitute experience.

Dewey, (1916) and Kolb (1984) suggested that an individual cannot lay claim to having an experience of a situation through mere activity. The authors are of the opinion that experiential learning/education can only take place when a participant undergo certain circumstances which gives concrete experience on the subject matter. Such experience helps the participant to reflect on the outcome of a previous situation thereby conceptualizing to make decision for future action. The conceptualization of past experiences often stems from the reflection of such experiences which in turn will lead

the participants into taking actions that may address such experiences either positively or negatively. Houle (1980, p. 221) posits “For many practitioners, informal education is synonymous with a pattern of learning that might be described as experiential, education that occurs as a result of direct participation in the events of life...”

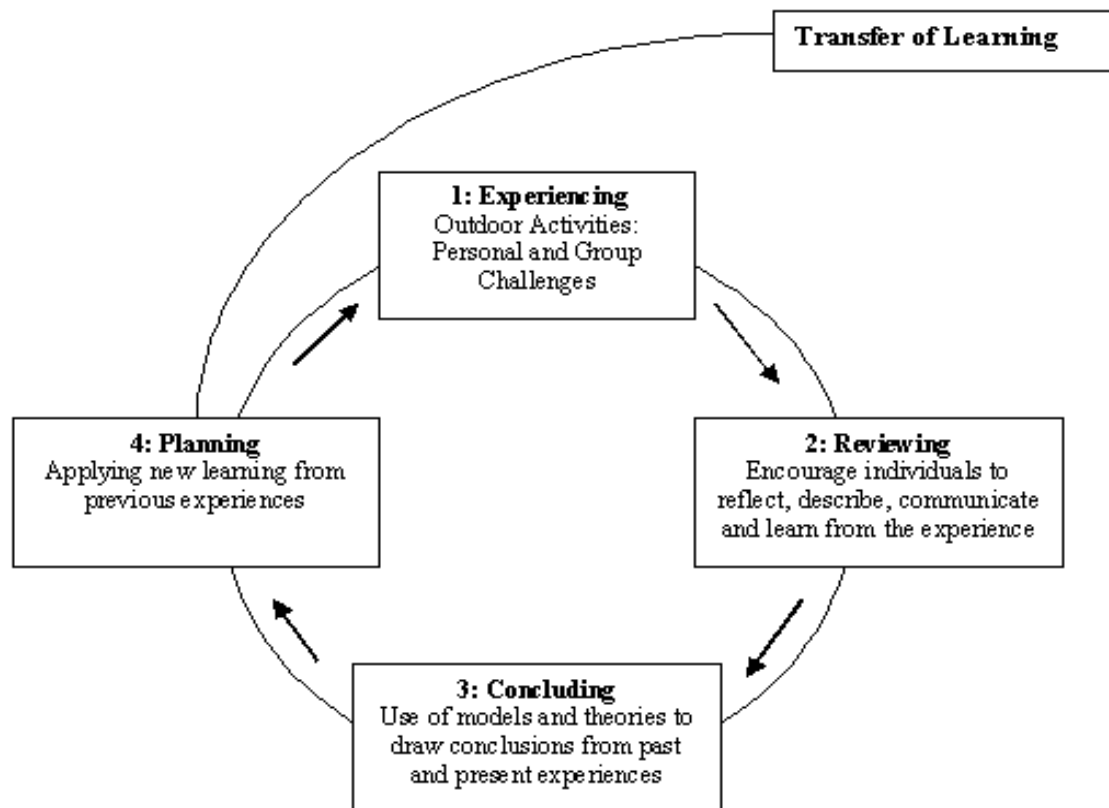


Figure 4: Kolb (1984) 4-Stage Experiential Learning Cycle

Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman (1995, p. 243) outline experiential education’s methodology which they opine that it “...is not linear, cyclical or even patterned. It is a series of working principles, all of which are equally important and must be present to varying degrees at some time during experiential learning”. The principles include:

Mixture of content and process; absence of excessive teacher judgment; engaged in purposeful endeavors; encouraging the big picture perspectives; teaching with multiple learning styles; the role of reflection; creating emotional investment; the re-examination of values; the presence of meaningful relationships; and learning outside of one's perceived comfort zone (pp. 243-246).

Chapter Summary

After reviewing literature on interfaith dialogue and Peacebuilding in some countries and Nigeria, one may conclude that interfaith dialogue is a difficult area to engage in. Experts in Religious studies and interfaith dialogue clearly outlined how different faiths have the concept of love for one another and respect for fellow human in their sacred texts. Islam and Christianity the two faiths in this study tend to have beautiful teachings that point the followers to it. One would envision that adherents of these faiths would adhere strictly to the instructions handed over by their founders. Prophet Muhammad PBUH, and Jesus Christ preached love and peaceful co-existence among the people. One would have concluded that interfaith dialogue will unite these two faiths with little or no stress. However, from the literature reviewed for this study, interfaith dialogue has two sides to it. Some experts are of the opinion that interfaith dialogue should focus on the leadership of the different faith traditions; to a large extent this may be dangerous. Some religious leaders will prefer to maintain the hegemony of their faith since interfaith dialogue may pave the way for questioning certain ideologies within their faith. Such action might give their followers the opportunity to question certain fundamental beliefs or actions.

Also, interfaith dialogue in some of the literature limits the concept to ‘having an interaction’ on the commonalities or differences in the two faiths. Experts criticized this concept and pointed to the fact that talking about commonalities or differences may not bring about the needed result. Others are of the opinion that respect and understanding among adherents may be the key concept for sustainable interfaith harmony. In most cases respect for another person stems from the fact that such person is known to the other person regardless of the differences between them. Adherents of different faiths should not just tolerate others; rather they should understand and respect each other. I see the concept of tolerance in interfaith dialogue as one person doing another person a favor. In the countries discussed above, the values of religious respect and understanding was taught in schools and encouraged within the public sphere.

There is research, which was conducted on interfaith dialogue in Nigeria in the wake of violent conflicts across the country, but there is little research conducted in the area of interfaith education. There is however, a pilot interfaith education program introduced in some schools in Kaduna town to assess the acceptability and its impact on the youth in these schools and the community. It is the premise of this pilot project and other interfaith network activities in the communities that this study intends to study and analyze.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

In this chapter, I shall review the historical background of Nigeria and her evolution as a sovereign nation-state over the years. I will also discuss the geo-political distribution and progress towards statehood amidst ethno religious conflicts and competition for power and limited resources. Furthermore, I will present Nigeria's peculiar challenge as a multi-ethnic, post-colonial entity, and the efforts to foster integration amongst her many federating units of diverse culture and heritage.

Brief Historical Background of Nigeria

In this section, I shall discuss the historical background of Nigeria before the arrival of colonial government in the area. In addition, I will explore the early contact between the natives and the colonial government.

Nigeria's history is traced back to about three millennia ago. Nigeria, like many other African states, was created by European imperialism. The name, 'Nigeria' was derived from one of the major rivers namely River Niger which flows through most parts of the country. According to history, the physical features and the name of Nigeria was suggested by a British journalist, Flora Shaw, in the 1890s. Ms. Shaw later became the wife of the then colonial Governor-General of Nigeria, Sir Frederick Lugard (Falola, 2008). The history of the present day Nigeria as a political entity can be traced to the British occupation of 1903 and the subsequent amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate. This country comprised of about 250-500 ethnic communities who have various cultures and different traditions. Renowned historians, oral traditions, written documentation and other evidence confirms the existence of lively societies that

had well-laid political structures, ones whose history is believed to have tremendous consequence on colonial rule and which have contributed in shaping the future of Nigeria even in the present (Nelson, 1982). Evolving from different traditions, Nigerian history seems fragmented yet carries the same message. However, many of the most outstanding features of modern society reflect the strong influence of the three provincially dominant ethnic groups: the Hausa in the north, the Yoruba in the west, and the Igbo in the east (Metz, 1991).

The present day Nigeria was initially divided and governed within these tribal and cultural regions. Although there are other tribes that are prominent, they are believed to be affiliated to these three tribes. The Northern part of the country, then, had the Hausa States and the Kanem-Borno Empire which had its beginnings from Mali and the Songhai Empires respectively. Each of the Hausa States have its own military, economic and religious functions, thereby making them autonomous of each other. However, the meager economic resources often led to armed conflicts and subsequent invasions of the land by others. Within this period, commerce was in the hands of the commoners. Within the cities, traders were organized into guilds, each of which were self-regulating and collected taxes from its members, who in turn handed them over to the king (Global Security Watch, 2017). The Fulani tribe, which was not recognized or populous then, later became a tribe to be reckoned with in Nigeria today. When they began to arrive in the Hausa country in the late twelfth century, their sole occupation was tending to cattle, sheep, and goats. They were believed to have migrated from part of Senegal and settled within the Hausa States, where they flourished. Over the years, there were intermarriages

between these tribes which have resulted in what is known today as the Hausa-Fulani tribe in Northern Nigeria.

Although there were other minority tribes within northern Nigeria that were independent of the Hausa leadership. The Hausa tribes were initially idol worshippers, the interaction between them and the Arab traders from North Africa and the Middle East brought about the introduction and the subsequent acceptance of Islamic religion in these States. The Berbers of North Africa found a comfortable atmosphere for their slave trade in the north because of the support of some Hausa rulers. Thus, the Hausa kingdoms and the Borno Empire became important terminals of north-south trade between North Africa and the forest people (as they were initially called), exchanging slaves, ivory and other products (Metz, 1991).

In the West, the Yoruba Kingdom of Oyo was founded in the 1400s. This Kingdom flourished because of the unity among the king, chiefs and the people. The king, chiefs and the priests are believed to be the protectors of the kingdom and the intermediaries between the people and the gods. The West has thick forests thereby promoting the trade of palm oil, timber and other goods. While the Berbers of North Africa interacted with the Hausa tribe of the north, the Portuguese traders established contact with the people of the West for trade in slaves and other goods (Falola, 2008).

The Benin Kingdom, located in the Mid-West of the country was another kingdom that had a long history before the British amalgamated the country in 1914. It has a long and rich cultural history, highly respected by the natives and internationally recognized (Falola, 2008). Unlike the other kingdoms, Benin had a centralized government that oversaw the administration of its territories. It was believed that by the

late fifteenth century, the Benin Kingdom was in contact with Portugal. This relationship established commercial ventures between Portugal and the Kingdom. The Yoruba and Benin Kingdoms have many things in common; one of which is that: their paramount rulers were addressed as 'Oba,' meaning 'King' (Metz, 1991).

The Igbo tribe occupied the Eastern part of the country and did not have a kingdom of its own. Metz (1991) described the Igbo tribe "as a Stateless society." The author asserts further "The Igbo region did not evolve centralized political institutions before the colonial period. The relatively egalitarian Igbo lived in small, self-contained groups of villages organized according to a lineage system that did not allow social stratification" (Metz, 1991, p. 29). The Igbo tribe, despite lacking an organized society or kingdom, has a rich culture and tradition. The choice of a leader in Igbo territory does not conform to the practice in the other kingdoms through succession; rather, an individual's fitness to govern was determined by his wisdom, age, social status and experience. Such leader has little or no role in governing the society. The lack of centralized leadership in no way deterred the tribe from having a peaceful community.

Rinehart points out on governance in Igbo land, "Despite the absence of chiefs, some Igbo relied on an order of priests, chosen to ensure impartiality in settling disputes between communities" (1980, p. 147). These priests are considered decision makers who serve as judges on marital and land related issues. Sometimes, they are saddled with the responsibility of appeasing the gods when there is sacrilege in the land. Though Igbo have a central deity which is known as 'Ala', individual families have other gods in their various compounds. Rinehart attested to this as he posits,

Igbo gods like those of the Yoruba, were numerous, but their relationship to one another and to human beings was essentially egalitarian, thereby

reflecting Igbo society. ...with a central deity, the earth mother and fertility figure, Ala, was venerated at shrines throughout Igbo land (1980, p.148).

The absence of an organized Igbo State led the Benin Kingdom to exercise considerable influence on the Western part of Igbo land, which in turn adopted many of the political structures unique to the Benin Kingdom.

In next the section, I will discuss the arrival of the two major religions in northern Nigeria.

Religion in Northern Nigeria

In this section, I will look at the geographical area of study and examine briefly the spread of Islam and Christianity in northern Nigeria. Islam came in through the northern region with the trans-Sahara traders. Christianity came in through coastal region of the south with the white merchants from Europe. I will discuss Christian missionaries in Nigeria and the Christian missions work in northern Nigeria. I will also discuss briefly the spread of Islam in northern Nigeria. I will conclude this section with discussion on the dynamic encounter between Christianity and Islam in northern Nigeria.

The spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria

In the mid-sixteenth century, the political history of the present day northern Nigeria reached its high point. The Songhai Empire covered most of the Sahel region in West Africa and some areas in the east which is within the Hausa States. In addition, within this period the Sayfawa dynasty of Borno empire subdued and extended their control to the Kanem empire and part of Hausaland in the west. (Global Security, 2017). The Songhai Empire, in furtherance of its campaign, captured part of the western Hausa States such as Kebbi, Katsina and Gobir. However, the influence of the Songhai Empire

came to an end in 1591, when the Moroccan army of North Africa crossed the Sahara and waged war on Gao and Timbuktu, thereby subjecting them to their rule (Metz, 1991). The vast territory of the Songhai Empire could not be controlled completely by Morocco; and some provinces and a majority of the Hausa States became independent. The fall of the Songhai Empire left Mai Idris Alooma of Borno, who was ruler of the Borno dynasty, uncontested and the sole force in the region. Having captured Kanem, Kano and, Katsina and subdued them. Borno dominated the political history of present day northern Nigeria during most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this time, Borno developed into the center of Islamic learning and trade. (Metz, 1991) Its capital at Birnin Gazargamu was well situated in the economy of the region. Though the Borno Empire ruled the entire region, some Hausa States wrestled for supremacy among themselves: Gobir, Katsina, Zamfara, Kano, Kebbi and Zaria formed various alliances. Zamfara later ceased to exist as an autonomous kingdom because it fell to Gobir in the eighteenth century (Rinehart, 1980).

Usman dan Fodio was born in Maratta, a modern-day province in the north west of Nigeria, in 1754. His ancestor, Musa Jokollo, was a Fulani migrant in the mid-fifteenth century. He and the other members of his Toronkawa clan travelled from Futa Toro, of present day Senegal, to Songhai. However, the tribe encountered ethnically motivated hostility there. To evade danger, they went on to Konni, in the Hausa State of Gobir. Musa Jokollo and his tribesmen were believed to belong to the Banu al-Fulani family, who had long esteemed piety and religious scholarship (Walker, 2016). As a descendant of Musa Jokollo, Usman dan Fodio's father provided his son with a traditional Islamic education. This education served to ground dan Fodio in Islamic theology and

jurisprudence. To further his education, dan Fodio moved with his father to Degel, the capital of Gobir. Here, dan Fodio studied syntax and grammar with Abd al-Rahman bin Hammada. Usman dan Fodio studied under several teachers of theology and jurisprudence, until his father sent him to Agades for more advanced studies. One teacher in Agades, Bin Umar, inculcated in his young student practices of both Sufism and puritanical Wahhabi (Larémont, 2011). In 1775, twenty-one-year-old dan Fodio began preaching in Degel. He preached that the community should be ruled not by polytheistic rulers, but by pious Islamic countrymen. The young preacher garnered much attention for his way of speaking, with some even believing him to be the Mujaddid. However, Usman dan Fodio vehemently denied divinity, claiming only to be a “redeemer of the faith, who would precede the Mahdi.”(Bugaje, 1985; Larémont, 2011 and Walker, 2016).

The end of the eighteenth century was the glorious era that heralded the foundation of Usman dan Fodio’s jihad. Many Islamic scholars had become disenchanted with the insecurity within their domain. Some of them saw the collapse of their States first hand, while others believed the adverse effect of the jihad would reduce or limit their powers. This turn of events made some of the clerics remain at the courts of the Hausa States to organize revolution from within so as to overthrow the existing authorities, and then pledge their loyalty to the jihadist (Al-Masri, 1976). This particular action of the clerics actually had a positive impact on the jihad; most of the Hausa rulers who mixed Islamic religion with syncretism were overthrown. These simultaneous uprisings exposed a vast network of underground Muslim revolutionaries scattered throughout the Hausa States. The jihad of Usman dan Fodio met with mixed reaction in the Hausa States. While some were happy, others had reservations about the jihad. In 1804, Usman dan Fodio

declared a holy war (jihad) with the main aim of cleansing the society of non-Islamic activities (Walker, 2016).

Usman dan Fodio believed that jihad was the last instrument to be employed if no meaningful results could be achieved. The jihad, initially meant to sanitize the religious belief of only the Hausa States. However, it spread to other parts of northern Nigeria and beyond. The manifesto of the jihad which Usman dan Fodio laid down in his “wathiqat ahl al-Sudan wa man Sha’ Allah min al-Ikhwan” (Documents of the people of Sudan, arguing for the necessity for jihad and urging the people to come out for jihad) in 1804 remained the guidelines of the jihad in northern Nigeria (Okafor, 1992, p. 29). According to this document, the assignment of a Muslim community was to overthrow and take over ruling of those States where a non-Muslim is the head of the government. These rulers are to be overthrown and these communities are to be led by the ‘Umma’ (a body of Islamic believers in a community). The Umma are to appoint judges, regulate taxes and make sure that the administration was fully anchored and remained inseparable from Muslim law (Shari’a) (Bugaje, 1985).

Usman dan Fodio’s jihad transformed the political setting of what is to be known as northern Nigeria. Bringing all the seven warring Hausa States before the jihad together as a united Muslim State under Usman dan Fodio; it was declared a caliphate with him as the amir al-mu’minin (Laremont, 2011). Within the caliphate, Zamfara, Gobir and Kebbi turned out to be the core religious center, while Kano, Katsina and Zaria were the economic center. Other States were also captured and subjected to the ruler of the caliphate; they included Hadejia and Katagum to the east, and Gombe, Adamawa and Bauchi to the south-east. As the jihad progressed, the ethnic composition of leadership of

the caliphate eventually changed. The new leadership of the caliphate became dominated by the Fulani who ruled over Hausa, Fulani and Tuareg. This was unacceptable to some Hausa leaders who then moved to Maradi in the present day Niger Republic. The whole of the Hausa States were conquered by 1808. However, some of the defeated ruling dynasties retreated and built independent walled cities, making it difficult for the jihadists (Larémont, 2011). Some of those Hausa dynasties that established independent cities were Abuja, this dynasty fled when Zaria was captured. Argungu in the north was a new home for the Kebbi rulers, and Maradi in present-day Niger Republic served as a new home for the rulers of Katsina dynasty.

Founded in 1809, the Sokoto Caliphate named after its capital Sokoto was a new State that emerged from Usman dan Fodio's jihad. The Hausa States that were conquered are now emirates. Usman dan Fodio appointed emirs to be in charge of each with a jihad's flag as a symbol of authority. According to Larémont, there was tremendous achievement recorded in the caliphate until 1817 when Muhammed Bello succeeded his late father Usman dan Fodio (Larémont, 2011). The fitnah that resulted in division among the Muslim Umma during the reign of the fourth Caliph Ali and Mu'awiyya of the Umayyad dynasty around 656 and 661 (Esposito, 2009), reared its head again in this Caliphate. A dispute between the successor, Muhammad Bello and his uncle, Abdullahi, resulted in the division of the caliphate into eastern and western regions (Metz, 1991). Despite the split, Bello's supreme authority as Caliph was upheld. This division caused the creation of a twin capital at Gwandu, for the Western Emirates, including Burkina Faso and Massina of present day Mali. However, the Eastern Emirates remained larger and more numerous than the Western Emirates. This gave Caliph Bello Muhammad

supremacy over his uncle and Sokoto was genuinely recognized as the capital of the caliphate.

The expansion of this campaign had a significant impact on the lives of the people of this region. The people were extremely happy because in some places the jihad brought about liberation from the tyranny of their leaders. The leaders, however, were not happy because the campaign had either ousted them or had reduced their powers. Bello (2018) wrote about the widespread impact of Usman dan Fodio's jihad that, "An analogy has been drawn between Usman dan Fodio's jihad and the French revolution in terms of its widespread impact. Just as the French Revolution affected the course of European history in the nineteenth century, the Sokoto jihad affected the course of history throughout the Savanna from Senegal to the Red Sea" (Bello, 2018, p. 7).

Christian Missionaries in Nigeria

According to Metz (1991), Henry the Navigator of Portugal around 1441 wanted to explore further in the Atlantic Ocean and thus sailed to West Africa. He was a leader of traders who loved to buy gold; he wanted to buy the gold directly from the people of West Africa as opposed to buying from the Muslim merchants of North Africa. In early voyages, he included Roman Catholic Missionaries with the ships to Nigeria. Their main mission was to trade but used the missionaries as a pretext to achieve this mission. They visited Benin and Warri; the rulers of these kingdoms were more interested in Portuguese guns as opposed to the gospel preached to them. They decided to use the opportunity to exchange commodities. While the Portuguese gave the monarchs guns and the powder, they in turn received gold and slaves. The involvement of the teams in the slave trade created a lack of desire to embrace the new religion by the people. According to Ade-

Ajayi (1977), Christian church planting was terminated immediately after the Portuguese merchants brought Christianity to Nigeria in the 15th century, because they were accused of involvement in slave trade. The Portuguese continued this business for a long period until the British parliament passed a bill for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 (Kalu, 1980). The campaign at the early stage yielded results because the British Navy was delegated to arrest any ship with African slaves on the high sea. The captured ships and slaves were normally taken to Freetown in present day Sierra Leone and the slaves would be set free while the slave merchants were jailed; the ships were sometimes sold to the rich, freed slaves. After a while, the practices continued without much hindrance, and then in 1841, Christians in Great Britain forced their government to change its policies on slavery and put a stop to the practices. William Wilberforce was in the forefront making the British government declare the slave trade illegal. In response, the British government sent out her armed ships on the ocean to curtail or stop the practice (Gaiya, 2002).

By the end of the eighteenth century, freed slaves who are believed to have their ancestral roots in West Africa arrived in Freetown. With little knowledge about Christianity from their enslaved countries, an Anglican priest who served in Sierra Leone as Chaplain to the European traders, Reverend Mulvilles preached the gospel to them. He did not just preach to them; he also cared for their needs as well. This set the conditions for most of the slaves to genuinely embrace Christianity (Owolabi, 2009). Some of the freed slaves were of the Yoruba origin, while at Freetown, they shuttled between Freetown and Badagry, they engaged in trading. Some resolved to settle at Abeokuta, in present day Nigeria. Abeokuta later turned out to be home for these freed slaves. They

practiced their religion (Christianity) there and preached the gospel, having many converts to Christianity (Owolabi, 2009 & Bamigboye, 2000).

Much like Islam in Northern Nigeria, Christianity was introduced by many groups of different denominations. In Freetown, Yoruba settlers appealed to the Queen of England for permission to establish a colony in Badagry, and requested that they be sent Christian missionaries. On September 24th in 1842, William de Graft and Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman arrived in Badagry. Freeman then paid a visit to Abeokuta, where he found two Egba freed men from Sierra Leone and Anglican Catechist Henry Townsend spreading the gospel. They preached and converted many natives (Bamigboye, 2000). One of the freed slaves was Samuel Ajayi Crowther who played a very important role in the spread of Christianity in Yoruba land. He was credited with the translation the Bible into the Yoruba language and he was also the first native Yoruba man to be consecrated Bishop (Owolabi, 2009). Freeman worked with them for a while, and then went back to Badagry. On arrival at Badagry, Freeman left William de Graft in charge of the new congregation at the newly established Methodist Missionary station in Badagry and Abeokuta respectively.

Another missionary worthy of mention is Jefferson Bowen from the Southern Baptist Convention who came to Badagry in 1859 and established a mission station. He later moved to Ijaiye where he also built a Mission Station, and then he met the Wesleyan and Church Missionary Society Missionaries in Abeokuta (Ade-Ajayi, 1977). Although they were from different denominations, they worked together to advance the course of the gospel. Bowen studied the Yoruba language in order to communicate with the natives, writing the first book on Yoruba grammar and dictionary. This inclined the

natives to accept him all the more, with the acceptance from the natives; Bowen proceeded further to Ibadan and Ogbomosho where he established Mission stations for the Baptist in 1854. By the end of the nineteenth century the Baptist Mission had spread and covered the entire Western part of Nigeria, though there was a little difficulty in achieving that. The terrain was not conducive for easy movement because of the thick forest and mosquitoes (Bamigboye, 2000).

In 1860, the Society of the African Mission for Spreading of the Roman Catholic Faith attempted to plant a church in Freetown but it failed. An Italian Catholic priest, Fr. Borghero, moved from Freetown to Dahomey (present day Benin Republic) and established a Roman Catholic Mission there. He visited Abeokuta and Lagos for a feasibility study in 1862. He re-visited Lagos on this second journey and met some freed slaves who were Catholics of Nigerian ancestry who had returned from Brazil. With their help he started a Mission station under the Roman Catholic Church in Lagos, thereafter, Catechist Padre Antonio a freed slave from Sao Tome was appointed to head the Mission station. Antonio worked tirelessly and expanded the mission outreach by teaching Nigerians and other nationals about the Roman Catholic faith (Owolabi, 2009).

Christianity in Northern Nigeria

Several factors militated against the penetration of Christianity into the Northern part of Nigeria during this early period. One of which was the then Governor-General, Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard. Lugard was of the opinion that emirs and other leaders of the Islamic faith need to grant approval before Christianity could be introduced in the region to avoid confrontation with these Islamic leaders (Owolabi, 2009). An attempt was made in 1890 to establish a Christian community by the Roman Catholic missionaries. They

realized that many slaves were brought to Onitsha in the eastern part from as far as Lokoja and Iddah from the north and were sold at the Onitsha market. To discourage this act, Fr Lutz established a station in each of the villages to spread the gospel and also create awareness on the need to stop this trade. Fr Lutz developed a strategy of converting native Hausa men who were freed slaves so he could penetrate the north with the gospel message. When such effort yielded little or no result, the Catholic Missions established hospitals, schools and clinics to gain acceptance in Hausa land. This strategy helped the mission in reaching the natives (Babalola, 1976).

In 1893, a group of young missionaries under the auspices of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) set out for Nigeria from Canada including Walter Gowan, Thomas Kent and Roland Bingham. On arrival they headed for the northern part of Nigeria. However, Kent and Gowan died that same year and Bingham had to return to Canada. He later returned to Nigeria in 1900 but was forced to go back because of ill health. Bingham made his third missionary journey accompanied by some medical doctors in 1902 and settled at Pategi in present day Niger State. They began the mission work by treating the sick and building clinics. For this reason many adherents of the religion of Islam converted to Christianity. This singular effort led to the opening of many Christian mission stations in Northern Nigeria (Turaki, 1993 and Owolabi, 2009). Most of the communities targeted by Bingham were the minority tribes that were neglected by the jihad of Usman dan Fodio or those who resisted it. By 1954 the Sudan Interior Mission, or ECWA, spread from Patigi to other Northern part of the country where the majority are Hausas.

The Yoruba traders are another group of people who helped in spreading Christianity in Northern Nigeria. These traders from western Nigeria carried their religion with them as they progressed in their business. From the Baptist Mission Stations at Abeokuta and Ogbomosho, the Baptist work spread to part of Ilorin. With the deployment of government workers from the west to the north, these Yoruba traders and workers helped to establish the Baptist work in Jos and Kaduna. With the increase in membership in northern Nigeria, the Nigerian Baptist Convention, which was formed in 1912, posted a clergy to oversee the Baptist work in the north. This can be seen in Owolabi's assertion "...the Nigerian Baptist Convention posted Reverend J.A Adejumbi to Kaduna as its pastor to oversee the rest of the Mission stations of the Baptist faith in the Northern part of Nigeria in the year 1925" (Owolabi 2009, p. 13).

Reverend Adejumbi served as liaison for the convention in the north; he used his influence there to create conducive atmosphere for new missionaries posted to the north. This effort helped the mission work because they recorded huge success. Owolabi states further, "when the American and some of the Nigerian Missionaries worked together in the Northern parts of the country, they established a secondary school in Jos, a Teachers Training College in Minna and a Seminary in Kaduna" (Owolabi, 2009, p. 13). The Nigerian Baptist Convention also established hospitals and clinics; this effort contributed tremendously to the acceptance of the missionaries by the natives.

The Encounter between Christianity and Islam in Northern Nigeria

The arrival of Christian missionaries in Northern Nigeria was frowned upon by some natives because of some of the practices of the missionaries (O'Connor, 2009). Islam was more acceptable than Christianity to the people of the north because Islam

accommodated the marriage style of the people, but Christianity did not (Owolabi, 2009). In addition, it was also said that some of the Europeans brought with them imported gin alcohol. Such practice set some of the natives against the missionaries, thinking they belonged to the same group with the slave traders because they were all whites. The Hausa emirs and chiefs believed that if Christian Missionaries were allowed to gain entry into their domain they might compromise the belief of the people, hence begin their hostility towards them (Falola and Adediran, 1983).

Another problem that militated against the spread of Christianity in Northern Nigeria is the weather. Some of the foreign missionaries could not withstand the harsh weather conditions in the north, whereas the Islamic propagators in Northern Nigeria were Africans who were accustomed to the harsh weather and the diseases of the land (Umaru, 2013). These Islamic scholars continued preaching the Islamic faith; they also established Qura'nic schools where children were taught Arabic, the official language in spreading Islam. For this reason the Muslim community had grown in size before the arrival of Christianity. Thus, the Christian Missionaries found it extremely difficult to communicate with the people. The Christian missionaries tried to use the native language of the people in the north, but such effort yielded little or no result. They adopted a different strategy whereby they used education and health care (O'Connor, 2009).

Sir Fredrick Lugard later allowed Christian Missionaries to build mission stations, so they could establish schools to teach the people. However, after a series of resistance by the emirs and chiefs, Lugard modified his decision of allowing the missionaries. He gave his support to the Muslim leaders to prevent breakdown of law and order. Lugard through acting High Commissioner, Wallace, in 1901 made a pledge to the emirs in the

north: “I do hereby in the name of His Majesty promise you protection and I do guarantee that no interference by government shall be made in your chosen form of religion” (Crampton, 1975, p. 59). When Lugard’s pledge was read to the hearing of all emirs and the people of Sokoto Caliphate during the installation of the Sultan of Sokoto, the emirs were glad and it was applauded by all present. According to Ayandele (1966), this gave the emirs the opportunity to restrict the presence of missionaries in their domain.

An attempt was made by a prominent CMS missionary, Tugwell, to plant Christianity in Kano, but it was resisted by the emir of Kano. When Tugwell insisted with the support of the District Officer (DO), the emir of Kano reminded Lugard of his promise. The emir declared that the protection of the lives and properties of the missionaries could not be guaranteed in his domain if they insisted. The missionaries were restricted by the British for their safety and were only allowed in the area after railway system was introduced. A means of transportation they used conveniently without any fear of attack as they travelled to the north (Ayandele, 1966). This declaration set in motion the confrontation between the emirs and the Christian missionaries. Other emirs also banned missionaries from their emirates and any native found to have any connection with the missionaries were prosecuted.

The action taken by Sir Fredrick Lugard which gave preference to the emirs and the religion of Islam may have been with good intention, but the aftermath of this decision had resulted in the series of crises and conflicts experienced in Northern Nigeria today (Bamigboye, 2000). The emirs and adherents of Islam believe they are superior to every other religion or people; missionary activities were to be decided by them. The rights of other natives who were either Christians or African Traditional Religion

worshippers were not respected. The first confrontation between Christians and Muslims was recorded in Dekina. The Christian missionaries were welcomed by the natives to open a mission station in Dekina in 1904, however, it was burned down by the Muslims to prevent Christian work in the area. Sir Fredrick Lugard was silent over the issue when it was reported to him by the missionaries. Another riot broke out in the same area in 1905. This time it was a clash between Christians and Muslims, about ten British soldiers lost their lives under Major Merrick in that fracas (Crampton, 1975). Lugard asked the Missionaries to leave the area for peace to reign in the area. However, they left behind some natives who had converted to Christianity and were forced to either convert to Islam later or leave the area. The same could not be said about some emirs, because in 1905, the emirs of Kontagora and Katsina sent an invitation to the CMS Missionaries to establish mission stations in their domain. With the introduction of schools by the missionaries, some emirs were convinced to accept the schools but not the mission work. The missionaries in turn used the opportunity of establishing the schools and hospitals to spread the Christian religion.

When the British left Nigeria, they had placed the emirs above the rulers in other regions. According to Korieh Chima, the northern leaders were preferred to be in charge of governance in Nigeria when the British were leaving; hence the British worked towards achieving that. It came to fruition when in 1960 the first Prime Minister who came from northern Nigeria was elected; this was achieved by the creation of more constituencies in the north than in other regions. As such the north had more representation in the parliament (Korieh 2005). This effort by the colonialists to favor the northern region over the rest was the result of the political arrangement which meant that

the Muslims elites and emirs were left to control the system, which many of them saw as Allah's given power to control the Federal Republic of Nigeria, they still believe so, even in the present day. Also, the emirs used such influence to promote the religion of Islam within the region and beyond (Korieh, 2005).

Islam and northern leaders have dominated the political arena of Nigeria by the mid-twentieth century. The consequence of this action by the British colonialists left an endemic problem for the integration of such a multi-ethnic state. It also left an enduring tension between faith groups, especially between northern Muslims and southern Christians. Usman Bugaje, an Islamic scholar from the north, described this beautifully while at the same time asking questions without arriving at any answer when he said:

Nigeria represents neither the consent nor the convenience nor the aspirations of the people trapped within, but the greed and irresponsibility of the British colonial army. Can people of divergent and conflicting world views, cultures and history be forced under one colonial administrative unit, hardly sharing anything beyond the common misfortune of falling prey to British imperialism, form a nation? Is this common misfortune, which indeed they all share in it, a sufficient cohesive force to integrate and hold together these diverse groups? (Bugaje 1986, p. 14).

The history of colonialism which Nigeria, as a country now has to deal with, is a result of the unsuccessful marriage of convenience between the Muslim ruling elite and colonial masters who left the country in the hands of the northern Hausa-Fulani leaders. The first premier of the northern region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, who is a descendant of Shehu Usman dan Fodio, swung into action immediately after the British left by fulfilling their agenda. His first mission was to terminate the appointment of non-northerners who were employed during the colonial period from the services of Northern Nigeria. Sir Ahmadu Bello was credited with this saying about non-indigenes working in Northern Nigeria thus:

We do not want to go to Lake Chad and meet strangers catching our fish in the water, and taking them away to leave us with nothing. We do not want to go to Sokoto and find a carpenter who is a stranger nailing houses. I do not want to go to Sabon-gari Kano and find strangers making body of a lorry, or to go to the market and see butchers who are not northerners (Harnischfeger, 2011, p. 35).

Religion became a meaningful factor in Nigeria's aspirations; it marks and solidifies the boundary between those who believe in God or Allah, at the same time defining the position of natives and immigrants from the same country.

In the next section, I will discuss religion as a tool for political struggle in northern Nigeria.

Religious Struggle for Political Supremacy

In this section, I focus on the role of religion as a determining factor in the political landscape of Nigeria. I also discuss the political-religious manipulation that often leads to interreligious conflicts. I will provide a brief account of some religious conflicts in Nigeria with special consideration on northern Nigeria.

It has always been the ambition of the Hausa-Fulani emirs to see a complete reversal of fortune, back to their pre-eminent leadership era under the caliphate. After colonial rule in Nigeria, most of the emirs with the help of politicians from their domains used the tools available to subject minority tribes under their leadership. In the northwest core of the North, some emirates like Sokoto, Katsina, and Kano still retained much of their old authority. The same cannot be said of Zazzau emirate in Kaduna State that has recently lost control of some vital minority tribes (Gwamna, 2010). By contrast, minority tribes from the southern part of Zazzau emirate in the State and the Gbayi tribe from the northern part of the State have as part of the emancipation by the subsequent

administration gained recognition as new indigenous governments (Global Security, 2017).

Attempts to regain the authority of the past prompted the Hausa-Fulani leaders from the North to diverse mean to achieve this conquest; one such avenue is the use of religion. Though, Hausa-Fulani Muslims in northern Nigeria do have some ideological differences, they usually will agree if it is politically necessary. However, each State's group and leaders pursue their own agendas, including maintaining relationships with local Christians. An example of some emirates that maintained good relationship between Muslims and Christians include Katsina and Gumel emirate councils (Global Security, 2017).

According to Karl Marx, "...religion is the opium of the masses," (Raines, 2002, p. 189). But in Northern Nigeria, religion is the focal point for political supremacy. The politicians discovered that religion is a sensitive issue; as such they used it to create disaffection among the people, thereby dividing the strength of their will-power. Whenever there was any such crisis, the politicians benefitted immensely through committees and panels that were set up by the government. Also, whenever they suffered any loss, the government grants them full compensation. Some of these politicians used religious leaders to fuel the crisis for their political gain. Most of the Muslim politicians are of the view that governance is their birth-right. As such no room should be left for any non-Muslim to get into political office (Gwamna, 2010).

In States such as Sokoto, Zamfara, Kano, and Jigawa, there has never been a single Christian in any elective office. However, this does not signify that these States have no Christians as indigenes. Instead, such States are viewed as Islamic States where

only Muslims can be political leaders. Such agitation was one of the reasons behind the post-election violence that took place in 2011. Some politicians instigated their followers to protest against the presidential election result which Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the South-South, was believed to have won. Some Muslims labelled Professor Attahiru Jega, a Muslim from northern Nigeria who is also the Chief Electoral Officer, an infidel because, he allowed a Christian to win the election (Dangida, 2011). The actions of the Muslim politicians from the Northern States against the Christians prompted the Christian leaders in States like Plateau in north-central Nigeria, where they are in the majority, to alienate the Muslims from holding political offices (Gwamna, 2010).

The struggle for political supremacy within the elites is mostly the genesis of religious crisis in the North. Religious leaders too have not helped matters because they followed the lead of the political class for political supremacy as they used to campaign for politicians from their faith traditions. Also, the decline in the quality of education in the North is seen as a fertile ground by the politicians to use semi-literate youths as thugs for their political struggles. In some States, these youths are the vanguard groups that are used by the politicians for political struggles and supremacy. While the people suffer the effect of religious crisis, the politicians in turn benefit immensely from such crisis. This has over the years given rise to the struggle for religious and political supremacy which is always initiated by some politicians and religious leaders (Kasfelt, 1994; Ilesanmi, 1997 and Gwamna, 2010).

Some Religious Crises in Northern Nigeria

In this section, I shall discuss some of the religious conflicts experienced in northern Nigeria by looking at the causes for the attacks and reprisal attacks. I also

discuss the issue of Shari'a (Islamic legal law) which is the genesis of most of the tension in the region. Finally, I will also elucidate on how the foreign policies of some western countries influence religious crisis in northern Nigeria.

Religion is a very sensitive issue in Nigeria, as any activity that has religion attached to it always have multifaceted issues tagged along. As such, there is interreligious tension in most parts of the country but very visible in the northern region; religious conflicts are mainly perpetrated by youth of each faith (Sampson, 2012 and NWGAV & AOAV, 2013). Wherever some particular faith adherents are in the majority, the majority tends to have advantage over the minority when there is an outbreak of religious conflict. The return to civilian rule in 1999 gave some governors from northern Nigeria the opportunity to prove their allegiance to their religion. They did this through the implementation of the Sharia legal system in their States regardless of protests against it by civil society organizations and the Christians (Ostien & Dekker, 2010).

Some Muslims saw the governors as heroes of a long-awaited effort that came a little late. However, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), an umbrella body of Christians in the country, opposed such a move, reasoning that Nigeria is a secular State. The constitution of the country allows for the establishment of sharia courts to entertain cases brought to it by Muslims who want to be tried under Islamic law. However, the constitution did not approve full implementation of Sharia law in a State or the country (Ostien, & Dekker. 2010). Northern Nigeria suffered series of religious crises; some of these crises are intra-faith, while others are inter-faith. Some are for political supremacy, yet with religious undertone (Gwamna 2010)

Maitatsine Riot in Kano. One of the major inter/intra-faith crises recorded in Northern Nigeria was the Maitatsine crisis in Kano 1980. According to Umaru (2013), the Maitatsine Sect was founded by Mallam Mohammed Marwa Maitatsine, a Cameroonian citizen from the village of Marwa who migrated to Northern Nigeria in 1945 and settled in Kano. He then formed the Maitatsine Sect in Kano; he was, however, deported to Cameroon, only for him to resurface and later joined his militant followers. Alhaji Marwa, also known as “Mai-Tatsine” (*the master of condemnation*), was known for inflammatory preaching which led to conflict with other Muslims. The sect leader preached a different doctrine from that of other Muslims but claimed to be a practicing Muslim (Umaru, 2013). They built Mosques but rejected the Prophet Muhammad – Peace be upon him (PBUH). Marwa declared himself a prophet in 1979 by rejecting the Ḥadiīth and Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Ezegbobelu, 2009). It is known among the Muslims that anybody who claimed to be a Muslim but rejected the prophet-hood of Prophet Muhammad PBUH cannot be considered a Muslim. Out of the five pillars of Islam, the *shahāda* is the profession of faith by the would-be Muslim which also formed one of the guiding principles of being a Muslim. It is expressed in two simple fundamental beliefs thus: “Lā ilāha illā Allāh Muhammad rasūl Allāh” translated “I testify that there is no god but God (Allāh), and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God (Allah)” (Esposito, 2009. pp. 116-117).

The leader of this sect looked down on other Islamic scholars who he constantly referred to as infidels. However, it should be note here that the prophet of Islam condemned any act or statements against a fellow Muslim (Umaru, 2013). According to a Sahih Hadith by al-Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH stated that: “Whoever

performs a deed that is not in accordance with our matter will have it rejected” (Sahih Muslim Book 18 No. 4266). His followers constantly attacked what they saw as the corrupt religious practices of the established Islamic community in Kano. Marwa preached against western consumer goods and condemned in his *tafsir* certain customs and traditions of the Hausa population. Marwa’s preaching appealed to marginal and poverty-stricken urban citizens in slums around Northern Nigeria. He also preached against the hypocrisy of the Muslim ruling elite and the corrupted, rich Islamic families. He promised his followers redemption and salvation as Allah’s chosen people. The ‘Yan Tatsine group’, as they were called, had earlier been involved in many violent conflicts principally directed against fellow Muslims and law enforcement agents resulting in the deaths of several thousand people. Christians were, however, not exempted in these hostilities as churches, Christian ministers and their houses were either burnt or killed (Danjibo, 2009).

The Federal Government of Nigeria had to deploy military personnel in Kano to quell the conflict. He was eventually killed, but most of his followers escaped to the Bulumkutu area of Borno State in North-Eastern Nigeria. The resistance by the people of Bulumkutu to accept them resulted in an intra-religious crisis among Muslims which later escalated into an inter-religious crisis with the Christians suffering the highest casualties. According to Danjibo (2009), they were driven away from the town and then moved to Jimeta in present day Adamawa State, North Eastern Nigeria, and established another camp which resulted into a religious crisis this time around with a new leader named Musa Mekaniki. They were finally crushed by the military in 1985 (Danjibo, 2009).

Religious Riots in Kaduna State. The northern region enjoyed peace with some minor religious differences in some places until 1987 when a Christian cleric at the College of Education, Kafanchan Kaduna State, preached a sermon and quoted from both the Bible and Qur'an, this act angered the Muslims (Jibrin-Ibrahim, 1989). The action led to a peaceful demonstration protesting against the use of the Qur'an by the Christian cleric. According to Jibrin, the protest was however, hijacked by some Muslim faithful who believed that the peaceful demonstration was not harsh enough, resolved to kill and maim Christians, with churches burnt in the fracas. There was also a chain reaction in Zaria, the second largest city in the State, though in this case, the Christians fought back. As a result, there were casualties on both sides. The crisis of 1987 left scars in the minds of the adherents of both faiths.

According to Little (2007), another religious conflict in Kaduna State occurred in 1992 at Zangon Kataf in the Southern part of Kaduna State which had a majority Christian population. It was said that the conflict was one of the worst religious crises in the history of Northern Nigeria. It started with the issue of relocating a market square. The Christian majority decided to relocate an earlier market square founded by the Hausa Muslims who are traders in the area. This did not go down well with the Muslim traders who resisted the move. It later resulted in a religious crisis where many Muslims were killed and mosques destroyed (Little, 2007). Kaduna town, which is the State capital, also experienced her own dose of the crisis when bodies of the slain Muslims were brought from Zangon Kataf for burial. Little reported that, the Muslim youth in the Tudun Wada area of the town unleashed mayhem on the Christians who reside in that area. Their

houses and churches were not spared either. At the end of the crisis, thousands were either reported to have been killed or missing to date.

This religious conflict spread to some states in Northern Nigeria where there are majority Muslims. The outcome was as disturbing as that of Kaduna, where hundreds were reported to have been killed. After the 1992 Zangon Kataf crisis, there was no record of a major religious crisis except for some protests that always result in killing of Christians or burning of churches. It may interest the reader to know that the foreign policy of any Western country against any Muslim majority country always provoked a negative reaction from some Muslims in Northern Nigeria with the Christians suffering for it (Gwamna, 2009).

Nigeria embraced party democracy in 1999 after a long period of military rule and some politicians from the north developed an agenda for winning the support of their people. The agenda was a promise for the implementation of full Sharia legal system in their States. Governor Sani Yerima of Zamfara State was the first to implement the full Sharia legal system in the country, though it was not without protest from the Christians and members of other faiths. There were assurances that their rights would be protected and respected. However, after the implementation, they were asked to subject themselves to the Sharia legal code. This raised concerns in many quarters without anyone finding a solution to the problem.

After implementation, many Christians were denied employment and their children were sent out of schools because of their names/religion or refusal to wear the *ḥijāb* (Agu, 1999). This action by the Zamfara State government infuriated Christians in other States of the North who vowed to stand against implementation of the legal system

in their States. Most of these States ended up in religious crisis. The re-introduction of Shari'ah law was heralded with pomp and pageantry. Wednesday, 27 October 1999 marked a significant day in the history of Islam in Nigeria, as that was the day a State in Nigeria totally accepted the implementation of Shariah as its legal code. According to Oloyede it was what could better be described as the mother of all launchings:

Gusau, the capital of Zamfara State, in the history of its existence witnessed for the first time a crowd that cannot easily be compared to any recent gathering in Nigeria... Three days to the D-day, people started coming into Gusau. In fact, about two million Muslim faithful from all parts of the country converged in the State Capital to herald the commencement of Shari'a in the State (Oloyede, 2014, p. 5).

Muslim faithful were excited for the first time that the Shari'a legal system was adopted in totality by a State in Nigeria. This declaration set other States with substantial Muslim populations on serious alert. With the acceptance by some Muslims, the Shari'a legal system implementation was met with resistance by some Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

According to Rudd (2001), Islamic law cannot be compared to civil or canon law. Rather it can be seen as an academic discourse for legal scholars. This can be attested to by the many often contradictory interpretations of the revealed texts. One of the arguments some of the Muslims who are opposed to it was that most of the judges are not learned in the Shari'ah legal system. For the non-Muslims, their right in a Shari'a states will be threatened regardless of the assurances of exclusion. The greatest fear is the *hudūd* (limit or boundary),⁶ which (they argued) if it is a punishment stated in the Qur'ān,

⁶Islamic term referring to punishments which under Islamic law (shariah) are mandated and fixed by God. These punishments were rarely applied in pre-modern Islam, and their use in some modern states has been a source of controversy. Traditional Islamic jurisprudence divides crimes into offenses against God and those against man. The former are seen to violate God's *hudud* or "boundaries", and they are associated with punishments specified in the Quran and in some cases inferred from hadith. The offenses

then, an offender, Muslim or not, would not be tolerated (Ostein, 2002). Another rationale for questioning the implementation of the Shariah legal system by the non-Muslims was the electioneering campaign statement of the then Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmad Sani, that:

In any town I went to, I first started with *kafaral*, which is chanting ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ (*Allah is the greatest*) thrice. Then I always said, I am in the race not to make money, but to improve on our religious way of worship, and introduce religious reforms that will make us get Allah’s favour. And then we will have abundant resources for development (Ahmad, 2000, p. 16).

Some Muslims and non-Muslims viewed these statements ‘*reform*’ and ‘*improve on our religious worships*’ as a ploy to Islamize the state. Others argued that the Constitution did not provide for the adoption of a state religion. The governor explained later that the reform he was referring to was not reforming the religion of Islam. Rather it is “...reforms of the laws and institutions of Zamfara State to bring them more into conformity with Islam in particular and Islamic law...” (Sani Ahmad, 2000. p. 48). These assertions were critically viewed as setting the pace to destabilize Nigeria, according to the non-Muslims.

In all, eleven Northern-Nigerian States joined the campaign of implementing the Shari’a legal system. While it was widely accepted in some States, others resisted, which resulted in bloody religious clashes. The issue of Islamization of the North increased the already heightened tension on the ground among Muslims, Christians and communities that were already divided along tribal lines. While the Christians and some Muslims are

incurring *hudud* punishments are *zina* (unlawful sexual intercourse), unfounded accusations of *zina*, drinking alcohol, highway robbery, and some forms of theft. Jurists have differed as to whether *apostasy* and rebellion against a lawful Islamic ruler are *hudud* crimes. *Hudud* punishments range from public lashing to publicly stoning to death, amputation of hands and crucifixion. *Hudud* crimes cannot be pardoned by the victim or by the state, and the punishments must be carried out in public. (Peters, R. (2009) “*Hudud*” and Wael Hallaq (2009), *An introduction to Islamic law*, p.173).

afraid of the implementation of Shariah law in their vicinity, even though they are in minority a majority of Muslims are comfortable with the action, as a Muslim scholar Musa (1999) pointed out “...this is the second jihad, the first being that led by Othman Dan Fodio in the early 19th Century” (Musa, 1999, p. 19). Some Muslims agitated for “...the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Nigeria” (Musa, 1999, p. 19). These actions prompted non-Muslims in some States to stand against the implementation of Shari’a law. It was met with a bloody clash in Kaduna State, where for two weeks there was severe fighting between Muslims and Christians. The State government finally resolved that Shari’a law would only be implemented in areas where there are concentrations of Muslims.

Kaduna State has a peculiar demography; the northern zone of the state has a Muslim majority while the Southern zone has a Christian’s majority. The population of the Christians and Muslims is about equal (National Population Commission, 2006). In the year 2000, some Muslims insisted that the Shari’a legal system must be implemented in the State; but the Christian Clerics opposed it and vowed to use the last drop of Christian blood to resist it. This confrontation set Kaduna town on fire with chain reactions in neighboring towns and cities so that the next fourteen days people were killed, places of worship and houses burned some by adherents of the two faiths.

Subsequently, other States followed in the footsteps of Kaduna State by implementing the Sharia legal system, though not without resistance. Such resistance came not only from non-Muslims; some Muslims were against it as well. According to Karin Brulliard (2009), a Muslim said in bitterness “Shari’a is about justice. Where you have Shari’a, you have development; nothing has changed in our system. If one relied on

tap water, one would die of thirst. We don't even talk of having electricity" (p. 1). The argument here by these Muslims is for the government to take the welfare of the citizens seriously before implementing or asking them to obey religious laws. Most of the implementation of the Islamic legal system was viewed as a political strategy because after the implementation there was misapplication of the system by politicians using it to promote their political agenda. "To us, Shari'a is a religious injunction laced around the strings of love, tolerance and respect for human dignity. Our leaders deceived us and now we are being used as sacrificial lambs" (Karin Brulliard, 2009, p.1). This statement was credited to Abba Adam Koki, an Imam who served on a government Shari'a Board for two years. He said he had to quit after realizing the politicians are only using the Shari'a issue to preserve their stay in power. He continued "If anybody comes to me and asks for my support on the promise of implementing Shari'a, I wouldn't even vote for him. I prefer someone to come and tell me what programme he has for the people"(Karin Brulliard, 2009, p. 3).

Like Abba, there are many Muslims who are disappointed with the behaviour of the leaders who implemented the Shari'a. First, they believed the leaders had a different conception about the Shari'a they are agitating for. Secondly, politicians believe that the laws or codes are meant to punish the poor. Thirdly, there was no proper provision on the ground to accommodate the Shari'a legal system. Finally, the people felt the law is just implemented to oppress them. The worse hit are the women, who are treated as if the law does not have any provision for their rights. In addition, the Shari'a legal system only ignites the flames of religious conflict in most parts of northern Nigeria.

Ethno-Religious Riots in Plateau State. Contrary to general belief, religious conflicts are not only attributed to Muslim youths, nor are the conflicts perpetrated only in Muslim dominated areas. In 2001 and 2008, Jos city (a Christian dominated area in Plateau State) experienced bloody religious conflicts that killed over 1,000 people. Plateau State is located in the north central region of Nigeria; the inhabitants of this State are majority Christians, Muslims constitute a less significant number. The cause of the conflict is believed to center on “indigeneship”⁷ which is very important to the Nigerian people (Adamu, 2002, p. 2). Appointment, employment and admission into schools are mostly based on equal representation spread across the six geo-political zones of the country. The native indigenes of Plateau State consider the Hausa-Fulani in the State as settlers or non-natives, since according to them; the Hausa-Fulani are originally from the northwest and northeast geo-political zones respectively (Gwamna, 2010).

Jos, the capital of Plateau State, is the melting point for this ethnic/religious rivalry, where competition about politics, religion and identity became visible in the State. According to Gwamna (2010), when a Hausa-Fulani man was appointed the sole administrator of Jos North Local Government Area, the natives protested. It was later discovered that he falsified his academic credentials, so he was forced to step down. However in 1999, he was appointed the Poverty Eradication Coordinator for the State, some Christian organizations and natives protested against the appointment. Tensions heightened in the entire State with the natives accusing the State government of favoring the Hausa-Fulani “settlers”. The situation finally reached a breaking point when on

⁷Indigeneship in Nigeria context refers to a citizen’s State of origin or place of birth. Usually, employment in government parastatals and admission into government schools is based on geo-political affiliation, in which indigeneship plays a key role in the decision-making. Politicians only contest for political offices in their State of origin, the concept of State of origin is define by the place of birth of one’s father according to the 1999 Constitution.

Friday September 7th, 2001; a Christian lady was molested by some Muslim youth. The lady attempted to cross a barricade to the other part of the road but was accosted by some Muslim youth who prevented her crossing. The road was blocked for Friday prayers, in the course of the confrontation the lady was molested by the Muslim youth. Since it was within the Christian populated area, information reached the Christian youth in time, they came to her rescue. Some mosques within the area were soon torched. Other areas within Jos responded to the crisis that resulted in churches, mosques and houses burnt down; people were also killed (Gwamna, 2010).

In each area the dominant religion unleashed mayhem on the other. The crisis spread to other areas of the State from September 7th-13th 2001, with killing and destruction of properties. In 2008 another problem arose along Masallacin Jumma'a Street in the State Capital. It was alleged that a Christian lady who was said have dressed indecently tried to cross the street where Muslim faithful were praying. She was said to have been molested by the Muslim youth but was rescued by the Muslim leaders and was escorted to safety. That action did not go down well with the Christian youth as they took to the streets in protest. The strained relationship between the two faiths disintegrated when the Christian youth unleashed mayhem on the Muslims. The military was forced to intervene since the Police could not curtail the crisis; eventually the Federal government had to declare a state of emergency in the State (Gwamna, 2010). As a result of the ethno-religious conflict that engulfed Plateau State in 2001, the State had the highest number of displaced people.

Subsequently, low severity conflict was experienced in some villages around the Langtang and Shendam areas of Plateau state where the Tarok tribes are majority

Christians clashed with the Hausa-Fulani Muslims herders in their communities. It was reported that over a hundred people were killed in this conflict and thousands were made to flee their homes. The Hausa-Fulani herders were accused of stealing land and maneuvering local politics to their favor. These accusations lead to the burning down of 72 villages between 2002 and 2003. Though the clashes in Plateau State have been portrayed as religiously-motivated attacks between Christians and Muslim communities, the clashes also assumed an ethnic dimension (Gwamna, 2009 and Global Security, 2017). Northern Nigeria experienced another religious conflict in the year 2002, when the Country was to host the Miss World Pageant. A columnist of a daily newspaper “This Day” was said to have written an editorial considered to be blasphemous against the person of Prophet Muhammed PBUH (Daniel, 2003). For the next ten days, Kaduna experienced a bloody religious crisis. Other States in northern Nigeria such as Kano, Bauchi, Gombe, Sokoto, Zamfara, Niger, and Kebbi followed suit (Okpanachi, 2011)

Yelwa-Shendam in Plateau State in April 2004 witnessed a bloody crisis whereby some people were reported killed in three days of religious clashes. Intense fights between Tarok tribe and the Hausa-Fulani herders tore through Bakin Chiyawa a district in Shendam area. Each group employed the use of bows and arrows, machetes, and firearms. It is believed that the fight erupted as a result of dispute over a land intended by both groups for either cultivation or grazing (Global Security 2017). It was reported that an estimated 600 people were killed during the clash (NWGAV & AOA, 2013). Muslim leaders who were affected by the conflict called it mass murder, and accused local authorities of taking side with the Tarok (Christian) youth. They accused the

authorities of withdrawing police protection from the area before the Christian youth stormed the town (Simmons, 2004).

Reprisal attacks in Kano as a result of religious riots in Plateau State. Kano, a city of 8 million citizens in Northern Nigeria, witnessed a reprisal attack on the city's Christians. Religiously motivated violence allegedly erupted on May 10th, 2004, during a Muslim demonstration protesting the killing of Muslims in Yelwa-Shendam of Plateau State. However, the demonstration was taken over by angry mobs who roamed the streets of Kano which is considered a predominantly Muslim town. They attacked Christians and other non-Muslims where they burned their homes and properties. The mob caused nearly 70 Christian casualties. An estimated 10,000 Christian Kano residents fled their homes in troubled areas of the town, taking refuge at military and police barracks (Global Security, 2017; IDMC, 2008 and IRIN 2004). In 2010 and 2011, no state in northern Nigeria was spared the agony of seeing people killed in the name of religion.

Reprisal and counter-reprisal attacks on the Plateau left many dead with others wounded and homeless. The case of Dogo-Na-Hauwa, a Christian suburb in Plateau State, was particularly sad. It was believed that some Hausa-Fulani gunmen invaded the village and killed over 150 people in the dead of night (Nossiter, 2010). Also, the post-election violence of April 2011 turned religious as several churches and mosques were destroyed; innocent lives were killed in the fracas. Many people were left homeless, while others fled to neighboring villages or towns for safety, where they became refugees (NWGAV & AOAV, 2013). See Table 1 for records of major interreligious conflicts in Nigeria.

Boko Haram as reaction to western education. The aftermath of the neglect of education in northern Nigeria is believed to have led to the emergence of insurgent groups who had campaigned against Western education (Gwamna, 2010; Larémont, 2011; Umaru, 2013 and Walker, 2016). They believed Western education has many vices that are detrimental to the growth and spread of Islam. It was at this backdrop of this development that one such Islamic group from north-eastern Nigeria started a campaign against Western education which they viewed as “Ḥarām” (forbidden). They are known in local parlance as “Boko Haram” (Western education is forbidden). This Islamic group unleashed mayhem on both Christians and Muslims who, according to them, are all infidels, because they (Muslims) did not fight for the full implementation of Sharia law in Nigeria. Among their demands, they are seeking the replacement of the then president of Nigeria who is a Christian. According to them an infidel is not fit to rule a Muslim. Since 2009, this group had carried out attacks on Mosques, Churches, and government and security agencies building. In addition, the United Nations building in Abuja was not spared. This group is believed to have links with al-Qaeda according to one-time US ambassador to Nigeria (McCulley, 2011). The members of the group adopted the suicide bomber style of al-Qaeda and ISIS where they have bombed many churches and mosques as well as international and security agencies in the country.

There are, however, conflicting statements regarding the sponsorship of the Boko Haram militant group. While some northern elites believed they are sponsored by al-Qaeda, many people are of the view that the same northern elites are the sponsors of this group (Maku, 2012). This can be attested to by the statement of some of these leaders in the past who promised to make Nigeria ungovernable for President Goodluck Jonathan

who is a Christian from the South (Adamu Ciroma, 2010). Boko Haram's nefarious activities divided the people because most Christians believed the group targeted only churches and Christian gatherings. However, there was twist on how the group attacked their targets. The group does not select who to attack or kidnap, there are cases of assaults on Mosques during prayers. There are also cases of women and children kidnapped regardless of their religious affiliation (Walker, 2016). Boko Haram lately targeted schools, where they kidnapped students and bombed the institutions. This is all in effort to dissuade people from sending their children to schools. When they kidnap young men, they often radicalized them and convince them to join their group and fight for the cause of Allah (Walker, 2016).

The activities of these insurgents have crippled economic activities in Northern Nigeria, with countless human and material cost, thereby affecting other parts of the country. Policy makers are of the view that without peace in northern Nigeria, the economy of the country will continue to dwindle. Labaran Maku, former Nigerian Minister for Information, asserts further: "...as long as the north is not at peace, Nigeria cannot develop because the north is a large part of this Country." (Maku, 2012, n.p).

Other religious crises within the country arose with the slightest provocation to any faith. For example, the foreign policy of any Western nation that is considered negative toward majority Islamic countries is met with retaliation by Muslim youth who attacked Christians. It is believed that Christians are sympathetic to Western countries that are considered Christian nations. Instances such as the Danish cartoon and any other blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad or the religion of Islam anywhere in the world always triggers religious conflict in Nigeria.

There is however, a turn of events currently in northern Nigeria concerning interfaith conflicts. The emergence of Boko haram insurgents seems to have reduced the prevalence of interfaith conflict in the region. However, there are conflicts in some parts of northern Nigeria which is often believed that such conflict is between farmers and herdsmen. The insurgency perpetrated by Boko Haram made the people to unite against them because they considered those who are not part of their group enemies.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the geographical and political landscape of northern Nigeria; I looked at the arrival of the British colonial government in Nigeria. I also discussed the introduction of the two faiths in Nigeria focusing mainly on the northern region. I also narrated how the two faiths encountered each other in northern Nigeria which is considered an Islamic dominant region compared to the Southern region which is considered a Christianity dominant region. I also discussed some of the many interfaith conflicts recorded in northern Nigeria and reasons behind some of the conflicts. The sensitivity of religion in Nigeria often contributes to the many conflicts occurring with slight provocations. I have also discussed how politicians used religion as a means to win elections; in addition, how religion is used as an avenue to escape prosecution when found guilty in some cases. However, I did not delve much into discussion about Boko Haram sect, because their criminal acts can hardly be considered an interfaith conflict, since they considered anyone who is not part of their group an infidel. With that said, I presented the argument of experts that the neglect of education in northern Nigeria may be the genesis of the many religious conflicts experienced in the region.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology used for the study. In addition, I have outlined the research design and the rationale for selecting the design, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. The research used qualitative research methodology to collect information from students, parents and religious leaders from four selected schools and communities, two each from Kaduna North and South respectively. These are the schools where the IFE pilot curriculum was introduced. Qualitative data was collected using interviews, classroom observation, focus group and review of educational documents. In this section, I will provide a brief background of the setting of this study; I shall also discuss sampling process, data collection procedures. I outline the validity of the study and ethical considerations for the protection of the respondents' identity against harm because of the study. I will also discuss my stance and positionality as a researcher, in addition, the limitations and constraints that I encountered in the course of the study.

Methodology

This study utilized qualitative research methods; data was collected from primary sources through interviews with respondents and focus group discussions. There are several reasons that prompted the choice of qualitative research methodology for investigation and analysis. Among the many reasons, the exploratory nature of the investigation called for theorizing with the participants' point of view since they came from a particular setting. Another reason for the choice of this methodology has to do with the topic, which centered on interfaith education or dialogue; detailed description of

the various events that culminated into conflicts in the past is necessary from the respondents. Interviews and focus group discussions often provide the opportunity to generate more verbal information during data collection that is centered on conflict, because most of the time the participants have rich narratives to share. According to Denscombe (2006) focus group discussions and interviews are justified when the respondents as key players are asked to give privileged information on the research topic. Looking at the caliber of respondents recruited for this study a qualitative research methodology is appropriate. In addition, I had access to the key informants on the issue of conflict in Kaduna town. I chose a methodology to grant me access to in-depth information. This methodology gave me the chance to speak to the respondents face-to-face, allowing me to know what their feelings and reactions about issues centered on interreligious conflicts in the past. According to Seidman (2006, p. 9) “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.” An interesting aspect of qualitative research methodology is that, the researcher is at liberty to fashion the interviews, focus group discussion or classroom observation to suit the respondents’ mood.

I chose students, parents and religious leaders because of my experience in interfaith education and dialogue. I had the privilege to observe conflicts in the past, sometimes caused by the slightest provocation from someone of another faith. Such occasions helped me consider how to overcome some of these conflicts through building bridges by promoting dialogue between people from different faiths. The pilot project I conducted earlier gave me the opportunity to weight the choice of either adopting a qualitative or quantitative research methodology. After much consultation, I decided that

I needed to drop the idea of conducting a survey with questionnaires because qualitative research methodology will help me to gather more information, by direct communication with the students, parents and religious leaders through interviews and focus group discussions.

The permission from the District Education Offices contributed to easy accessibility to students who formed a major part of my respondents. On most occasions, when I arrived at the schools, the principals always grant me access to the students.

Overview of Research Settings

The past religious conflicts in Kaduna Township prompted the division and resettlement of the people based on religious affiliation. Kaduna north and south is divided by the Kaduna river. Kaduna was originally one local government area. The incessant religious conflicts and industrialization prompted the division of the local government into two. Kaduna North has majority Muslims while Kaduna South has majority Christians. According to the 2006 National census figure, Kaduna North has an estimated population of 357,694 people; while Kaduna South has an estimated population of 402,390 people⁸ (NPC, 2009). Each area enjoyed support from foreign religious organizations based on the majority faith in the area. While Kaduna North controls the commercial aspect of the state, Kaduna South contains the industrial hub of the State. The central market, banks and commercial offices are mostly located in Kaduna North, while majority of the industries are located in Kaduna South. The two local government areas experienced religious conflicts in the past.

⁸Census figures are often politicized in Nigeria based on politics or religious affiliation.

The study took place in schools where the pilot interfaith curriculum was introduced, two schools each located in Kaduna North and South. Majority of the students and teachers in Kaduna North are Muslims with few Christians, while Kaduna South has more teachers and students that are Christians with few Muslims. Despite the majority and minority dichotomy, Religious Education (RE) is taught in all schools. The secondary schools selected for the study from Kaduna North are Government Day Secondary School Kawo and Tudun-Wada respectively. In Kaduna South, Government Day Secondary School Sabon-Tasha and Gonin-Gora was selected for the study. Each of these schools has both the junior secondary school classes 1-3 (grades 7-9) and senior secondary school classes 1-3 (grades 10-12) respectively. In addition, each school has two RE classes (Christianity and Islam) for every grade in the schools with two teachers, one for each faith tradition.

IFE Network in Kaduna North and South Local Government Area (LGA)

To reduce the prevalence of religious conflict in northern Nigeria, the Interfaith Mediation Center and Muslim-Christian dialogue (IMC-MCD) in collaboration with the Kaduna State government introduced interfaith education in selected secondary schools in Kaduna North and South in 2010. Four secondary schools were selected for the pilot program, two schools each in Kaduna North and South respectively. In addition, an interfaith awareness campaign began in the communities where the secondary schools were located, to enable youth to learn about religious tolerance and understanding. One of the major efforts of the center towards combating religious conflict is the Community Peace Action Network (CPAN). According to IMC-MCD (2015) CPAN is the organization's early warning and response system used to combat outbreak of violence.

The Center further states that the purpose of CPAN "...is to neutralize potential conflict, identified as early as possible through information collection and verification and share the information for appropriate response and conflict resolution" (n.p).

CPAN was introduced in selected communities that were considered flash spots for religious conflicts in the past. The network is comprised of youth who were trained by IMC-MCD to be ambassadors in their communities. The network organizes awareness and community meeting among youth, in some cases in places of worship. The network encourages visitation among adherents of the two faiths in their places of worship. There are also exchanges of visits to wedding ceremonies, naming ceremonies and burial ceremonies. The network has equal representation of youth from the two faiths. These youth also serve as contact persons in their various places of worship.

I chose these communities and schools to be involved in this study to maximize the diversity of the input I anticipated. In addition, the choice of these research sites was motivated by the accessibility and their relevance to IFE curriculum and CPAN activities.

Research Design

Interfaith education is a new concept in Nigeria education curriculum; however, interfaith activities were prevalent in some States in the country. Earlier, I conducted a small-scale pilot study where I collected data and analyzed it using an exploratory research design to determine a better design for this project. According to Brown (2006, p.44) "Exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done." Singh (2007, p. 64) further elaborated, "Exploratory research is the initial research, which form the basis of more conclusive research. It can even help in determining the research design, sampling methodology and data collection method." I

realized that this design approach was very appropriate, since the main purpose of this study was to explore the various perceptions of students, parents and religious leaders about IFE curriculum and networks in schools and communities. Another reason for choosing this design was to assess (if any) the contribution of such program in interfaith awareness and understanding in the communities. Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) are of the opinion that exploratory studies help to understand a phenomenon in order to undertake further in-depth study of such phenomenon. This study is about a particular region in Nigeria and the research design helped me to assess the acceptability of the program and to understand limitations of the program.

Based on my experience with exploratory research design in this project, I chose a qualitative research method for the collection of data through interviews, classroom observation during interfaith education classes and focus groups in the schools.

Sampling Process

Sampling is a crucial process to collect valid and reliable data. The choice of participants should be motivated by the researcher's will to collect valid data to analyze and draw reliable conclusions. According to Fowler (2014, p. 15), "Sampling is done from a set of people who go somewhere or do something that enables them to be sampled...." In addition, Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 136) while discussing sampling strategies posit that a researcher "...cannot gather data intensively and in depth about all participants, events, or places. You make choices. The first and most global decision in choosing the setting, population or phenomenon of interest is fundamental to the entire study."

I adopted the purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 2008). According to Gay and Airasian (2000, p. 138), “In Purposive sampling, also referred to as judgement sampling, the researcher selects a sample based on his or her experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled.” In this study, I have knowledge of interfaith dialogue because of my experience. In addition, I am aware of the pilot interfaith education curriculum/networks introduced in the selected schools and communities in Kaduna. I am also familiar with the past interreligious conflicts that Kaduna town has experienced in the past. To better use the purposive sampling in recruiting the participants, I used Random purposive sampling to select the participants. Gay and Airasian (2000) are of the opinion that random purposive sampling helps to streamline the number of people available for the study. The authors pointed out “...this approach adds credibility to the sample but is still based on an initial sample that was purposively selected” (p.140). I explain the sequence I used for the selection more clearly in the next section. In general, experts are of the opinion that qualitative researchers select respondents they believe to have information, perspectives and experiences related to the topic (Patton, 1990; Gay and Airasian, 2000; Rossman and Rallis 2003). Qualitative researchers often describe the context of their study as an in-depth study; I did not generalize the outcome of this study to a larger population. Since this study investigated the introduction of IFE and interfaith activities in schools and the communities, the purposive sampling approach was appropriate.

Selection of respondents. I selected 52 participants for this study in an effort to involve a substantial number of respondents from the four schools and communities. The larger sample enabled me to maximize the diversity of input to make the most valuable and

reliable conclusions. I targeted students, parents and religious leaders from different religious background, gender and grade levels. I was also cognizant of the social status of the respondents. Involving a large number of respondents such as this was a herculean task. The sensitivity of the topic prompted my desire to involve parents and religious leaders too. This was to help me understand their perception toward the program, since parents are the custodians of the students at home while the religious leaders are considered ‘spiritual fathers’ who command respect in the communities. The view of parents and religious leaders about the curriculum is very important as well. The dynamics of religious and gender affiliation also prompted the researcher to recruit ten students from each school to enable me have equal representation from the gender and religious affiliation respectively.⁹ Though the interfaith curriculum was introduced in the junior and senior secondary schools, I only selected participants from forms 3 and 4 (9th and 10th grades) respectively. This is because it is the age bracket mostly used in religious conflicts; the project seeks to understand their perception about the other faith as taught before and after the introduction of IFE curriculum.

I also selected four religious leaders for interview. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) office and Jama’ul Nasril Islam (JNI) office in Kaduna suggested four religious leaders that I interviewed. From the list of religious leaders suggested by CAN and JNI, I selected two each from Kaduna North and South respectively. I interviewed eight parents in the course of this study, four each from the two LGAs with equal representation of the two faith traditions. I intended to select them through consultation

⁹Religion and cultural identity are sensitive issues in Nigeria. For the purpose of this research and subsequent research on this topic, the identities of the participants will be concealed because of their safety. Some people from their own faith traditions might not be comfortable with their views, as such that may create danger for the participants.

with Head-teachers. I wanted parents who are involved in the school Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) because of their active participation in the affairs of the schools. However, this plan did not go down well with some of the Head-teachers, so I devised another means of recruiting the parents. After consultation with the Director of Youth Engagement at IMC-MCD, he suggested that I speak with Christian clerics and Muslim Imams in these communities, so they could make an announcement in their places of worship. An announcement was made and a group of about 35 parents in total from the four communities expressed their interest to participate in the study. I apologized in each community that I only needed 2 representatives or participants; in the end I had eight parents who took part in the study.

During the selection process, I used the same method for selecting the students, parents and religious leaders. In each school, I constructed a list of male and female students from the target classes; I then split each gender list into Muslim and Christian. I later used a simple numerical scheme within each of the four lists to select up to ten respondents; I picked every fourth name until I got the required number needed. For the parents, I picked every third name, while in the case of the religious leaders I relied on the organizations to nominate a participant each. However, one of the Islamic clerics was not comfortable talking with me because of my background; he was honest enough to let me know. I reported to his organization and another person was nominated to replace him.

Description of Participants' Background. The background of participants in this study is diverse. I intentionally included a large and diverse sample of participants, which enabled me have equal representation of gender and religion. In addition, the

students are all from the same grade, attended the same interfaith education classes in the past, and have witnessed inter-religious conflicts in their communities. The students are between the age group of 15-17 years old. The religious leaders who participated in the study have 10-25 years of professional experience. In addition, they also held appointments at the local and State governments' levels respectively and have participated in an interfaith dialogue seminar in the past. The Christian Religious leaders have at least a degree from a theological seminary, while one Imam has a degree in Islamic studies, the other has no degree but was said to be an expert in the religion.¹⁰ The teachers have about 10-20 years in the teaching profession. They all have a university degree in Religious Studies and Education respectively. One teacher has a Post-graduate Diploma in Education which places this teacher as the most qualified among the teachers who participated in the study. During the interview, I asked the religious leaders if they have the authority in their faith to make pronouncements on issues. The reason for this question is that in some religion, some scholars have no authority to make certain pronouncements. Examples of such pronouncements are issuing a 'fatwa' (legal pronouncement in Islam) and absolution of sin in Christianity by priest of the Roman Catholic denomination. All religious leaders confirmed they have the authority to make pronouncements in their faith. The official from the Interfaith Mediation Center-Muslim Christian Dialogue headquarters is an expert in Christian-Muslim Relations. He has a Master's degree in Comparative Religious Education and a graduate certificate in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. Furthermore, the parents in this study have diverse

¹⁰There are different classes of Islamic scholars in northern Nigeria, while some obtained formal education qualification others become experts through attendance of Madrassa. The Madrassa system of religious education is such that the students stay with a particular teacher for a number of years and under-study the teacher. They later become experts in qur'anic recitation and sometimes Islamic jurisprudence.

background; three of them have university degree while one parent only has a high school diploma, another parent is a politician while the other three are public servants.

Majority of the Christians in this study identified as people from the Southern senatorial zone of Kaduna State¹¹ while majority of the Muslims are from the Northern and Central senatorial zones of Kaduna State¹² respectively (See figure 5 for the map of the three senatorial zones in Kaduna State).

¹¹People from the Southern Senatorial zone of Kaduna State are a combination of minority tribes that made up the zone. They are majority Christians because of the early of the people with Christian missionaries. These groups of people constitute the highest number of people in the public service of the State.

¹²People from the Northern and Central Senatorial zones of Kaduna are majority Muslims. It is believed that the people are majority Hausa-Fulani, though it is difficult to ascertain the true tribal identity of the people in these zones because some people who converted to Islam never want to associate with their original tribes. They adopted the Hausa-Fulani tribe as their identity.



(Courtesy: Open-access)

❖ **Kaduna Northern Senatorial Districts**

❖ **Kaduna Central Senatorial Districts**

❖ **Kaduna Southern Senatorial Districts**

Figure 5: Map of Kaduna State showing the three senatorial districts in varying colors.

After the final selection of participants, I administered consent forms to the parents, religious leaders and teachers. As for the students, I administered Assent form for participation in a research study before I commenced the data collection. As seen on Table 1 there is equal representation from the four communities where the study took place.

Table 1: Distribution of Participants and Data Collection Method:

Participants	No. of Participants	Interview	Focus Group
Students (Schools with IFE):			
Govt. Sec. Sch. Kawo	10	10	1
Govt. Sec. Sch. Tudun-Wada	10	10	1
Govt. Sec. Sch. Sabon-Tasha	10	10	1
Govt. Sec. Sch. Gonin-Gora	10	10	1
Religious Leaders from Communities:			
Kawo Community	1	1	-
Tudun-Wada Community	1	1	-
Sabo-Tasha Community	1	1	-
Gonin-Gora Community	1	1	-
RE/IFE Teachers			
Govt. Sec. Sch. Kawo	1	1	-
Govt. Sec. Sch. Tudun-Wada	1	1	-
Govt. Sec. Sch. Sabon-Tasha	1	1	-
Govt. Sec. Sch. Gonin-Gora	1	1	-
Parents from Communities			
Kawo Community	1	1	-
Tudun-Wada Community	1	1	-
Sabo Community	1	1	-
Gonin-Gora Community	1	1	-
TOTAL	52		

Consent Forms. To commence the data collection process, it was important and necessary to get the approval of the participants or their parents if they are minors. Rallis and Rossman (2012, pp. 63-64) posit, “Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice. Respect for Persons means that researchers are to treat subjects as independent agents... minimize potential harms. IRBs have applied the principles through a requirement that informed consent must be secured from participants...” According to the authors, the consent serves as an agreement that the participants understood the purpose and nature of the research; and possible harm during the research. The consent form gives respondents assurance from the researcher that their identities will remain confidential and anonymous. All recordings, focus group discussion questions and interview protocol are only accessible to the researcher. As required by the University of Massachusetts, I submitted paperwork to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval prior to my fieldwork in Nigeria and approval was granted before I travelled to collect data. Each participant was given a consent form and students were issued assent form for their parent to grant approval for the students to participate in the research (See appendices A-E).

Data Collection and Procedures

The research took place within a span of 12 weeks. In the course of the study, I used the following data collection procedures.

Document Review. Document review is an important procedure in data collection. It gives the researcher the opportunity to understand the background of the study. According to Edith (1999, p. 12) “In trying to understand an organization’s history... one should review documents such as... reports, and other documentation

rather than relying solely on the recollections of those involved.... At minimum, this effort produces background information on which to base interviews.” Since the study focused on school curriculum, there was the need to review some of the documents that relate to the study. I reviewed the training manuals that are in use at IMC-MCD which included: Interfaith Peace-Building and Peer Mediation Training Manual; Students for Peace – Peace building Modules: Student Guidebook; Conflict Early warning and Early Response Training Manual; Do No Harm Project: Trainer’s Manual Workshop Modules.¹³ I also, reviewed the lesson plans on interfaith education. I reviewed documents at the Ministry of Information to get data on the frequency of religious conflicts since the introduction of IFE in schools and interfaith networks in the communities.

At the IMC-MCD office, I discovered that the center uses two manuals for training the IFE teachers and facilitators. The manuals are Interfaith Peacebuilding & Peer Mediation Training Manual and Do No Harm Project: Trainers’ Manual Workshop Modules. While the students used Students for Peace – Peacebuilding Modules: Students Guidebook (See Appendices G – K for samples of the manuals). These manuals focus on interreligious understanding among people from different faith traditions. The overview of these manuals is to bring out the various commonalities between Christians and Muslims leading to peaceful coexistence. In addition, there was the emphasis on peace education as well. I discovered that there are slight similarities between the manuals and the Civic education curriculum taught in the schools. The student guidebook is for the students to participate in class interaction by completing the various exercises during

¹³Some of these manuals were written by the IMC while others are manuals written and used by some organizations on Peace building and conflict resolution. In most cases, the activities in the manuals were contextualized to northern Nigeria’s context.

classroom period and Homework. I discovered that the manuals have more of hands on training kind of instruction for the students to participate in class activities compared to conventional class textbooks.

I also discovered that the center has manuals for IFE networks in the communities, including manuals for Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Training. According to the Director of Youth Empowerment of the center, these manuals are directed at training youth and students in the communities on the dynamics of interfaith awareness and understanding. I earlier indicated that I will review frequency or history of interfaith conflicts in Kaduna after the introduction of IFE curriculum/networks in schools and communities respectively. However, at the Ministry of Information, there was no useful information. At the Headquarters of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Jama'tul Nasril Islam (JNI), I discovered they also have manuals from the IMC-MCD. On the prevalence of religious conflict in Kaduna, each of the organization claimed they have no right to give any accurate information concerning interfaith conflicts in Kaduna. I was referred to the Ministry of Information where they claimed are in a position to give me a tentative information, but the bureaucratic nature of Nigeria as a developing country hindered my access to such information if there was any.

Classroom Observations. As part of this study, I observed classes in the four schools where IFE is taught. According to Thomas (2005, p. 91) "Observation involves collecting information by seeing and/or hearing events..." I spent three days in each school to observe IFE classes. I also looked at lesson plans prepared by the IFE teachers for delivery in the classrooms. In each school, the Principals introduced me to the IFE teachers, who in turn ushered me into their classrooms. I observed three sessions of

interfaith education classes in each school, during the classes I paid attention to the interaction between teachers and the students. Each classroom session lasted about 40 minutes. I looked for evidence of IFE interaction with the students during the lessons and activities outside of the classroom. I took notes during the observation both in and outside of the classroom as I wrote them in my research journal. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003, p. 266) "...observers in a qualitative study do not seek to remain neutral or objective about the phenomena being observed. They may include their own feelings and experiences in interpreting their observations." As a graduate of interfaith dialogue and education, I was aware of the structure of the curriculum.

Outside of the classroom, I had the opportunity to observe the interaction between students of different faiths. The dress code for schools in northern Nigeria is such that female Muslim wear religious scarf while the Christian students have the option to wear it or not. This helped in differentiating which religion the students belong. I observed that students interacted with one another cordially while they ate lunch. While some of the boys played soccer together, there were other activities on the school compound. However, it was not all interaction between students from different faiths. I witnessed students from the same faith gathered together in about three places. I walked up to two such group to inquire why they are alone from the same faith. Their response was that they are planning for a presentation in another school that has to do with their faith tradition.

I also observed that teachers interacted with each other despite the religious differences. I asked one of the principals during an informal conversation if there are discrimination among the teachers and students on the ground of religion. The principal

replied jokingly, that “how can we discriminate against one another when Boko Haram terrorists considered all of us infidels regardless of their religious belief”. I walked some yards behind some of the students after the school closed; I discovered that the students walked together regardless of their religious belief. They went their separate ways when they approached the junction to their homes, because of the division within the community based on religious settlement. The observation generally gave me an idea of the students’ behavior in and out of classroom.

Focus Group. Fowler (2014, p. 100) is of the opinion that “Before writing a draft of a structured set of questions, it is valuable to conduct focused discussions with people who are in the study population about the issues to be studied.” I had four Focus Group discussions with students in their school environment; each focus group discussion took approximately 1 hour. According to Mertens (2015, p. 382) “Focus groups, in essence, are group interviews that rely not on a question and answer format interviews, but on the interaction within the group.” The focus group discussion created the enabling environment to establish trust between myself and the students taking into consideration their religious and cultural differences. The focus group also provided students the opportunity to put their ideas on paper through graphics.

In each school, I used a classroom dedicated for this research by the school. During the pilot study I conducted earlier, I discovered that some of the students were not upcoming with answers to questions I put to them. I realized that their culture/religious upbringing might have contributed to such behavior. I also realized that the straightforward questions are unlikely to produce more than minimal answers, which contained little value. To avoid these challenges, I decided to ask the students to draw

pictures of their experiences of interreligious conflicts in the past, and what they think of an ideal community in the future. These sketches helped to buttress the many points the students would have answered through straightforward questions. It was helpful because all students responded positively to this exercise, and it helped me as I prepared for the interview I had with them later.

In this process, I gave each student a Strathmore Sketch paper, pencil and pack of crayons. I asked the students to draw the picture of an ideal environment or community where they would love to stay. Then, I asked the students to turn the next page and reflect on a time they witnessed interreligious conflict in their communities. They are requested to draw some of the damages they experienced during the conflict such as houses that were burned, schools that were destroyed, places of worship that were burned down. I asked them to reflect on how they perceived people from other faiths since their experiences of past conflicts. I finally gave them another paper to draw how they now think their communities should look.

One-on-one interview. Trochim (2001) is of the opinion that interviews in research introduce a personal and in-depth conversation with the respondent(s). The author posits, “In the personal interview, the interviewer works directly with the respondent. ... the interviewer has the opportunity to probe or ask follow-up questions, and interviews are generally easier for the respondent, especially if you are seeking opinions or impressions” (p.109). In addition, Rallis and Rossman (2012) remark that interview helps one to understand individual and group perspectives, views and feelings. Sometimes these cannot be seen in the responses from the questionnaires, Rallis and Rossman further states, “...interviewing entails asking people questions and eliciting

detailed responses” (p. 128). Qualitative interviews are believed to encourage communication between the researcher and subject, thereby giving room for in-depth conversation (Britten, 1996).

The interviews took place in the schools at different times. I spent about 25 minutes with each student. I asked the students, if it was all right to record our conversation on tape. The interview was conducted in English and Hausa languages, because the language of communication in schools is English. As for the parents and religious leaders, I used both Hausa and English languages, because Hausa is the street-language in Kaduna and I can speak and write fluently in the language.

I listened and interacted carefully with the participants using two sets of questions for the interview one for the students and the other for the parents and religious leaders. According to Gay and Airasian (2009, p. 222) “Interviews have basic choices for collecting their data: taking notes during the interview, writing notes after the interview and tape recording the interview.” The authors are of the opinion that tape recording of interview is the most viable; as such, I recorded the interview. This is to enable me concentrate more in the conversation. During the interview with students, I asked the students to bring the sketches they drew earlier during the focus group discussion. I formulated most of the questions by drawing from the sketches and narration of the student's experiences. All the follow-up questions I asked the students are unstructured. I know that it is easier to conduct interviews using structured questions than the unstructured questions (Gay and Airasian, 2009). However, I tried to pay attention to the students' response and sketches. I divided the conversation into three parts:

-First, I asked the students of what they think are their dreamed community or environment they want to live in.

-Secondly, I asked about their experiences of interfaith conflicts in the communities and how it affected how they view people from different faith.

-Finally, I asked them what they think are the ways to avert conflicts in the future. In addition, I tried to understand if they would rather fight to protect their faith or would rather make peace with others.

The interview sessions with the parents took place in their places of worship. The Imams and Pastors of the various communities contributed immensely to the success of the interview by granting permission to use the Mosques and churches. When the parents realized that I am from northern Nigeria like them, they were very open to me to the extent that some of them invited me to visit their homes and to meet with their families. The interviews were conducted in both Hausa and English languages; I sought permission to record the interviews. During the pilot study I conducted earlier, I realized that some of the questions did not produce useful answers. This time around, I decided to refine my interview protocol. In the new interview protocol, I used set of questions to guide the process of the interview with the aim of giving the parents opportunity to narrate in detail their experiences about interreligious conflicts and the effort of peacebuilding in the community. I also wanted to hear about their perceptions of the IFE pilot curriculum that was introduced in secondary schools in their communities. To maintain consistency of information, I asked all parents the same questions. I often used follow-up questions during the interviews when I realized it was helpful for me to gather more information to get clarity from the parents. According to experts, follow-up questions provide opportunities for the respondents to add more information that they would like to share with the researcher (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003; Creswell and Clark, 2007). I also

allowed them to ask me questions when they needed clarification or wanted to clear any curiosity. I realized that this act helped built a better relationship with me.

The interaction with religious leaders was enriching as well, though there was a slight hitch. Three religious leaders were open to me in the course of our discussion, one of the religious leaders however declined to participate in the interview because he came to know that I am from northern Nigeria. I reported the situation to the headquarters of the religious organization and a new religious leader who was part of the population earlier slated for the study agreed to participate in the interview. I met with the Christian religious leaders at the headquarters of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), while I met with the Muslim clerics at the Jam'atul Nasril Islam (JNI) headquarters. The interview questions with the religious leaders were similar to the questions I asked the parents. Religious leaders are considered prominent and respectful figures in the society, as such their perception about interfaith education/networks in the communities is very important.

I used structured questions to interact with the religious leaders and parents. I also used follow-up questions as well in the course of the interview. The structured questions are as follows:

1. What do you think are some of the causes of religious conflicts in northern Nigeria?
2. Tell me about a time when your faith affected your engagement with people of other faiths?
3. What attitudes does your faith encourage toward other religions?
4. In your opinion, what are some of the causes of interreligious conflicts in Nigeria?
5. Can you walk me through your experience with an interreligious conflict in the past?
6. What is your understanding of interfaith harmony in the community?
7. What experience do you have about interfaith dialogue?
8. How do you feel about your experience?

9. Can you describe how you feel about the introduction of interfaith education in schools?
10. Would you support the integration of interfaith education into Religious education curriculum in schools for children, and why?
11. In your opinion, who should be in charge of interfaith education in schools and why?
12. What do you think in your opinion are the potentials of introducing interfaith education in your community?
13. What other ways do you think interfaith dialogue can be encouraged among youths in your community?

At the end of the interview, I thanked all participants and asked if I could contact them again in the future for clarification or follow-up questions. I also asked them if they would like to have a copy of the transcription later. They all declined and only requested to see the entire study when it is completed.

Data Analysis Strategy

Experts in qualitative research methods describe analysis as the process by which data is broken down and presented in themes and manner, which, will bring out the meanings within the text (Swinton and Mowat, 2006; Rossman, and Rallis, 2012). Galman (2007, p. 85) posits, “Data analysis is mostly a process of sifting and thinking and waiting for patterns to emerge.” In addition, Data analysis is an ongoing process that requires asking analytic questions and continuous reflections (Creswell, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Rossman & Rallis (2012) used the metaphors of organizing “a closet full of clothes” and a “child’s playroom filled with toys” to explain analyzing qualitative data (p. 263). This signifies that data analysis can be a complicated and exciting process. To aid this complicated process, Rossman & Rallis (2012) suggest eight phases: organizing the data, emersion in data, identifying categories, coding the data, generating themes, interpreting, searching for alternative understandings, and writing the report.

In this study, I evaluated the IFE curriculum and other documents that I came across from the various institutions. The analysis of the documents at these institutions provided useful information on how IFE and its networks is conceptualized in national discourse with emphasis on Kaduna town northern Nigeria.

To commence the data analysis process, I organized the various information I gathered in the field ranging from my field journals, observations notes, and notes from focus group discussions. I transcribed and interpreted the interviews and conversations from the recordings as well. Mertens (2010) is of the opinion that transcription is part of the data analysis process that allows the researcher to interact with the data intensively. Writing a transcription is not merely a technical issue, rather an interpretative task requires researchers to make decisions around what to include and exclude in the transcription. Tilley (2003) posits that transcription is a critical aspect of data analysis, which may cause distortion in the research results if the researcher decided to exaggerate the participants' statements or leave out meaningful points. To enable me to overcome some of these shortfalls in the analysis, I paid special attention to the transcription, field notes and memos to help me.

According to Creswell (2012, p. 257) "Interpretation in qualitative research means that the researcher steps back and forms some larger meaning about the phenomenon based on personal views, comparison with past studies, or both." I coded the data sources based on the overarching research question that point to: interfaith awareness, peacebuilding, and religious tolerance. The coding of the data helped me bring out the various themes of the study arising from the data collected. To help me organize these themes, I used NVivo software program. Some of the emerging themes were: infidel,

hatred, betrayal, discrimination, peacebuilding, reconciliation, forgiveness, religious background, tribal identities, regional identities, stereotypes, political influence and education. I coded the data while I remained open to the possibility of other findings during the data analysis. Patton (1990, p. 196) is of the opinion that “A qualitative design needs to remain sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry. Qualitative designs continue to be emergent even after data collection ends.” The final stage of the analysis was the integration of all the data to enable me to answer the research questions through interpreting the responses from the participants. Analysis of the data helped in formulating recommendation for further studies in the field.

Researcher’s Positionality

The incessant interreligious conflicts in northern Nigeria contributed to the need for interfaith dialogue in the region. Military personnel are often invited to help restore order in conflict situations. I had the privilege of serving in the Nigerian Air Force and was deployed on many occasions to help restore order in internal security operations. After my retirement from active service, I became an educator and taught in a secondary school. I attained a managerial position. My position as a teacher gave me the opportunity to serve on the committee of community leaders. These positions gave me the opportunity to interact with many youth in the communities I served. During one of the interreligious conflicts in the year 2000, some youth who were actors in one of the conflicts were eventually arrested by police confessed they did not know why they were fighting people from the other faith.

On a close examination, I discovered that they knew little about their own faith, never mind about the other person's faith. This and other accounts narrated by others or government officials often worried me, because the political class used the youth to act against their political opponents using religion to fan the ember of disunity. However, most of the interreligious conflicts are concentrated in the northern region of Nigeria; while the southern part of Nigeria hardly experienced interreligious conflicts. Despite the mixing of Christians and Muslims in the southern part of the country, they lived in peace respecting each other. I had the opportunity of working in the region and marveled at their peaceful co-existence and interreligious understanding.

As I retired and started working in the community in Kaduna North and as youth representative, I realized that, there is a great gap between the southern and northern regions of Nigeria in terms of education. I often wondered if the educational gap is the cause of the interreligious intolerance and lack of understanding and respect for each other. I decided to embark on the quest to acquire knowledge, I returned to school. I came to the United States for graduate studies.

As an international student from Nigeria a country that is considered to have the highest number of children out school (UNICEF, 2017), my initial intention was to research on the neglect of girl-child education in northern Nigeria. However, on arrival at the Hartford Seminary CT, USA as a student and subsequent admission to the Center for International Education (CIE) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst USA, I had a change of plan. The various courses I took on interfaith dialogue at Hartford Seminary and CIE were a revelation to me. It kept me thinking about one of the major problems northern Nigeria faces, which is an interreligious conflict. My interaction with interfaith

NGOs in Nigeria also contributed to my desire to investigate the IFE curriculum in Kaduna. All of these reasons triggered my curiosity in knowing more about how Religious education was used to combat violence in other countries such as Northern Ireland, Britain, Indonesia, and some other contexts as narrated in chapter two. I also discovered that some countries in West African sub-region used Religious education and interreligious dialogue to create awareness among students and youth in their communities. Though interfaith dialogue is not a new concept in Nigeria, IFE however is new a concept, which in my opinion if managed properly may help curb the incessant conflicts in northern Nigeria.

As a teacher and a graduate of interfaith dialogue, I possessed multiple roles as a researcher. These roles gave me the opportunity to explore students, parents and religious leaders' perception about the IFE curriculum seeking to understand "...meaning of social reality from the participants perspectives" (Reinhardt and Rallis, 1994, p. 11). In my role as an investigator, I was initially afraid that some of the students and parents might not want to speak with me because of my religious affiliation. It turned out to be an advantage; those who belong to a different religion from mine spoke from their heart they could have refused to speak with me because of religious differences, but they were very open to me. Another advantage on my side was when they realized that I have some knowledge about their religion (Islam), it was helpful. If they had realized I have no knowledge of their faith, I doubt if they could talk to me.

My relationship with some officials at the Ministry of Education allowed me to get quick approval devoid of bureaucratic antics. In addition, on realizing that I am a student from the United States of America, I was accorded some level of respect and

some of the parents thought I would be submitting the report to the US government who will in turn come to Nigeria's aid in combating the menace. Even though I told them it would not be submitted to a government institution, some of them did not believe me, such notion however helped get them speak freely in the course of our conversation. In addition, in my role as a researcher I encountered some challenges when planning to conduct the research. I applied for sponsorship to conduct the study but was not awarded. I had to rely on the meager family resources to conduct the research in the field; the lack of funds delayed the collection of data. Despite all the challenges, I am confident of the data collected. This study helped me understand the dynamics of a new curriculum. I look forward to playing a vital role in the full implementation of the curriculum in the country. I will be willing to contribute the result of this study if called upon by the Ministry of Education.

Validity

Data collection instrument can only be considered valid through reliability and dependability. According to Mertens, (2010, p. 383) "A second category of quality is validity of the meaning of scores derived from the data collection instrument." Validity includes the proper, clarity and usage of instruments as collected by a researcher. Mertens (2010, p.383) also assert, "The conventional definition of the validity of an instrument is the extent to which it measures what it was intended to measure". It is believed that validity can often be bias or judgmental because of misapplication or assumptions (Patten, 2004). Though experts are of the opinion that: "In practice, however, the validity of an instrument is assessed in relation to the extent to which evidence can be generated that supports the claim that the instrument measures attributes targeted in the proposed

research” (Mertens, 2010, p. 383). The subjects I used for this study are not secondary sources; they are direct witnesses of religious conflicts in their communities. In addition, some of them are students where IFE is taught as a subject in their schools.

Ethical Considerations

According to McNamara (1994) a research that involves human subjects can only be considered to be ethically right when certain issues are taken care of. Some of the issues are, participants’ protection from harm, volunteering for the research by participants, maintaining confidentiality, knowledge of the purpose of the research by the participants and feedback of the results. Rossman and Rallis (2012, p. 71) while discussing ethic of rights posits, “The Ethic of Rights and Responsibilities considers the fundamental rights of an individual... This ethic follows the doctrine that all people have fundamental rights that may not be denied, even for the greatest good for the greatest number.” In this study, participant’s confidentiality was protected, all documents are stored on a computer that is pass-word protected with hard copies protected in a safe file cabinet and can only be accessed by the researcher. Participants’ identity is protected against any possible harm. All recordings were transcribed and saved on a computer while the hard copy was saved in a fireproof file cabinet in my office under lock and key. Overall, no document linked to the data collection is accessible by another person except the researcher.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the research methodology used for the study. In addition, I outlined the research design and the rationale for selection of the design, data

collection method, data analysis, and interpretation. The research used qualitative methodology to collect information from the participants in four selected schools and communities where the IFE pilot curriculum was introduced. I also discussed the various instruments I applied in the collection of data. In addition, I provided a brief background of the settings of this study where I discussed the dynamics of Kaduna north and south in relation to some of the conflicts experienced in these places. I also discussed sampling process and data collection procedures. I then outlined the validity of the study and ethical considerations for the protection of the respondents' identity against harm. I also discussed my stance and positionality as a researcher. In addition, the limitations and constraints that I encountered in the course of the study was also discussed.

In the next chapter I will present the findings on the various themes that came up during the data collection.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS ON FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AND INTERVIEWS

In this chapter, I will present the outcome of the data collected during the study. I will discuss the participants' demographics, which may help the reader to understand the composition of participants for this study. I will highlight the outcome of the review of documents related to interfaith dialogue/education in Kaduna. Moreover, classroom observations and outcome of focus group discussions will be presented. I will discuss the major themes that emerge from the various interviews, classroom observations and focus group discussions. One common factor about the participants is that they all come from northern Nigeria where they all have witnessed interreligious conflict at one time or the other in the past.

Findings

In this section, I will present the review of documents at the IMC-MCD, which is also used for IFE curriculum in schools. I will then present the Focus group discussions with the students. Finally, I will present the result of interviews I had with the students, parents, religious leaders and RE teachers which brought the various themes.

Review of Documents

At the IMC-MCD I discovered that the documents used in preparing teachers and other peace advocates to carry out their responsibilities in schools and communities were developed by the center. Some of the documents are:

- Peace Building Modules-Students Handbook;
- Manual on Early Warning and Early Response for Community Peace Observers;

- Do No Harm Project: Trainers Manual Workshop Modules;
- Process for Mediators Training Manual and Interfaith Peace-Building;
- Peer Mediation Training Manual (See appendices F – H).

Every peace advocate trained at the center is expected to use at least one or more of the manuals. Below are brief explanations of the manuals.

Peace Building Modules. This document contains the curriculum used for students in schools. Teachers are expected to use the various modules from the manual to design lesson plan for each class session. According to the IMC-MCD the objectives of the Modules is for students to:

- establish concrete understanding of what builds conflict, how it evolves, and the reasons conflicts exists.
- identify historic conflict events in recent Nigerian history and be able to use it to identify positive aspects of peace management.
- associate religious content used for peacekeeping and be able to use it to identify positive aspects of peace management.
- understand many of the origins of conflict and strife in a scientific manner based on psychology, psychiatric background, human behavior and human nature.
- identify one's role in the community, whether that be as small as the immediate people around them or as much as their effect on the international community.
- understand modern communication skills needed to be able to convey feelings and actions to the people around you.
- recognize and use steps needed to ensure lasting and essential mediation techniques and why they are needed to fight conflict.
- able to discuss and mediate situations to resolve issues.
- to become successful and willing mediators.

-distinguish themselves as mediators of any conflict situation that can be resolved by using the skills taught in the Peace Building Modules (Peace Building Modules, 2013).

The manual does not limit its scope to religious conflict. Rather, it encompasses all aspects of conflicts, when I asked an official at IMC-MCD the reason behind including all aspects of conflicts; he responded that Nigeria is not only experiencing interreligious conflicts. According to the official, communal and tribal conflicts were also experienced in some areas, and many a times, it was difficult to differentiate interreligious crisis from communal or tribal conflicts, whereby one conflict often transitioned into the other. One of such examples is the 2011 presidential election. When Goodluck Jonathan was announced to have won the presidential election, some politicians incited youth from the northern region who are majority Muslims to protest the result. It should be noted that political affiliation has nothing to do with faith traditions. However, during the protest against the result of the 2011 election, some youth took to the street and attacked Christians. Churches were burned and homes belonging to Christians too were not spared. Some youth were heard shouting they won't accept an infidel to rule the country (BBC, 2011, Human Rights Watch, 2011, and Aljazeera, 2011). There are many other conflicts which was either a communal or religious which translate to the other (*Please see more about the dynamics of conflicts in chapter 4*). This is the reason why the manual included other forms of conflicts. The manual commences the training from the family level to the community, the nation and the entire world. It drew the attention of the students on the interdependence of one another in the world. The manual also discussed typology of religious conflict looking at the Qur'anic and Biblical perspectives. Religion is to be taught as a good example for conflict mediation. The

manual also used Qur'anic and Biblical examples to build a wonderful technique for listening during conflict prevention and resolution. There are also practical activities in the manual to stimulate the students to act on certain exercises. The IMC-MCD official pointed out that the manual is not used in schools alone; they are also used in some places of worship as well.

Early Warning and Early Response for Community Peace Observers. This manual is used to train both students and youth in the community under the CPAN program. In addition, religious leaders and teachers too are trained as contact persons in the community in the event of crisis. The main objective of the early warning training is to help mitigate violence expression of conflict before it escalates to full blown crisis. The manual comprises of the definition of conflict early warning, and the history of early warning. It also outlined the components of early warning which comprises collection of information using specific indicators, which are analyzed and then transmitted to decision makers. The manual also discusses the guiding principles of early warning and the various typologies. Although I did not experience the use of this manual in the classroom I visited, I was told by the teachers that there are days when they discuss the early warning training with students. Just like the Peace building modules, this manual also has exercises for stimulation of the students or participants.

Do No Harm Project: Trainers Manual Workshop Modules. The manual was fashioned after a similar one from the Collaborative for Development Action in Cambridge Massachusetts. The purpose of this project was initially launched to respond to certain inquiries on how conflict could be mitigated and to prevent the escalation of such crisis. According to the manual “DNH project was launched to answer the question:

How may assistance be provided in conflict settings in ways, rather than feeding into and exacerbating the conflict, help local people disengage from the violence that surrounds them and begin to develop alternative systems for addressing the problems that underlie the conflict?” (Collaborative Learning Projects, 2004. p. 2). This manual is contextualized to meet the Nigerian needs and northern Nigeria in particular. An official from IMC-MCD pointed out that this training is meant for people who are considered to be potential trainers, who will in turn train early warning and early response for community peace observers. Teachers were trained and inducted to be trainers in communities and schools. At the schools, the teacher showed me the manual as given to them by IMC-MCD and the District Education Office to form part of their curriculum.

Process for Mediators Training Manual. This manual forms part of the IFE curriculum. It deals with the techniques of conflict resolution among the people. Students are trained to be ambassadors of conflict resolution. The teachers use religious theology and sacred texts to build the components of the curriculum. Examples are given of Christianity and Islamic alternative to conflict and dispute resolution. Students are trained on the rudiments of negotiation among people with differing views. The simulation exercises in the manual helped students apply the technique learned during class lessons. Students were taught the basic concepts of trauma counselling. When I asked the official from IMC-MCD about the trauma counselling lessons which I believe is a profession that need proper training, he responded that handling trauma in the African contexts are different from the western concepts in most of the time. According to him, sympathy and empathy are often viewed as a process of identifying with someone who was traumatized as a result of a conflict. Helping the victim identify ways of overcoming such situation by

believing God will take care of the situation is important to them. In Nigeria, most people attribute the circumstances that often lead to disaster from God. There is the belief that God destined things to be the way they happened. During my conversation with some of the teachers and students, this assertion came up. It was difficult to make them understand that the trauma counselling taught the students is the wrong concept of counselling in such situations.

Classroom observation

As part of my research, I observed classroom proceedings in the four schools. The interfaith education classes are not like the religious education classes where students are separated based on religion. They were combined in the same classroom. Two religious education teachers facilitated all the classes in the four schools I visited. The teachers prayed before the commencement and end of the classes. In one of the schools in Kaduna South, the Christian prayer was offered at the beginning of the class while the Muslim prayer was offered before the close of the class. The teachers co-taught the classes in all the schools. During the class proceedings I observed the interaction between the students and teachers. In one of the classes in GDSS Tudun-Wada Kaduna North, I came across the teachers discussing the concept of common ground among the two faiths. On this topic, the teachers outlined the many reasons why each faith should respect the other. They also pointed out the many commonalities among the two faiths. Students were asked to pair with a person from a different faith and discuss what they want the other person to understand about them. The students interacted with each; they were asked to clarify some of the misconception about their faith as seen by people from a different faith. I witnessed the students interacting with one another; a student asked a question

while the other responds to the question and vice-versa. After this exercise, the students came back to a whole group to discuss some of the important and pertinent points/questions that came up during their conversations. It was interesting to hear some of the questions the students asked each other for clarification. One of the questions asked was “How come Christians believed Jesus is the Son of God, whereas God has no wife” and the other major question asked was “Is it true that the Qur’an was actually delivered to Prophet Muhammad by God Himself?” The two teachers responded to the questions and went further to give example with human beings that are from different background and race but are all considered as humans. The students were given assignment to speak with someone who is from a different faith in the community about ways to live in peace; each student is to submit the report of their conversation in the next class.

In GDSS Sabon-Tasha in Kaduna South, I observed a classroom proceeding where the two religious education teachers used posters to teach the lesson for the day. The topic for the day was on early warning intervention. The teachers demonstrated how the students would respond on the event of a crisis in their communities. I asked the teachers later whether the students already have learned about the interfaith dialogue/education, they responded that the early warning intervention is part of the curriculum for the subject. I later learned that majority of the students in this school are members of CPAN in the community and serve as ambassador of the project as well. I later learned from the teachers also that the students volunteer at the interfaith office in the community, an office set up by IMC-MCD in collaboration with the Local government headquarters. In GDSS Gonin-Gora in Kaduna South, the teachers taught

about the commonalities within the two faiths, the lesson seemed to be the same as that of GDSS Tudun-Wada in Kaduna North. Students were divided into group and asked to discuss the previous class lesson and come up with suggestions on how to avoid reprisal attacks when one is a victim. The students made suggestions such as reporting the incident to the local chief, tribal leaders, the police or religious leaders in the community. GDSS Kawo/Mando was no exception too, I witnessed classroom proceeding where the teachers talked about the prophets in the two faiths. The students were asked to come to the next class with lists of some of the things they discovered through interaction in the community about the unity of their faiths based on the topic of the last class I was not present.

After the classroom observations, I sat down with the students in a focus group discussion. In the next section I will present the result of the focus group discussion with students and teachers from the four schools.

Focus Group Discussions

The focus group discussions took place in the four schools. I assembled the students in a classroom; after all the necessary protocol was administered I gave each student a pencil, crayon, color pencil and a Strathmore sketch paper. I asked the students to draw an ideal community or how their house look like before and after conflict; In addition, I told them they can draw a before and after image of a place of worship as well. All the students responded positively to this exercise, I discovered that some of them shared their drawings with their classmates and they either make fun of each other's sketch or commend the sketch. Majority of the students had a sketch of their houses with cars or their bicycles while others had sketches of places of worship. During this time, the

students were so happy sketching the ideal home with beautiful flowers and palm trees which could be found in some areas. I then asked some of the students if they still live in the house they sketched on the paper, some of them responded in the affirmative while others said they don't live there anymore. I asked the students to explain to me if their friends who live in their communities where their houses were built also live in the same type of houses. My reason for this question is to understand if their friends are of the same social status as them. Some of them responded that their friends have the same houses or even bigger, while others said their houses are bigger than their friends, but they visit each other.

In each school the students were allowed to take a 15 minute break, I understand that the students are eager to discuss their sketches with friends from the look on their faces. During the break period, some of the students gathered in group discussing the activities or laughing at each other's sketches. The interaction was mutual because there was no segregation among the students based on religion, and they interacted freely. I witnessed a situation when one of the students who drew a sketch of his church walked up to another student who had a sketch of something that looked like a school or a training institution and they engaged in a conversation. I found out later they lived in the same community in the past before the year 2000 Sharia Law conflicts which forced one family to relocate to another area close by, but they still attend the same school. A Christian student from Kaduna south explained to her friends why she sketched a one story-building because of the safety of her family. According to her, if they live in a high building, the perpetrators of the many crises in the area cannot reach them easily, as against when they lived on the ground floor of a house.

After a short break, I asked the students to turn the reverse side of their sketches to draw an impression of what they witnessed during an interreligious conflict(s) in their communities. It was interesting that majority of the students sketched their home either on fire or was destroyed. Some of the sketches had persons who could be considered as perpetrators of the crisis either stabbing someone or standing with a weapon. I also observed that some of the students argued over the way in which another student portrayed the image of a killer. According to one of the critics of the image, the face of the killer was not well covered, and it could be detected easily. The other students argued that there was no way the person could be detected because the face is well covered, I asked them if the image on the sketch represent those who came to attack them either at home or in their places of worship. One of the students responded that this is the trademark of the perpetrators of evil, because they have transition into Boko Haram now. I noticed that the fun with which the students' welcomed their ideal home sketch was long gone, the students were silent, I asked them to quietly submit their sketches and I allowed for a break again (See appendices I – N for some of the sketches made by the students).

When we reconvened, I used the students' sketches to probe further for explanation of the motives behind the sketches. I asked the students how they felt when the first moved to their new houses, a Muslim student from Kaduna north narrated that she was so happy because the new house had separate bedroom for each member of her family. And that the neighborhood was very nice with friends and she attends the same school together. She also narrated how they gather each Saturday at their place of worship to learn about their religion and for most part to play all day until they disperse

around 4pm. According to this student, “It is a way to relax after a hectic week and you get to see some of your friends that you could not meet within the week”. Shata also narrated how their house was located near the market square of their community and on market days¹⁴ which are usually on Fridays, they have the opportunity to watch many traders come in from different parts of the State to sell their wares.

A Christian student from Kaduna south also mentioned how some traders use megaphones to sell their wares and such action make the area noisy and crowded. Though this student’s parent does not sell any wares because they are public servants, he looked forward to each Friday because the school closes early to enable children to go home on time because of the influx of people in the community every Friday. According to another Christian student from Kaduna north, their house was located near the State government high-cost housing estate; they often visit the estate in company of their friends who reside there. Such visitation gave them the opportunity to use the children recreation park with a swimming pool, swing and children toys. Mostly they visit the estate on Saturdays that was a practice they maintained almost every week. In addition, this student mentioned how they celebrate religious festivities in the community; she showed me a spot on her sketch where people come to perform traditional dances in their compound so her parents gave the people money. Other students narrated the experiences of their former homes and the horrible experience they had about the place as seen on

¹⁴In Nigeria apart from the international method of hosting trade fairs, government/private business retreats, counting and naming days of the week such as Sunday – Saturday, there are also various ways these days are noted traditionally especially for different towns and villages. The days are noted for their market days when people from far and near bring their wares or farm produce for sale or others coming purposely for buying goods. Each town or market in some cases has special produce that are mainly sold in such market or town. These days are very special to the people of the locality.

their sketches. From all indication, majority of the students experienced one form of loss or the other as a result of the conflicts. The sketches indicated many sad experiences, to the extent that I saw a sketch with something that looked like an aircraft firing a missile or gun from the sky. The student who sketched it narrated how they were evacuated by a military helicopter during one of the crises.

I then asked them to indicate by raising their hands who still live in their houses, majority of the students indicated that they moved to a different area. I asked if they could tell me what prompted their movement. Some students who all moved to a new community not because they lost their houses but because the parents felt their safety in the former area is not guaranteed as result of the incessant and reprisal attacks from adherents of both faiths. A Muslim student from Kaduna south narrated how her father secured a new accommodation in Kaduna North when the attack on his family turned aggressive during one of the conflicts. According to her, they vacated the house and her father asked someone who works in the same place with her father to occupy the house since the person belong to the majority religion in the area. At a later date the father put up the house for sale through a realtor, her father later built the current house they occupy from the proceed of the sale of the former house. The case of another Muslim student from Kaduna north was different because the reason for their relocation was as a result of an attack on their house by some people during the 2002 interreligious crisis where her father was killed. Her mother and elder brothers moved the family to a safe location and later secured a house in their new place and have since been living there.

The mother of a Christian student from Kaduna north was attacked when the perpetrators came to their house, according to him their house was not burned but it was

vandalized, and his mother was raped and killed in his presence and his siblings because they were forced to watch. I asked if he recognized anyone among the perpetrators he said he could not because they all covered their faces with a piece of cloth. According to the student, he was much younger and did not really understand what was going on then. He was only concerned about the vandalization and fear inflicted on them at the time, he placed no emphasis on anything that happened, it was only in the years later that he understood that his mother was raped and killed during that action. I further asked him how he viewed people from the other faith who are believed to be the perpetrators of the arson and murder on his family. He replied that in the past, he hated them but now, he realized that it is not everyone from that faith that attacked his family; a particular set of people did that. His orientation also changed when he heard his classmates from that same religion relish stories of how people from his own faith unleash mayhem on them and burned their properties. He concluded that the bad eggs are in all religion, and no particular religion has monopoly of violence against the other.

However, a Muslim student from Kaduna south did not suffer any direct harm on himself or their house, but his place of worship was burned down. And there was an inscription on the wall that ‘we are coming back for more blood if you don’t leave this area’; his father decided it was high time they vacate the area to another side of the town. Even when they were moving their things to the new area, some youth blocked the roads some few kilometers away from their former house in an effort of trying to identify which side of the divide they belong to. According to him, it was the intervention of the military that saved them. Another Muslim student from Kaduna south also did not lost his house but were advised by a local religious cleric in the former area they occupy to

vacate the place because there was a plan to attack people who are minority or belong to a minority faith in the area. Though the father secured protection from the police, it was however difficult to rely on them when the crisis escalated to high proportion. The father asked the police to escort them to safety, though their house was not burned but their place of worship was not spared, it was burned down and the pastorium was vandalized.

In each school, I asked the student how they felt about their experiences over the years as a result of the various conflicts they witnessed. Majority of the Muslim students attributed the circumstances that led to the crisis and the eventual act of violence as a will of Allah. According to one of the students, if Allah did not will it, no one can harm another person. The student is of the opinion that Allah knows everything and can stop anything, but He allows some things to happen, so that He could test the people. However, another Muslim student did not agree with the argument of the first student, because according to this student, if Allah will allow her father to be killed and made them fatherless with a mother who is unemployed then it is unfair. I realized the conversation was turning emotional and argumentative.

So, I decided to direct my attention towards the Christian students by asking their views and experiences about the conflicts. Majority of the Christian students believed all acts of violence emanate from the devil. They opine that it is the devil alone that encouraged people to commit such havoc. Two Muslim students and a Christian student from Kaduna north and south respectively blamed the politicians for allowing so many children roaming the streets without going to school. According to these students, most of the perpetrators are the youth on the street, supported by few people who are not part of the Almajiri School. They believe that if those children on the street were given an

opportunity to go to school, the politicians will not have tools to use for perpetrating these acts. I asked the students if they believe that if all children are sent to school and when they subsequently become youth, will it stop the conflict in the community.

Majority of the students are of the opinion that education will help reduce the prevalent of conflict in northern Nigeria. According to a Muslim student from Kaduna north, “educated people are civilized people and cannot act in manner that may harm other people for the sake of religion”, she gave an example with the Yoruba tribe of southern Nigeria who interact freely with one another without any problem. She believed it is because the Yoruba is a very literate tribe that is why; she also gave instances of the people of the South-South region of Nigeria as well. From this student’s argument, I understand that the people of the southern region had contact with the European much earlier than their northern region countrymen. It is also said that the Southern region had western education established in the region for over 100 years before it was introduced in northern Nigeria. When Sir Fredrick Lugard allowed for western education to be introduced in northern Nigeria, he allowed the feudal system he met on ground to operate. He also allowed the integration of Western and Islamic education. This action is believed to have contributed to the many reasons parents did not allow their children to acquire western education.

I asked the students to indicate by raising their hand if any of them had experienced or witnessed any form of bullying in their school which they believe is connected to religious differences. None of the students raised their hand; I decided to simplify the question realizing that they did not understand the question. I asked if anyone experienced a situation where a derogatory word was used against them in school.

Three students raise their hands and reported that they were called ‘infidels’ by fellow students when they engaged in a fight at one time or the other. I further asked them if the incident was reported, the students replied that there was no need reporting because the students concern will continue to call them infidels. Also, in some cases, they may team up to beat the person who reported, since people from his own faith may be sympathetic to such person that was reported for using the word.

I asked the students if it was comfortable to talk about the other faith at home or in their places of worship. Some of the students indicated that it was not easy to talk about the other faith at home, because their parents may think they are beginning to have interest in that faith. Other students reported that they talked about other faith at home with friends and even at worship places; however, they did that among themselves without the knowledge of their teachers at these places of worship. When I asked why they don’t allow their teachers to hear them speak about the other faith? These students stated that it may be seen as not being loyal or dedicated to their faiths. I inquired from them if they talk about the other faith at school among themselves, majority of the students reported that they could comfortably talk about the other faith in school because no one could question or sanctioned them. A student narrated how a teacher of religious studies was dismissed for scolding a student who got involved in a religious festival of another faith. The teacher was annoyed and was said to have asked the student if she believed light and darkness could meet and remain together. The student reported the matter to the school principal who then queried the teacher because of the act, which later resulted in the termination of the teacher’s service by the District Education Officer.

I asked the students if they agreed with the punishment meted on this teacher, majority of the students were happy because, according to them teachers such as this one should not be allowed to teach religious education. I asked why? They responded that religion teaches love and respect for one another, so why would a teacher scold a student publicly for participating in another faith's religious festival. The consensus of the students on this matter is that teachers are supposed to be role model for peaceful harmony instead of dividing the students. A Christian student from Kaduna south gave me an example of what happened in Borno State northeast region of the country.

According to her,

Look at what happened in Borno State with Muhammad Yusuf the leader of Boko Haram, when he started preaching, some of the Islamic scholars pushed him away and asked their followers not to associate with him. He decided to preach against them and won many followers, because other Islamic leaders don't like him they asked the government to raid his area so as to destroy his structures thinking that may put an end on his agitation. But when the police succeeded in killing him, we all can see the result of such action now which Boko Haram is.

Teachers and religious leaders are seen as role models in the society in northern Nigeria and a pronouncement by some religious leaders may build up or spell doom for the community. As such teachers and religious leaders need to preach and practice respect for one another according to another Christian student from Kaduna north. I probe further to understand why they believe education could help reduce the frequent interreligious conflict. A student responded that school environment would take the children away from the street. The student states further: "In most cases, when there is crisis in town, our principal and teachers warned us that we should move as a group to a safe place or home. They also emphasize that any student found to have participated in anyway directly or

indirectly in the crisis will be expelled from school.” The assertion was re-echoed in another school in Kaduna south where a Muslim student added that, “Our principal and teachers often tell us if we allow conflicts in our communities through participation, it will affect the progress of our academics because schools must close down, and we may not grow up to be the professionals we want to be.”

When I asked, whether interfaith dialogue/education was introduced in their schools, the students in all schools replied that Interfaith education was introduced in their schools. I asked further to understand about the curriculum, a student responded that the subject was taught alongside religious education. The student went further to state that the subject was taught just like any other subjects with the exception of religious studies where students are divided into faiths. In another school in Kaduna south, a Christian student narrated how the IFE class gave them the opportunity to learn about another faith. This student explained how the class was taught in her schools,

During the IFE classes, our religious education teachers taught the class together unlike other classes that have only one teacher. I had the privilege to learn about some of the prophets in my religion that are also found in the other faith. It was interesting to learn of the similarities, when I told my Sunday school teacher about the class, she was not happy about it.

I further asked the student if the Sunday school teacher’s view affected the way she view the curriculum/class. The student replied that it did not change her perception about the subject, the behavior of the Sunday school teacher made her inquisitive in trying to understand what is wrong with the subject that the teacher objected to it. A Christian student from Kaduna south also narrated how the subject helped her to enroll in the interfaith dialogue youth empowerment program (CPAN) in her community along with

her elder brother. Majority of the students reported that they learned about other faith in the interfaith education classes.

According to the students, the class was not about teaching of another faith, the teachers taught them about respect for each other. The students were able to participate in an exchange program to places of worship and religious festivals as a class assignment.

According to a Muslim student from Kaduna north,

Though at first, I was scared of visiting a church because I was not sure if I will be welcome, however, on arrival, we were accorded a warm welcome. I was surprised at the reception, and we had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the Christian faith and some of the misconceptions about the faith.

Furthermore, when I asked this student in order to ascertain some of the misconceptions that needed clarification, she responded that some of the misconceptions are centered on statues that are perceived to be worshipped by the Christians. In addition, they wanted to understand why women and men are allowed to sit together which they considered morally wrong. For her and some of the students who visited the church, these practices and others are some of the things that prompted people from her faith to view people from Christianity as not equal to them or worshipping the same God. I then asked if the differences are enough to cause fight among them. The student responded that she is not in support of fighting or hating each other.

Another Muslim student from Kaduna south on the other hand, reported that the interfaith education was encouraged even in their community by the RE teachers and officials from IMC-MCD through organizing football (soccer) league among the various streets in the communities. It was helpful for them to come together to learn and respect each other. However, some of the students raised concerns about the competence of the

teachers. In some cases, according to the students, the teachers sometimes cannot answer questions put to them by the students on some of their inquiries about interreligious harmony. When I asked for some the examples, none of the students could say specifically a question or sets of questions they asked the teachers. To get the teachers response to the issue raised by the students, I tactically asked them if there are certain issues or question, they could not respond to their students accordingly. Three teachers agreed that there are situations when they could not respond to the students' questions or concerns because they do not know how to respond to them. Why I asked the reasons for their inability to respond to the students, the teachers reported that they are not experts in interfaith dialogue or education, the knowledge they have about the subject was from a short course at IMC-MCD. An Islamic teacher from Kaduna south pointed out that for the teachers to have a good grasp of the curriculum, they need to undergo a proper course in the discipline for effective transmission to students. The teacher states further,

It will only be proper if the government will sponsor teachers to undergo proper training in the field of interfaith education. Religious education and interfaith education are two different fields, as such as a teacher I cannot teach this subject properly without further training. We complained to the Head teacher and District Education Officer about our concerns, we were told to be patient the authority will do something about it.

When I inquired if the authority responded to the request of the teachers, a RE teacher from Kaduna south said they are yet to respond to their request.

After the focus group discussion, I engaged all participants on a one-on-one interview. In the next section, I will discuss the major themes, which came up during the interview.

Major Emergent Themes

In this section, I will introduce the themes that emerged during the data collection. These themes formed the basis of the discussion in this section. I will present the views of the participants based on the information gathered during the interviews categorizing them into themes. Some of the major themes which came up during the data collection are infidel, hatred, betrayal, discrimination, stereotypes, religious affiliation, tribal and regional identities, political influence, forgiveness and reconciliation, peacebuilding and education. I will discuss each theme further using the data collected during the study.

During the data collection, I discovered that most Nigerians are proud of their religious affiliation and tribal identities. On a typical street in northern Nigeria when someone is stopped and asked to identify him/herself, the majority of the answer will start with their religious affiliation before their tribal identity. This is one of the exercises I used during the data collection where I asked participants to identify themselves. Over 80% of the respondents started by identifying with their religious affiliation, tribal identity came second. When I inquire further if tribal identity could replace their religious affiliation, no one accepted such suggestion. According to one of the parents from Kaduna south, “my faith is my source of survival.”

Infidel. The concept of infidel (arni or arna)¹⁵ tends to be the fire that often sparks interreligious conflicts. The word may not sound insulting or demeaning when interpreted in English, but it is one of the worst insult or labels that could be attributed to someone in northern Nigeria. During the interview, every single person mentioned the word ‘infidel’

¹⁵ Arni is unbeliever in Hausa language, while arna is the plural. In northern Nigeria, this word could be compared to the experience in Rwanda where a tribe called another ‘cockroach.’ It can also be compared to the slave era in the U.S where the African slaves were referred to as ‘niggers.’

in describing another person or being described as such. Different religious ideologies have often led many adherents to become extremists. During the interview, I realized that majority of participants used certain labels to identify some people who do not have the same religious ideology as they practice. This is often a common factor in northern Nigeria according to one of the Christian religious clerics from Kaduna north. According to him, “there is no way I would consider people another religion to have the same salvation as me.” This is because the participants felt that salvation could only be found in his religion, while others are unbelievers. When asked further, why he referred to other people as unbelievers, he is of the opinion that his religion is the only true religion.

Religion often influences certain decisions people make in terms of politics or where to live with their family or where to send their children for schooling in Kaduna State. According to a Muslim parent from Kaduna south, “I do not want to live in an environment where my children will grow up having the behavior of infidels. Such as, moving around half naked in the society without covering themselves properly.” During my conversation with an Islamic cleric from Kaduna north, I purposely asked his views about the concept of infidel in the community. His replied was “Is that not the concept that led us to where we are now?” According to the cleric, if people could acknowledge the existence of others as important as theirs, the world would be a better place. He decried all the labels human beings placed on each other to demean one another. This religious cleric lost his first wife during the interreligious conflict in 2000 at Kaduna. Since then his orientation towards people of diverse faiths other than his faith changed subsequently. During the focus group discussion with the students, three of the students

indicated on their drawings the word ‘infidel’ referring to someone who came to burn a house or destroyed their properties. (See appendices I – N, I decided to blur the word).

During the interview later, I tried to understand further what they meant by the use of such label. According to a Muslim student from Kaduna north:

My father finished building our house, and then we moved out of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Staff Quarters to our new home. We did not even spend six months in our new home, since we are not Christians some useless boys who are always under the influence of drugs (miscreants) came to our house broke into the house and starting taking our things. Some of them said since ‘your Muslims brothers decided to kill Christians in Kawo, we cannot allow you to live here.’ My mother opened the back door and we ran to our neighbors who are Christians. Later, the boys burned our house.

The other two students who used the phrase ‘infidel’ on their drawings only stated that those who kill their brothers must be infidels because they have no true faith. According to the student, anyone who belongs to a true faith does not kill but speaks the language of peace and love. I understand that these are traumatic experiences for these students to witness such violence perpetrated directly on them or their properties. I inquire further from the Muslim student whose house was burned if they had re-built the house. She replied that her mother swore never to stay in that area again, which was why her father finally had to sell the land. It was interesting to hear her view about the Christians who offered them refuge. I asked her if she considered them infidels too. The student looked at me with a smile and said, “They are not, they are very good people.”

Though this student from Kaduna north who is a Christian did not use the word infidel, instead he used the word ‘unbelievers’ which has the same meaning as infidel. During the interview with the student, he narrated how ‘unbelievers’ unleashed mayhem on their community and killed his brother who went to defend their house. In the end,

they lost the brother and the house. He believes that the perpetrators need to accept Jesus Christ as their savior and failure to do that means they will remain unbelievers. Such is the orientation most parents and religious leaders often inculcate in their children.

According to a Christian cleric from Kaduna south,

Untrained pastors and Imams are the most ignorant, yet zealous when it comes to issues concerning religion. They make pronouncements that are contrary to the teachings of their religion. How can a religious leader use such despicable name in addressing fellow human being? The government needs to enact laws and set up regulatory bodies to check the excesses of some of these leaders.

About 90% of the participants responded that they first heard of the word ‘infidel’ from a religious leader. Either during preaching or lectures in their places of worship. Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah¹⁶ once drew the attention of the government of Nigeria to set up regulatory body from the two faiths to look at proliferation of worship places and religious leaders (The Guardian Newspapers Nigeria, 2016). During the focus group discussion with the students, I asked if anyone considered another person in their school an infidel. All the students responded in the negative. Some stated that they only considered those who attacked their homes as infidels.

Hatred. Another issue, which tends to dominate the conversation, was the issue of hatred towards one another. According to an Islamic cleric from Kaduna north, it is one of the difficult tasks to overcome when you experience such violence meted on your family or friends.

Whenever I remember how my house was invaded and my wife was raped and killed, I tend to develop hate for people from that faith. On the other hand, my conclusion is that they acted out of ignorance; I believe they

¹⁶Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah is the Bishop of Sokoto Diocese and a prominent human rights activist. He is the founder of The Kukah Center – Faith, Leadership and Policy. He delivered this speech during the 2016 Easter Celebration.

know little about their faith. I hate their religious leaders more for not teaching the youth the right frame of religious beliefs.

Hatred stem from how parents groom their children while growing up. A Christian parent from Kaduna north is of the opinion that every child is born with beautiful attributes. However, the parents are responsible for nurturing these beautiful attributes to fruition. The parent pointed out that, northern Nigeria is divided on religious line where each person believes his/her faith is more important than the other. When such concept dominates the belief of such person, it further breeds hatred for the other person who has a different ideology. He further pointed out:

Hardly do you see a person from another tribe hating another person from a different tribe. We co-habit without much problem, we even inter-marry and are happy about it. However, when it has to do with religion, we dig a wide gulf between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Hardly do we allow for interreligious marriages, neither do we feel comfortable having each other from different faiths in the same place discussing religion. We are Nigerians first, before the different religions. The whites who brought Christianity to us and the Arabs who brought Islam to us only planted the seed of division among us. Nowhere in the sacred texts do we find instructions to hate one another. This only came out from ignorance of the religion and our selfish behaviors, sometimes; I feel we should go back to the African Traditional Religion practice. There is so much respect for fellow humans from adherents of African Traditional Religion who we most times consider as primitive people.

Hatred for one another is often the fuel that fans the ember of religious conflict according to another parent. The parent is of the opinion that religious leaders should be cautioned against using words that will contribute to the deepening division among the people. According to him, those religious leaders should concentrate on preaching love and unity as against using words or ideology that will promote hatred among people of different faiths. The parent pointed out “Islam and Christianity preached love for one another and

people of other faiths, religious leaders should place more emphasis on uniting the people as against dividing them.”

Betrayal. This is one other issue that came up frequently during the interview with the participants. The issue of interreligious conflicts in northern Nigeria painted a clearer picture of division in the country not because of region or tribes. The divisions in many instances are based on religion. Earlier there was trust among the people, but the interreligious conflicts created lack of trust and betrayal among the people. In all the schools visited, only two students felt betrayed by their former neighbors and friends whom they had confidence and trust in them. A Muslim student from Kaduna north narrated an incident that led to the burning of their house and the killing of his father. He stated that they overheard some of their neighbors giving information about them to the youth who came to attack them. According to the student,

When they came to our house, we were told by my father to be quiet so that we don't attract any attention. We heard the youth who came to attack our house asked our neighbors whom we believe are from the same faith as the youth does our house belonged to infidels or are we are their fellow brothers. Our neighbors responded that our house belong infidels, on hearing that my father asked us to run to the back door. He quickly opened the back door and asked us to run out before the youth broke the front door. We ran out towards the bush, but I guess they caught up with my father who could not run fast enough, and they butchered him. We discovered his decomposing body after a week when the conflict was contained by the military. We lost our house indeed.

This student felt betrayed by the action of their former neighbors and swore never to trust anyone from the other faith. When asked if he does not trust his teachers who are of the other faith, he responded that his relationship with them is that of a student and teachers.

Another Muslim student from Kaduna north was bitter too because of the incident that led to the attack on their house. She stated that some of the youth who came to burn

their house were people whom her father used to give alms (money) at the Gas station and at the car wash. She could not imagine how they could attack the same person who has helped them. When I told her that probably those youth did not know the house belong to her father who gave them alms, the student responded that it was not an excuse. She believed their house was targeted because they belong to a different faith from the youth who burned it down.

Three parents also echoed the concept of betrayal during the interview. The relationship they had with people of different faith other than theirs was tested during the conflict. According to a parent from Kaduna south, the year 2000 and 2002 conflicts brought out the true colors of people he once considered friends. The parent states further:

In our area, we lived with our neighbors regardless of religious, tribal and political affiliation. We attended each other's naming and marriage ceremonies, we exchanged visit to places of worship. We worked in the same factories; we also exchanged visits to each other's homes. However, when youth from their faith came to attack us, none of these people we considered neighbors, friends and colleagues at work tried to stop them. Instead they formed a barricade to protect their homes. When we suggested that it would be wise to defend the entire area by blocking access into our area, some of them refused and insisted that we should defend our individual homes. They know very well that people from my faith are minorities in the area, I felt disappointed in the people I called friends and neighbors. Even after the destruction of our properties, they wanted us to sell our plot of land to them. This truly angered me, I felt betrayed by people I once considered friends.

This parent was not alone on the issue of betrayal; another parent narrated how his place of worship was burned down by youth from another faith. It was discovered later that the plot was hatched in their place of worship in the form of retaliation of an earlier attack. The parent was concerned that the elders from that faith failed to stop their youth and neither did they inform the authorities of the plot. According to the parent, those elders

should have informed them of the plot, so they could defend their place of worship. The attack caught them unaware and they lost everything in their place of worship. Another parent from Kaduna north who was forced to relocate to a new area with his family felt betrayed by his friends and colleagues. He also left his job because he does not trust his former colleagues who could not help when their place of worship and houses were burned down.

The issue of trust and betrayal almost had the same response from religious leaders; who are of the opinion that some of their colleagues contributed to the lack of trust and betrayal among the people. I tried to understand why they blamed their colleagues since I was informed there are professional bodies where these colleagues are supposed to be members. I seek to understand if there are no ethics for their profession. One of the Christian religious cleric pointed out that majority of religious leaders are not members of these professional bodies, which made it difficult to regulate their activities. According to the cleric,

It is so disheartening that people saddled with the responsibility of promoting unity and instilling moral values in their followership are the same people who promote disunity. It is sad that many religious leaders preach messages which I will consider as hate speech. In some cases, they promote division among the people by using words such as 'us' and 'them'; which to me is so unfortunate. You know religion is so sensitive that government in the past does not want to interfere with the issue of regulation. Rather, the government often directs prominent religious leaders in the society to caution those clerics in their association. However, such messages of caution do not help in most cases; this is because the government never prosecuted any religious cleric because of hate speech. I am of the opinion that any religious leader who preached hate speech should be prosecuted. Their actions have contributed to the distrust among the people, since the followers agreed to some of their concept of 'us' and 'them'. This behavior totally destroyed the wonderful relationship most people enjoyed in the past.

The cleric's concern is that some of these religious leaders often portray themselves as peacemakers in the community but behind the curtain, they preach hate and division. When I asked why such religious leaders could not be reported to the authority. He laughed and asked me if I would be comfortable reporting such religious leaders in a corrupt country as Nigeria. I replied that if I am in a position I will report them, he shook his head and said, "You want to meet your maker at a young age, because these people will kill you."

In addition, an expert on interfaith dialogue expressed his displeasure on the attitude of some religious leaders. He considers them as monsters that are happy to see other people suffer. The actions of these religious leaders contributed to the non-acceptance of interfaith dialogue by people from either side of the divide. He states further,

One of the greatest challenges we have during interfaith discourses is the issue of betrayal. Many participants confided in us when we visit any locality to introduce interfaith dialogue that we should be careful because some members of our group who belong to other faith are not to be trusted. My colleagues too shared with us that they were cautioned by people from their faith about us too. We find it difficult to build trust among the people because of the betrayal of such trust in the past. One cannot have true dialogue if people come to the table with skepticism about each other. We are trying to see if the government can make laws that will prohibit the promotion of hatred through preaching in places of worship or other religious gathering.

Another parent described how the lack of trust exists among the people because of the many conflicts, which have affected all facets of their lives. The parent remarked that, the betrayal by some people in the past prompted others to be cautious on where to settle with their family. It also affected the commercial activities of the people; a common case was how people patronize even petty traders. According to the parent,

The issue of trust and betrayal is a very complicated case because even the commercial activities in the communities are affected. Can you imagine that there are some people who only want to purchase goods from people belonging to the same faith as them? There was a scenario that played out in one area where it was alleged that a meat seller poisoned some of the meat he sold to the people of the other faith from his. According to the allegation, it was said that the seller had two categories of meat on the table. He sells to people who are from his own faith the good meat, while he sold the poisoned meat to people from other faith. This is how bad the situation was, though it was not proven, that particular action led to the crumbling of his business. All effort by the meat seller to prove he did nothing of such did not help matters.

On further inquiry as to how the meat seller identified people from his faith and those of other faith. The Muslim parent from Kaduna south states: “Common, it is not difficult to identify people in this part of the world.” I gave the example of myself having names that are common in two faiths; I asked how I could be identified in such situation. The cleric pointed out that just by looking and listening to how I behaved and spoke, he could identify which faith I belong to. He states, “From your first name I know you are a Christian with a Muslim background because no Muslim from northern Nigeria will bear the name Ezekiel. Even if such person converted to Islam, the person would drop the non-Islamic name. So, my brother you are a Christian with at least a Muslim background either through your parents or left Islam for Christianity.” Though parent’s position on names affiliation to Islam and Christianity is somehow true, because most converts to Christianity retained their names not minding the meaning or which religious affiliation it belongs to. However, hardly do people who converted to Islam retained English or Christian names, they take new names commiserate to their new faith.

Discrimination. Looking at the issue of discrimination in the Nigerian society, one would have expected that a great number should have emerged from tribal and

regional affiliation. However, according to information collected during the interview all the respondents reported having experienced one form of discrimination or the other because of their religious background. A Christian student from Kaduna north narrated how they experienced discrimination as a family immediately following the 2002 interreligious conflict in Kaduna. According to the parent,

After we lost our first house, my family refused to move to another area as most people from our area did. We remained in the area, we needed a new house, my father found one for rent. However, when my father went to sign the lease agreement, the agent asked him for confirmation about his religion; we lost the opportunity because we belong to a different religion from the landlord and the agent.

He further narrated how their neighbors and those he once called friends, now referred to them with demeaning names; they had no option than to relocate from the area.

According to him, it was painful that the same people with whom they had lived together for many years could deny them access to an apartment for rent. When I asked him if he experienced any discrimination from his teachers and classmates, he responded that schools were yet to be opened when they left. He is of the opinion that he would have experienced such discrimination because some of the friends he left behind who are of the same faith, later complained of discrimination. A religious leader also attests to the issue of discrimination against one another depending which faith is in majority in a particular area. He states,

The religious conflicts succeeded in polarizing our communities. I remember during one of the many conflicts, we (a group of religious leaders) decided to pay condolence visits to some of the areas affected by the violence. With the exception of two places we visited where we were received as a group, all the other places we visited were met with negative reception. In some places, the police had to come for our rescue because in each location we were accused of promoting the violence. While religious leaders of the majority faith are welcome, leaders from the other faiths are

asked to leave. We could not understand why these people vented their anger on us in these locations.

A Christian parent from Kaduna south wondered why some Nigerians allowed religion to eat into the fabric of their unity. He was responding to the question on the causes of interreligious conflict in northern Nigeria. This parent pointed out that the division caused by religion will have adverse effect on the next generation of Nigerians and its unity. He pointed out that if one does not belong to the majority religion in a particular area, then such person must be prepared to play the role of a second-class citizen in their own country. He further posit,

My daughters experienced discrimination in their schools because of her religious affiliation. My first daughter was a student in one of the universities here in the north. In her second year, she received a letter of withdrawal that indicated her ineligibility to be a student of the university because she does not come from the catchment area.¹⁷ When I called the registrar to understand why my daughter was withdrawn from the university. The registrar assured me there was a mistake somewhere and asked of my daughter's name. When I told the registrar, he said 'Sir, why did you give her such a foreign name, we thought she was from the Southern part of the country and not within our catchment area.' I then responded that my own name does not sound foreign, at least you could have imagined that her father gave her the foreign name. I thought my conversation with the registrar would resolve the issue; I was finally referred to the Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja. Some of my friends advised that my visit there will not yield any tangible result.

This parent is of the opinion that religion played a significant role in withdrawing his daughter from school. This is because; some of his daughter's classmates who does not belong to the catchment area were not withdrawn. Since their names are affiliated to a particular religion, they were considered eligible students who could remain in the

¹⁷ Catchment areas are a simple way to decide who can attend a public school. The education authority has to provide a school place for children living within the areas. School isn't allowed to discriminate against a child because of race, color, religion, sexuality, sex, disability, gender reassignment or pregnancy or maternity, or vocation (job) of the parents (Source AVIVA).

university regardless of the catchment area they belong to. The parent went further to narrate how his second daughter was denied admission into a high school in the area. He suspects that the denial of admission was based on her religion. According to him, his daughter wrote and passed the Joint Matriculation Examination Board (JAMB) Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination. The daughter got the required cut off marks¹⁸ but was denied admission into a university of her choice. However, some potential students who had lower marks were admitted in the same university where his daughter was rejected. He complained but was told they need to wait until the registration process is over and if there is any vacant seat his daughter will be considered.

He also narrated how his third daughter wrote the National Common Entrance Examination;¹⁹ where she got good grades and was invited for oral interviews. He said his daughter later told him that one of the officials asked her why she is dressed improperly without covering her head like other girls. The daughter responded to the official that her dressing is part of what is practiced in her house. According to this parent, his daughter said that another official reminded the first official that “she should not be bothered about it because from her looks, she is from a family of infidels.” I asked him of his reaction, he pointed out that there was no need to perturb himself about it because he believed the examination officials would have denied it anyway. I inquired

¹⁸Every potential student need to meet the required minimum JAMB cut off mark to enter a Nigerian University, College of Education or Polytechnic. Though JAMB may set the cut off mark, but the final cut off mark rest with the institution involve to either increase or maintain the cut off marks.

¹⁹This examination is administered to pupils in their 6th year of basic education. The purpose of this examination is to select the best candidates from every state of the federation and the federal Capital territory (FCT) for admission into federal Unity colleges. These Colleges are Secondary schools owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Their objective is to foster unity amongst the children of NIGERIA. One is held annually. Result of the first examination determines candidates that qualify for a second examination based on cut-off marks for each state. The result of the second examination qualifies candidates for admission based on merit, equal state quota and environment considerations (NECO, 2018).

further if his daughter attended the same school, he replied in the negative. According to him his wife suggested that her daughter be sent to a private high school and that was what he did. He angrily pointed out how divided the country is with hatred among the people because of religion. He is of the opinion that religious matters should be out of the national discourse in Nigeria if the country wants to move forward.

A Christian RE teacher made it clear that discrimination based on religion is a common factor in some parts of northern Nigeria. He pointed out that it depends on where one finds oneself because people tend to affiliate with one's faith rather than with other faiths. He added that the insecurity in the country can lead some people to alienate others from whatever they do whether official or private. I asked him if discrimination has any relationship with insecurity. He insisted that people do not trust each other any longer as such; they tend to discriminate against one another. The teacher and I had a long conversation on this topic, but we could not come to agreement. However, I understood his position because he tried to make me understand that the insecurity in the country had contributed on the kind of reception some people gave others who belong to other faith. He further elaborated how denominational differences even affected the relationship between people of the same faith, which resulted in discrimination towards one another.

During my focus group discussion and personal interviews with the students, none of the students indicated if their teachers in school discriminated against them. Some of the students have experienced discrimination from fellow students. When I tried to understand what the situation was and whether the students were willing to narrate their experience. One of the students responded that the types of students who often

discriminate against other students are those who always believe they are better than the other students. When I pressed further to understand what the students meant by 'better than other students'; the student responded that those who think people from other faith are beneath them and they cannot associate with them. I then asked if such action was reported to the school authority, the student replied that there is no basis to report since everyone has the right to choose who they play or talk to.

Stereotypes. In the course of the interview, most of the respondents have different notion about people from other faith. Most times the blame was on people from the other side. With the exception of one parent and a religious leader who blamed youth from their own faith for the carnage that took place, other responders blamed people from the other faith for the havoc. In reference to youth from another faith, the students I spoke with, believed those youth from other faiths were the cause of the conflicts because they attacked their homes. All the students reported that youth from their own faith only defended their home and only retaliated when attacked by youth from the other faith. However, when I asked if their classmates fall within this category? They all responded in the negative emphasizing that the referral was to the youth who came to burn their houses or killed their relatives. From my experience as an internal security officer during one of such conflicts, the perpetrators often camouflage their identities with face-mask which makes it difficult to identify someone that is known before.

During the interview with a Muslim parent from Kaduna north, he told me he was able to identify one of the youth despite the camouflage. According to him the youth lived on the next street and they attend the same place of worship. The parent confessed he could not help the victims then because he was afraid they (the youth) may turn

against him and tag him a betrayer. According to him, he lived with that guilt whenever he remembered the incident. This parent's position on youth from his faith's involvement in some of the conflicts, is a source of concern for him, he tagged the youth 'troublemakers' because they always attack other people first. There were instances where he had to hide people in his house and the youth will shout on the street that anyone whose identity is discovered to have sheltered anybody who is of the other faith will be treated as an enemy too. He lamented that on what ground should these people be considered enemies. When I pressed further to understand if he had ever reported the issue to the police or parents of the youth. He replied thus,

You have left Nigeria for a long time that you forgot how things are done here. If I dare report any of the incidents I mentioned earlier, you very well know I will be considered a traitor. These boys (youth from his faith) will come after me, rape my daughters in my presence and later kill me.

An official from IMC-MCD collaborated this parent's story that after every conflict, they discovered that there is always an overhauling of the area through silent killings of those who are consider traitors, who refused to either support the cause or report any of the perpetrators to either the authority or parents.

An Islamic religious cleric too blamed youth from his faith for some of the conflicts. He attributed the behavior to lack of proper parental care. The cleric narrated how he witnessed youth from his faith rape a woman during one of the crises. He is of the opinion that the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)²⁰ needs to search the entire communities and get rid of illicit drugs consumed by these boys (youth from his faith). He believed the lack of proper parental care drove the youth to drugs and prepared

²⁰Decree Number 48 of January 1990 established a National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to eliminate the growing, processing, manufacturing, selling, exporting, and trafficking of hard drugs, and the decree prescribed stiffer penalties for convicted offenders.

them as available tools for any outbreak of conflict such as this. He also added that some of his colleagues are troublemakers who always loved preaching controversial topics just to instigate youth into such nefarious activities. When I asked why such clerics can't be sanctioned, he replied that they often defend themselves that they preached from the Holy Scriptures. According to him, some people just hate peaceful coexistence because they benefit from conflicts as such they help in promoting or igniting it. The idea of blaming others is a common phenomenon in Nigeria during and after most conflicts, it is either the government or others are seen as perpetrators or caused of the conflicts. This was clearly displayed from the reaction of the responders.

Religious Affiliation. It was confusing for me to comprehend why northern Nigeria is often engulfed in these conflicts when all participants spoke highly of their faith. All the students made me understand that though their faith taught them the values of love for another, yet there is disrespect for each other through name-calling that sometimes results in conflict. A Muslim student from Kaduna north listed some of the beautiful lessons her faith taught her about loving and respecting and how she was enjoined by her clerics to practice those virtues towards others. Another student from Kaduna north also from another faith voiced out the same response. I probe further, as to why people adhering to the two faiths experienced such conflict with each other. The Muslims student posit, "Most times we do not start the problem, it is always those people who start." The Christian student also gave a similar reply. I then asked why the youth from their faith do not ignore such attempt, at least to enable peace to reign. This Christian student responded thus, "You do not expect us to fold our hands and allow those people to wipe out my entire religion. Our religion is very important to us and will

not allow some miscreants to destroy it. It is our responsibility to protect our faith. We will be nothing without our religion; it will be a thing of joy to die for our religion.” The Muslim student is of the opinion that instead of confrontation, there is the need to use many virtues of their various faiths to preach peaceful coexistence. According to her, the destruction of each other is not beneficial for either side. She narrated the pain of losing their home which her father labored to build, she pointed out that she is loyal to her faith and will do anything to protect it but not to destroy another.

A Christian religious leader buttressed on the point of one of the students above when he explained how important it was to inculcate among the youth right from childhood the tenets of their religion. However, according to him unfortunately there are religious leaders who preferred to indoctrinate the people with false teachings especially the youth. The indoctrination has adverse effect on the youth who often believe that to die for the cause of one’s religion is the ultimate sacrifice or martyrdom. In addition, the cleric narrated how indoctrination often defines the religious identity of most people who are gullible because they want to be identified with a faith they are proud of. An official at IMC-MCD pointed out how the loyalty to one’s faith often hinders the success of dialogue among the people. According to the official,

One of the major problems we experienced during dialogue is the loyalty of the people to their religion. When we plead with one side to compromise a bit, so the other side could also be comfortable, we often meet a brick-wall because all sides are not willing to shift their grounds. It is always a difficult moment to deal with. I wish the people will understand their religion on a different perspective instead of accepting indoctrination from the leaders.

According to an Islamic cleric from Kaduna south, they have hope in their religion that is why the people are dedicated to their faith. He is opposed to the concept of

indoctrination, which he believed is detrimental to the progress of the people as a country. He also pointed out that religious identity is very important, but clerics should be regulated on what they preach. When I inquire if other clerics will not opposed to such move because they may consider that the government is interfering in their religious activities. His response was that, since the government regulates other organizations such as NGOs and businesses the issue of regulating religious activities should also be included. He pointed out that some people believe whatever their clerics voice out because the people always want to hear messages of hope. The last resort for such people is found in their religious beliefs. To him, his religious identity is very important, but indoctrination should be out of the practice.

Tribal and Regional Affiliation. Tribal and regional affiliation is another prominent theme, which came up during the interviews. In northern Nigeria, tribes or regions that resisted the incursion of the 19th century jihad of Usman Dan Fodio aligned with Christianity. As such, tribal and regional affiliation play important role in the people's identity. In Kaduna state, the northern axis is Hausa-Fulani tribe who are majority Muslim, while the Southern region of the State is comprised of many minority tribes who are predominant Christians. During the interview, respondents who are natives of the southern region tend to blame the Hausa-Fulani Muslims as the architect of the conflicts. They gave examples of the many instances when the Hausa-Fulani in past tried to dominate other minority tribes even within southern Kaduna. The southern Kaduna origins pointed out that fighting in defense of their region and tribes who are often consider second-class citizens in the state is crucial to their survival in the State. Since the creation of the State in 1967, people from the southern region had produce only one

executive governor in the State while all the remaining executive governors are from the northern axis. Respondents from the southern region felt the rotation is unfair to them and they aligned all these unfair under-representation to the fact that because they are majority Christians. They are of the opinion that the Hausa-Fulani Muslims intend to revisit the 19th century jihad of Usman Dan Fodio. This action tends to affect the relationship between the people.

The Hausa-Fulani respondents on the other hand are divided; they are not in complete agreement among themselves. While some agreed to the assertion by the southern Kaduna indigenes, others think differently. Some of the respondents from the Hausa-Fulani extract believed the people from Southern Kaduna are only complaining over issue that is not true. In addition, the allegation of marginalization based on religion is preposterous and unfounded. They opined that the election process is often open and fair. They also pointed out that while they (Hausa-Fulani) team up and support a particular candidate of their choice (who in most of the time is from their tribe and religion), the southern Kaduna people are divided most times among themselves. They are confident that their loyalty to the tribe and origin always puts them ahead of the southern Kaduna people. When I inquired further on whether the political maneuvering in the state has any connection with sharing of resources in the State, the southern Kaduna respondents confirmed that it is part of the many reasons for the conflict. Therefore, one could then ask what the connection between religion and tribal identity is. According to one of the respondents, most times every conflict transforms into an interreligious conflict. There are instances when ethnic crisis translated into communal conflict based on religious divide.

Political Influence. Political influence came up several times during the interview. Though the students knew little or nothing about the influence of politicians as instigators of some of the conflicts, the parents and religious leaders made remarkable contribution. The political struggles in Nigeria right from 1960 is believed to have religious undertone in all the process. A Christian parent from Kaduna south who is a public servant explained how he experienced the influence of religious and political sentiments in the civil service. He maintained that such influence cut across every aspect of the society. He argued that some politicians want to maintain the dominance of their tribe and religion in northern Nigeria over the minority tribes. The best option in most cases is to use religion as a strategy to convince people from their side to fight for such cause. The minority tribes on the other hand are not folding their hands to allow such campaign to succeed. According to this parent, the best option of achieving all these strategies is to use religion. He posits,

The insecurity experienced as a result of interreligious conflict often have political undertone. Most politicians start their electioneering campaign in places of worship seeking spiritual guidance and support from the clerics and from people belonging to same faith after the election when such a politician from their faith lost the election, in most cases, the politician will use the clerics to incite the people to go on the street to protest against rigging. Often, such protest always turned into interreligious conflict. Some of the politicians are happy when there are interreligious conflicts, they tend to benefit somehow because since such conflicts does not affect them directly. In addition, the politicians often serve on committees that are constituted by the government to look into the causes of conflict and compensation for victims. Because of the level of corruption in the country, they benefited tremendously from the crisis.

According to some of the respondents, the high level of corruption in the country also contributed as to why politicians often politicize any crisis whether it is ethnic or religious. The respondents gave example of the crisis in Jos, Yelwa-Shendam, Bauchi,

Kano and Zaria where conflicts are believed to be on a different issue, but it later turned religious because of the assertions of some politicians and clerics. Their comments ignited much violence because the people were made to believe that the other religion is trying to dominate the political scene. In turn, youth from the two faiths were deceived to go on the street and fight for the cause of their religion. An Islamic religious cleric from Kaduna north narrated how he was lured in the past to preach sermons against a political opponent of a member of his congregation. He was devastated by the kind of information he was provided with to use during his sermons. He turned down the request and the money promised to him as compensation for the playing such role. This religious leader blamed his colleagues for allowing the politicians to use them to achieve cheap political goals.

A Muslim parent from Kaduna north also narrated how politicians used religion to promote their political agenda in so many ways. The parent gave instances where politicians used state funds to build religious institutions such as schools, however, such schools does not admit students from other faiths because the school curriculum is religious based. According to the parent,

It is unfortunate that the people get carried away by the many promises of the politicians ranging from sponsorship of pilgrimage to Mecca and Jerusalem to building of religious based schools. I don't understand why people do not see that the politicians are comfortable when the people turn a blind eye to the many corruption in the country; they divide the people using religion. As far as I am concern, they set up the pace in motion for most of the conflicts experienced today in the country.

Though most participants blamed politicians for contributing to the division of the country based on religion lines, an Islamic religious leader from Kaduna north blamed his colleagues for most of the religious conflicts in the country. He is of the opinion that

politicians alone should not be blame for corruption because some religious leaders too are corrupt. He pointed out how some religious leaders are comfortable to speak on behalf of corrupt politicians not minding how devastating their action will mean to the people. He complained that credible people do not make it to elective positions but only those whose selfish agendas and supported by their clerics do make it to elective offices. According to him

Until all religious leaders understand that the unity of this country far outweighs their selfish desires we cannot move forward. In addition, religious leaders should understand that they are serving God and humanity and will be held accountable for their acts. We are supposed to preach unity but all we do is dividing the people by preaching hate messages.

An official from IMC-MCD agreed with the Islamic cleric above, he narrated how some religious leaders shifted their attention from serving as moral and spiritual leaders to campaign managers of some politicians using their sermon as a platform to promote such politicians. He pointed further that in some of the places they visited for peace and reconciliation they discovered that most of the crisis was said to have started as a result of improper allocation of resources by the politicians favoring people from their faith. However, in all of these instances the conflicts transformed into interreligious crisis. The IMC-MCD official further pointed out that in northern Nigeria today, virtually all conflicts have religious connotation attached to it. On the other hand, religious leaders often garnered support for their faith, no matter what the crisis, it always transforms into a religious conflict.

According to a Muslim parent from Kaduna north, the masses suffer from two major contributors of religious conflicts in northern Nigeria; they are the politicians and

religious leaders. He is of the opinion that religious institutions need to establish codes and ethics of the profession that members could be sanctioned for preaching hate speech. He gave instances of some countries in West Africa that religious activities are regulated. With such regulation, religious leaders could be sanctioned for preaching incriminating sermons; this is not obtainable in Nigeria. This parent states further,

It is only in Nigeria that a religious leader can make incriminating statement or preached inciting sermons that may lead to interreligious conflicts and nothing will happen to them. The most annoying thing is that these politicians and some powerful religious leaders do not suffered any loss; their children are hardly on the street during the conflicts. It is the children of the poor masses that always fought for the cause of the religion, this is disheartening.

Today in Nigeria, elections often have religious backing; each faith tends to support politicians from their faith. Many youth often fight to defend politicians in many cases even though they do not have any direct benefits. However, since the politicians belong to their faith they could struggle or do anything to make sure such politicians are elected into offices. In most cases, elections are often rigged in some parts of Nigeria and such rigging always trigger conflict that always metamorphose into a religious conflict. In addition, ethnic conflict always has religious connotation with politicians and religious leaders playing a significant role in the crisis.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Forgiveness is very important in any peace process. Forgiveness and reconciliation is another theme, which came up frequently during the interview. It was great and lovely to hear the students talked about forgiveness and reconciliation in their communities. However, some of the students did not have the opportunity to reconcile with their neighbors, but those who had the opportunity were able to reconcile and forgive each other.

One of the students from Kaduna north did not have the opportunity to speak with youth who burned their house in Kaduna south which prompted them to relocate. However, she does not hold any grudge against them now; she is only concerned that her father complained bitterly that when he wanted to sell the burned property to enable them to resettle in their present location most buyers who were their former neighbors took advantage of the situation and undervalued the property. When I asked her if such action made her angry and in anyway make her hate those people, since they are from a different faith, she responded that the thought of it always make her sad and wonder why they could behave in such manner when they were neighbors once. Their actions do not in any way make her hate them; she believed that is God's plan for them. According to her, "My faith taught me to embrace any situation as the will of Allah. I was t to submit to Allah's will always which is 'Tawakkul'²¹ in my religion." On further inquiry as to her stand about seeking justice from the courts for the action of those who burned their

²¹Tawakkul means that man, in the face of the difficulties of life, enmity and troubles of opponents, the tangles of existence which hinder his journey towards his objectives, and in instances wherein he finds himself unable to untie the knots, takes Allah (SWT.) as his support but, at the same time, does not stop his own efforts and endeavors. Rather, in those instances too, wherein he possesses the strength to perform the work, he looks upon Allah (SWT) as the fundamental influencing force. (Al-Islam.org).

house, this student pointed out that there is no need for such because she still believed there must be a purpose for God to have allowed it. She posits,

If our house was not burned, we would not have moved to the new place we are now. I would not have met my new friends in the community and school. We (she and her siblings) also have the opportunity to attend a religious school here with gifted and talented religious scholars.

In most communities in northern Nigeria, parents either engage the services of religious scholars at home or place of worship to teach their children about their faith. The sad aspect though is that some of these religious schools or teachers contribute to the indoctrination of the children in which some parents are comfortable with.

Another student from Kaduna north who is a Christian also narrated his opinion about forgiveness and reconciliation that his religion taught about both. He pointed out that after the conflict in his neighborhood they lost their house and worship place but did not leave the area. There was a reconciliation process in the community by the IMC-MCD, during the occasion, forgiveness was preached, and people came out to ask for forgiveness and the officials from IMC-MCD facilitate the reconciliation process. According to the student, “I was taught to forgive those who offend me and did me wrong. During the peace process in our community, we were told to embrace each other and forgive one another. That will be the only way we could live in peace and bring development.” I asked this student how he feels about the people who burned their house and place of worship. He responded that there is no way they (who burned their house) could repay them or replace the damage done on their property, as such the idea that he stills hates them is useless. He stressed that forgiving them is the best option because God knows best and reward the good and bad.

A Muslim student from Kaduna south also is of the opinion that forgiveness and reconciliation is very important. He narrated how his family lost their house too in the conflict of 2002. His bitterness however has to do with the fact that the house was built with their late father's gratuity. However, they still own the land, but they lost the house. When I asked how he felt about the burned house and the perpetrators, he replied that there is nothing he could do about them than to forgive them. He emphasized the need for forgiveness or else there will be reprisal attacks back and forth, and he stated that they (school children) suffer more because they won't go to school and will be left behind academically. He is concerned that lack of forgiveness will plunge the community into another round of fight that will make many people homeless like his family, something he does not want another family to go through. According to a Muslim parent from Kaduna north, one can never claim to be a Muslim or Christian if such person does not imbibe forgiveness. "Forgiveness is central to the core beliefs of the two faiths." He emphasized that making peace with another person cannot be possible if there is no forgiveness in the heart of those initiating the peace process. This parent was among the parents that organized the peace process in his community in collaboration with IMC-MCD. He is of the opinion that government should be involved in the peace process in areas affected by conflicts. He posits, "When we had our peace and reconciliation program, members of the two faiths were involved. Members of our community came out in large number, people asked for forgiveness and there was reconciliation. Since then, we have a council of elders comprising of members from the two faiths." I later discovered that this community experienced intense fight in the past, but the peace process helped the people to heal faster. It also helped them to forgive one another for the

past wrong. This community now has one of the most vibrant interfaith council of elders in Kaduna. They often invite officials from IMC-MCD to conduct seminars and sensitization program of the members of the community on interfaith dialogue. A Christian RE teacher from Kaduna south also corroborated the story of one of the parents above about involvement of religious leaders in interfaith dialogue. He added further that they encouraged their religious leaders to endeavor and be part of interfaith dialogue activities, which has helped to curb sermon messages that could trigger conflicts between members of the community.

Though some communities did not experience the processes of reconciliation as organized by IMC-MCD, they have in some ways forgive and reconciled with each other. According to a parent from Kaduna north, “Our religious leaders in the community attended an interfaith dialogue program organized by the Kaduna Diocese of the Anglican Communion. When they came back, they preached about forgiveness in Mosques and Churches, it really helped us in the community. We all picked our pieces and life goes on.” I asked him of the reaction of people who lost their loved one in the conflict when they heard the sermon about forgiveness by the clergy. This parent responded that the people respect religious leaders more than they respect politicians. With pronouncement from religious leaders, the people will have no option than to oblige. In most cases pronouncements by religious leaders are viewed as representatives of God on earth, as such the followers obey them; that was what contributed to the acceptance of the religious leaders’ pronouncements in the community on forgiveness.

One of the parents from Kaduna north praised the effort of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama’atil Nasril Islam (JNI) officials in his community

for organizing the peace process. It was at the program they were all advised to eschew peace and forgive one another. According to him, it was a helpful exercise to help them pour out their heart at the same time point out the many reasons that led to the conflict. Those youth who were believed to have started the 2002 crisis in their community were fished out and asked to apologize for bringing such chaos to the community. Since those youth could not be held accountable for the entire crisis, other youth who undertook the reprisal attack were also brought forward to apologize. This parent states further “It was a sad and memorable day at the same time. When the youth confessed to committing such heinous crime, they all cried and asked for forgiveness.”

Through the effort of IMC-MCD and Abrahamic Peace Center (APC) the youth were asked to undergo a three-day seminar on interfaith dialogue.” I inquired as to why the perpetrators were not handed over to the Police. A Christian parent from Kaduna North replied that handing them over to the Police would have opened a lot of hatred among the people and youth from both sides would end up in jail since there were reprisal attacks and the motive of the peace process was to bring about unity in the community after such loss. I understood that bringing the Police will mean arresting more youth than expected since most youth in the community were involved in the conflict. This parent also pointed out that his religion taught him to forgive others for the wrong done to him, so there is no need bringing in the authority. The parent later showed me a commemoration plaque and a commendation letter from the Kaduna South local government Chairman for the most peaceful community in the local government area. He pointed out that the relative peace experienced in the community was as a result of the forgiveness and reconciliation process that took place.

A Muslim religious cleric who was a co-facilitator of the peace process pointed out that forgiveness and reconciliation are very important in interfaith dialogue. He narrated how a forgiveness and reconciliation program helped members of two communities to raise funds to rebuild their places of worship and recreation centers that were destroyed during the conflict. His team also organized seminars for religious leaders and community elders on how to avert further crisis in the community. They also taught the religious leaders and community elders to continue the peace process with the involvement of youth in most or all interfaith activities in the community. They were encouraged to exchange visits to places of worship, marriages, naming and burial ceremonies, this according to him was to encourage and help solidify their forgiveness and reconciliation effort that was introduced in their community.

According to the IMC-MCD official, the best aspect of their work at IMC-MCD is forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness and reconciliation is the opportunity members of a community have to listen to confessions and genuine repentance from perpetrators of most conflicts. He cited the case of Yelwa-Shendam in Plateau state where traditional chiefs of about 13 communities in three local government areas in the State came together to seek forgiveness among each other. A ceremony was organized where the people came together to reconcile with one another. Since then according to the official, these communities did not experience interfaith conflicts again. He stated that such peace process was replicated in some of the communities in Kaduna and had helped in reducing the intensity of future conflicts. The IMC-MCD developed a manual, which is to be used in achieving the success of such process in other communities. The official pointed out that it was helpful because some communities who were not opportune to

have IMC-MCD visit them send their religious leaders and community elders to the center to be trained in the process. He also told me that plans are at advance stage currently in another program designed to be used in regions that experienced Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east region.

A Christian parent from Kaduna south however expressed skepticism about genuine forgiveness and reconciliation among people in the communities. He is of the opinion that because of the lack of prosecution of perpetrators in the past, when there is another conflict, the same people may be active combatants in the crisis. I asked him if he think prosecuting such people might not lead to enmity in the community since the perpetrators are from both faiths. He responded that he was well aware of it, but he still supports the prosecution to set example for others. Though another parent disagrees with his position on prosecuting the perpetrators, according to this parent by so doing it will encourage tribal and religious conflict the more because relatives, tribal men and members of the same faith of those prosecuted may hate those who seek for justice. He stressed further that majority of the people in the communities must have suffered one loss or the other; as such it will counter-productive to invite the police to arrest such people on the other hand those people (youth) confessed themselves without any coercion. That it will be unwise to then hand them over to the authority, according to him, the best thing is what IMC-MCD in collaboration with religious leaders are doing to sensitize the youth on respect for one another. He also states that the forgiveness and reconciliation process helped in stabilizing the communities in so many ways as everyone swore not hold grudges or bitterness against another person as a result of past conflicts.

Peacebuilding. The quest for peacebuilding is something I discovered during my interview with participants as one paramount need in Kaduna and environs. Since the interreligious conflict of the year 2000, many communities decided to find common ground for adherents of the two faiths. The parents and religious leaders I interacted with commended the many efforts of local and international Non-Governmental Organizations in Kaduna for programs that center on peacebuilding within the community. They also commended the effort of Kaduna State government towards peacebuilding effort in the State starting at the grassroots level. A Christian parent from Kaduna north narrated how interfaith activities in his community brought both parents and youth to learn about peaceful coexistence. He pointed out that United States Institute for Peace in collaboration with IMC-MCD organized seminars and community intervention programs for peaceful coexistence.

Kaduna South had its share of peacebuilding efforts in the communities. According to a Muslim cleric from Kaduna south, the peacebuilding program was widely supported by officials of the local government authority. Jingles and commercials were placed and aired on print and electronic media to create awareness among the people. Some parents and religious leaders interviewed stress the importance of the program in their communities and places of worship. Some religious organizations such as the Anglican Communion Kaduna diocese and an Islamic organization called ‘Dialogue Group’ introduced some programs in places of worship and communities. The program, according to two parents from Kaduna south created more awareness among the people. One of the parents a Christian from Kaduna south state further “Many people in our community did not believe there are commonalities between our religions. During the

peace building process, some Christians for the first time knew that Isa (Jesus) was mentioned in the Qur'an. Some Muslims for the first time heard that the two faiths all have link to Prophet Abraham.” He pointed out that the facilitators of the peacebuilding program beautifully designed the programs in such a way that some of the very misconceptions about the faiths were first spelt out during the program. According to this parent, “During the program, I overheard a parent exclaimed, that wow so they (the other faith) have all the prophets we have in our religions, then why are we so divided despite having similarities in some ways.”

Although many students did not understand the concept of peacebuilding, after an explanation, some of them attested that they experienced something similar at their places of worship. A Christian male student from Kaduna south confirmed that the religious leader in his place of worship invited some personalities who delivered lectures one time and the lecture was centered on how to avoid conflict in their community. A female Muslim student from Kaduna north also narrated how officials from Dialogue Group Kaduna visited their place of worship and there was interaction between the men and those officials. She later learned from her father that the mission of the delegates was to preach peaceful coexistence. She also stated that Dialogue Group has a program where female candidates from both religions are enrolled for an ICT program. However, one of the major aims of the program is to foster interreligious awareness among the candidates. They recruit candidates from different communities to participate in the program. When I asked if she participated in the program, the student said her two sisters participated in the program and one of them is a member of the CPAN in her community.

A female Muslim student from Kaduna south who is a member of a Peace campaign in her community (not part of CPAN) she narrated how a young religious scholar introduced the program in her place of worship. According to her,

A religious scholar who is in our group at NASFAT²² introduced the program, though it is not called interfaith dialogue or education. He taught us about the dignity and respect for other people's view. He often allows us to discuss how we could show respect for people of other faiths.

This program helped Faiza understand some things about other religion and why they believed what they believe. According to her, the lesson helped her to interact with other people without referring to them as infidels. The student also narrated some of the activities that took place because of this program. These activities include visitation to places of worship of different denomination and faith. Community development efforts were also introduced in collaboration with religious scholars from the other faith for youth in the community to clear weeds and clean burial ground for both Muslims and Christians. According to her "I have never entered another faith's place of worship or burial ground in the past, but this program helped me and my friends to understand that

²²Nasrul-Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) has become a household name in the entire Nigeria as the leading Muslim prayer group or what others refer to as Muslim Pentecostal group started as a branch of another elitist Prayer group, Yusrullahi Society of Nigeria founded by a retired banker with its headquarters in Ibadan. Its success is primarily based on the availability of its liturgy in such a manner that clergies are really not required to embark on its usual prayer as well as the seemingly miraculous efficacy of the prayers offered by the group which has accorded it the stead to gauge the conversion of Muslims into Christianity and has equally aided reversion of those hitherto lost back to Islam. The group equally has a number of challenges ranging from qualitative education for its members to economic empowerment of the jobless as well as making their impact in the socio-political spheres of the Lagos Society especially in the comity of Prayer groups. In a bold step towards overcoming the challenges, a number of education projects including scholarship schemes, grants and establishment of a full fledge University have been put in place while various halaal business companies including Tafsan Tours and Tafsan Beverages, the brewer of the NASMALT malta drink were started (World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization 2(2) 102-17, 2012).

we will all die someday and be buried in this same ground. This helped us to respect one another.”

A male Christian student whose father is a religious cleric also narrated how his father’s effort and another religious cleric helped foster peaceful coexistence in his community. According to this student, his father led a delegation from his place of worship to pay a visit to their neighbors’ who were observing a religious festivity at the time. His father was given an opportunity to deliver a remark at the occasion; it was one of the high points of his father’s career. His father and the other religious cleric continued the peace effort in the community and were later given an award by the local government chairman.

In the course of my interaction with the students, some of them narrated instances where peaceful coexistence was introduced, I discovered that it all started after the 2002 Miss World crisis²³, which translated into an interreligious conflict in Kaduna. At the IMC-MCD, I learned that after the 2002 conflict, a Kaduna Peace Declaration²⁴ was initiated by the center. The declaration brought prominent religious leaders from both Islam and Christianity to a round table dialogue on the need to foster peaceful coexistence among the adherents of the two faiths. Twenty-two religious leaders and the former governor of Kaduna State signed the declaration highlighting some of the major

²³The Miss World riots were a series of religiously-motivated riots in the Nigerian city of Kaduna in November 2002, claiming the lives of more than 200 people. The Miss World beauty pageant, that was controversial in Nigeria, was relocated to London after bloody clashes between Muslims and Christians, caused by what some Muslims deemed to be a "blasphemous" article in the Christian newspaper *ThisDay* about the event. The Miss World riots were part of the Sharia Conflict in Nigeria, which started in 1999 when several predominantly Islamic states in Northern Nigeria decided to introduce Sharia law (Human Rights Watch).

²⁴After some violent and protracted ethno-religious conflicts, Christians and Muslims in Kaduna State signed a peace agreement known as the Kaduna Peace Declaration in 2002. This agreement, which was facilitated by nongovernmental organizations and endorsed by the government, emphasized the need for peaceful coexistence and cooperation between Christians and Muslims (Peace and Change, History Society and Wiley Periodicals, Inc).

cause of interreligious conflicts in the State. The declaration also contained follow-up actions such as conflict prevention and mitigation; establishment of conflict prevention and peace-building mechanism at community level; sustaining dialogue among stakeholders and the people; dispute resolution; media and dissemination of hate speech; code of conduct for religious preachers among other many topics.

According to an official from IMC-MCD, this declaration really helped to curtailed some of the interreligious conflicts and has encouraged peaceful harmony across board. This declaration was replicated in Kafanchan Southern region of Kaduna State where interreligious and communal conflicts were experienced too; it was called the Kafanchan Peace Declaration²⁵ (See appendices O and P for full details of the Kaduna and Kafanchan Peace Declarations). The governor of Plateau a neighboring State also invited officials of IMC-MCD to replicate the same declaration effort in Yelwa-Shendam area of the State, which experienced bloody interreligious, and communal conflicts in 2008. The official states further “Peacebuilding effort is everyone’s responsibility. Every citizen needs to participate and contribute to this great task or else we will wake up one day and there will be no Nigeria because we would have killed each other as a result of ignorance.”

An Islamic religious leader from Kaduna north invited me to witness a religious gathering in his place of worship to observe a class session where interfaith dialogue was taught, in both adult and youth classes. He gave me permission to enter any of the classes

²⁵Southern Kaduna has had a number of experiences of violent conflict that constitute a major threat to peace and security. Electoral disputes, farmer and grazer differences in particular, have caused violence, deaths, injuries, loss of property, trauma, widows and orphans, poverty and massive displacements. The stakeholders in this Declaration are convinced that a necessary condition for establishing lasting peace in our State is the resort to dialogue to resolve conflicts (Peace and Change, History Society and Wiley Periodicals, Inc).

and interact with both the teachers and students/learners. This organization intends to paint a picture so that people outside of their faith will understand that some of the misconceptions about their faith are not true because they embrace dialogue with people of other faiths. During my visit, I met other people who belong to different faiths from their host community and others who are from the same faith as the host but from a different denomination. I was informed that they were invited by members of this faith organization. In some of the classes or groups I visited, I met teachers who taught the students/learners of the many teachings/sayings of the prophet who is the founder of their religion on peaceful coexistence with their neighbors. I was shocked when I heard one of the teachers encouraged her students to felicitate with people of the other faith during religious festivities. I was shocked; this is contrary to what I experienced growing up in northern Nigeria because it was considered a taboo for the people from the Islamic faith to eat food or meat from other people because they consider other people as infidels. A student asked if it was proper to eat their food and meat since they heard from other religious clerics (not of the same sect) that it was forbidden. The teacher responded thus “It is wrong for a cleric to tell you not to eat their food or meat, the Prophet PBUH referred to these people as ‘Ahl al-Kitab’ (people of the Book)²⁶. So why can’t we eat from them? Do not listen to clerics like this; they are pure extremists who only want to

²⁶Ahl al-Kitāb, (Arabic: People of the Book) in Islamic thought, those religionists—Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, as well as the imprecisely defined group referred to as Sabians—who are possessors of divine books (i.e., the Torah, the Gospel, and the Avesta), as distinguished from those whose religions are not based on divine revelations. The Prophet Muhammad gave many privileges to Ahl al-Kitāb that are not to be extended to heathens. Ahl al-Kitāb are granted freedom of worship; thus, during the early Muslim conquests, Jews and Christians were not forced to convert to Islam and had only to pay a special tax (jizya) for their exemption from military service. Muslim authorities are responsible for the protection and well-being of Ahl al-Kitāb, for, according to a saying of the Prophet, “He who wrongs a Jew or a Christian will have myself [the Prophet] as his indicter on the Day of Judgment.” After Muhammad’s death, his successors sent strict instructions to their generals and provincial governors not to interfere with Ahl al-Kitāb in their worship and to treat them with full respect (Encyclopedia Britannica)

twist the religion for selfish gains.” The religious cleric who invited me later drew my attention that in their congregation they tried to preach respect for each other’s faith.

Education. Education is one of the major agendas set out by the United Nations, which is also part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of this body. However, in some developing countries such as Nigeria, many children do not have the privilege to attend school because of either poverty or religious beliefs of their parents. Some parents attributed some of the frequent interreligious conflict in northern Nigeria to the high level of children out of school who grow up to become available tools in the hands of the perpetrators of the conflicts. According to a Muslim parent from Kaduna south,

The high rate of illiteracy in northern Nigeria helped fan the ember of conflicts we experienced here. Look out on the street you see many ‘almajirai’²⁷ roaming the street. Some of these almajirai don’t even know where their parents are, because they were brought to the religious scholars between the ages of 5 and 6 years to learn Qur’anic education. They have no parental guidance except the old man who serves as their teacher, how can he control about 6 children in his care properly? Some of them were sexually molested by the senior boys in the Qur’anic school. By the time they are about 14-16 years they retaliated by doing the same to the younger ones as was did to them. I was a victim before I ran away from the Islamic scholar whom my father took me to. They go from house to house begging for food in some cases they indulge in petty theft in the neighborhood. The politicians in many instances use them as political thugs. In as much as I do not want to blame the parents for not sending their children to school because of poverty, on the other hand I blame them for not allowing those children to stay under their supervision.

²⁷It has almost become a normal feature, a cultural norm – children roaming the streets in certain parts of (mainly northern) Nigeria. Almajiri as the children are commonly referred to derives from the Arabic word Al-Mahaajirun, which literally means a learned scholar who propagates the peaceful message of Islam. The Almajiri grows up in the streets without the love, care and guidance of parents; his struggle for survival exposes him to abuse (homosexuality and pedophilia), used as a slave, brainwashed and recruited for anti-social activities and used for destructive and violent activities. The Almajiri culture epitomizes child abuse, social exclusion and chronic poverty in all ramifications. Almajiri system has created a cover for criminally minded individuals to abuse the Nigerian child, trafficking in innocent minors and exposing them to anti-social behaviors, and to be used as sex slaves. The elite care less either about their plight. (Obaro The Guardian 29 Feb. 2016).

The issue of almajirai in northern Nigeria is a source of concern to the people; the politicians always play lip-service when confronted with the issue. In addition, a Christian cleric from Kaduna south states “Those politicians are happy with the situation because that is the sector where they often get their foot soldiers that do their dirty jobs during campaign.”

Comparing the Southern region of Nigeria with the north, Southerners do not experience interreligious conflicts in which the Islamic cleric above attributed it to the high rate of literacy in that region. He gave instances how the southerners have interfaith marriages without any problem, something that is very rare in northern Nigeria. When I inquired further if he believes that education could help reduce the frequency of the conflict, this Islamic cleric responded that education will help a great deal. According to him the children will understand that they have a bright future ahead of them and would not want to jeopardize it. But with the majority of youth currently on the street whose future is bleak, these youth have nothing to lose and will not care if others do not have a bright future.

Some of the students I interviewed also expressed fears about the activities of almajirai in their communities. A Muslim student from Kaduna north reiterated her point that it is the caliber of youth she told me who burned her house. According to her most of them are on drugs and homeless, they attacked innocent people sometimes and they are often the one who engage in most of the fight when there is slight provocation either on religion or political view. A Christian student from Kaduna narrated an incident that took place between him and some of the almajirai:

We were having a soccer practice on an open area in our area when some of these almajirai came by and asked us to either give them money or they

will seize our ball. When we replied that we don't have money and we won't allow them to take our ball, three of them brought out knives, before we could run away, they stabbed one of my friends and started shouting a slogan in their religion. They also shouted in Hausa language that 'do away with the infidels. We rushed our friend home by the time our parents got to the field, the boys ran away.

I asked him if they were able to trace or locate them later, He responded that one could not recognize them again since they roam about in the community and there may be the possibility of denial from them. Another student also narrated how some almajirai always laugh at them when they see them going to school. They insult them that it is unfortunate that they accepted to enroll in 'Boko' (Western education) instead of devotion to their religion. According to the student, the almajirai will often sing a derogatory song to annoy them thus "*Yan makarantan Bokoko, ba karatu ba salla, sai yawan zagin mallam*" (Students of western education do not devote their time to read the scripture neither do they pray, they are morally bankrupt often insulting their teachers). This attitude often irritates each time they sang the song and follow them on their way and from school. However, none of the students wants to leave western education and enroll in the religious schools, according to all of them, they have religious education in their schools and their places of worship as such they are not interested in the almajirai type of religious education.

Parents and teachers agree that the government needs to do more on the area of education in the country and in northern Nigeria in particular. They are of the view that educating the children today may help the progress of the country in terms of development because these children will grow to be leaders tomorrow and will be saddled with the responsibilities of providing manpower for development. One of the

religious leaders narrated the implication of neglecting the education of children and its repercussion to Nigeria and indeed the West African sub-region. He pointed out the emergence of Boko Haram in the north-east region is as a result of the neglect of the education sector by successive administration in the country. He is also of the opinion that the politicians need to vote for more funding on the education sector to enable the ministry of education to create the necessary environment for teaching the children. According to him, not every child may be gifted to attain certain levels in education, but the basic needs of the children in terms of literacy need to be met, because it is the responsibility of every government to provide for the basic educational needs of its people. During my conversation with one of the teachers, I tried to understand the role they play in promoting the needed awareness, so parents could send their children school. A teacher from Kaduna north responded that it is always difficult for them to embark on such campaign because the lack of resources and support from the government hindered such progress in the past. Another teacher from Kaduna north attributed the lack of commitment of the department of education at both the local and state government levels as a major factor that contributed to having miscreants in the society, when I asked how? The teacher said:

When I was growing up, the teachers are known in the community, they are highly respected, and they contributed to the development of the society both in and out of school environment. But today many teachers do not know where their students live and the family status or background in the society. Some of the teachers do not care about the moral behavior of their students. But as long as they keep quiet in class and submit their assignments they are considered good students. During my days in school, teachers helped to shape the values of the children in and out of school. Why do we have Boko Haram? Are they old men? No, they are young men who are either school drop-outs or have no basic education. Since they are illiterates, they rely on the interpretation of their religion by another person, who did it with selfish aims and in a fraudulent manner to

win their sympathy. If the teachers in the communities where these youth came from to join Boko Haram had committed time to look in the behavior of these kids at early stage or encouraged them to go to school we may have saved ourselves of so many problems we experienced today as a result of the insurgency.

When I told him the responsibility of the teachers in the school and suggested to him that the way a child behaves in the society cannot be held against the teacher. The teacher responded that teaching is a ‘calling’ in which the teachers will need to commit more time in and out of classroom and to nurture their students. He also drew my attention to the fact that in some part of Nigeria; teachers are seen as life umpire, who made final decisions in societal problems. In order to understand deeper, I inquired if the teachers referred here includes teachers in religious schools? This teacher said “of course no.” According to him, these are some of the problem they often have in their communities. When some teachers in formal schools try to inculcate in their students the fabric of diversity, those teachers in the religious schools tends to disentangle all of these beautiful efforts by teaching them a new concept through indoctrination. Another Christian teacher from Kaduna north also added the same opinion; he went further to state that “All of these get the students confused the more.”

I asked some parents the same question if it was the responsibility of the teachers to instill discipline among their students even out of school. A parent from Kaduna south responded that the children spent more time with the teachers than some of the parents. Though he may not blame the teachers but will hope that they help in restoring order in the society since the students and other youth respect teachers in the communities. Another parent from Kaduna south however, disagreed with the idea that teachers are to blame for the misbehavior of children or youth in the society, according to him, the

responsibility of nurturing a child rest with the parents. The teachers are only a guide in the academic journey of the child so why a teacher should be held accountable for something which the parents are supposed to be held responsible for.

Since many parents and students mentioned religion in our conversation, I asked them whether they believe religious education in schools could help to alleviate the numerous uprising because of a slight provocation in the society. Some students agreed that religious education would definitely help the children to build a morally sound society. According to a Christian student from Kaduna north, “

Religion encompasses everything in this world; as such there is nothing one can do without religion. I need to understand my religion very well or else I may not find a husband because no one will be willing to marry a woman who does not practice or understand the very basics of her religion.

In the Nigerian society, the responsibility of nurturing children most of the time lies with the mother. Many women are expected to be God-fearing who have good behavior in the community, are seen as role model to her unborn children, and are viewed to have the concept of religious piety. Such women are quick to get married because the men want a woman who will support him in raising godly-children as they are often referred to in the Nigerian society. An academically intellectual woman may find it difficult to get married on time but a religiously pious woman though an illiterate will have many suitors swamping around her for marriage. This is because the concept of being religious is very important, and so I asked the students how important religious education in the schools is. A female Muslim student from Kaduna south responded that RE is one of the most important subjects in school. According to her,

I need to know my religion very well so that I can be a good housewife and mother so as to train my children too to be good people. If a girl is

does not have knowledge about her faith and the teachings and nature of worship of her religions, such girls will not find a husband. Even if she finally married someone, he won't respect her.

A Muslim cleric from Kaduna north emphasized the importance of religious education in schools as one of the many solutions, which may help to restore the much-needed peace in the country. He stated further that, the neglect of religious education or education would have dire consequences on the generality of Nigeria because such negligence will only end up with visionless leaders who are stark illiterates. According to him, the knowledge about one's faith is the most thing such person can benefit from in school. He totally agreed with the concept of having religious education in schools "...to help curb moral decadence in the society."

On my visit to the NASFAT place of worship, I discovered that the emphasis of the leaders of the organization is about education. Some of the classes that I visited have teachers just like the formal schools, and the organization have curriculum though it is centered on their faith tradition, according to the cleric who invited me there, "...it helped the students to read and write at the same time inculcating in them the tenets of their faith." For NASFAT, education is very important, and it is one of the cardinal principles of the organization.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings on the focus group discussions I had with the students. In addition, I presented the various interviews I conducted during data collection. Some themes came up during the interview and focus group discussion. The documents and IFE curriculum I reviewed at IMC-MCD and schools showed concept of peacebuilding and coexistence among people of different faiths. Some of the themes that

came up during interview were infidel, hatred, betrayal, discrimination, peacebuilding, reconciliation, forgiveness, religious background, tribal identities, regional identities, stereotypes, political influence and education. All the participants were proud to identify with their faith traditions with emphasis on education on the said faith. Participants also reported how they encountered discrimination and betrayal from neighbors in the communities they once lived. The concept of infidel (arni or arna) was discussed at length because this is one major concept that often triggers most of the conflicts in northern Nigeria. Some religious leaders were open to the concept of interfaith in their places of worship. This is a new development in that part of the world. It was interesting to hear parents and religious leaders accept the concept of interfaith dialogue in the communities. The frail relationship experienced because of interfaith conflicts in the past is beginning to heal going by the assertion of some participants. However, some of the participants are still bitter as they recount their experiences of past events that led to the division among the people. IMC-MCD played prominent role in introducing and encouraging peaceful coexistence among the people through the many interfaith initiatives introduced in the communities.

In the next chapter, I will present the discussion on the perception of students, parents, religious leaders and teachers on the IFE curriculum/networks introduced in schools and communities.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION ON IFE CURRICULUM/NETWORKS IN SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

The purpose of this study is to better understand the perception of students, religious leaders, parents and RE teachers on the IFE curriculum/networks introduced in some secondary schools and communities in Kaduna North and South respectively. The responses of the participants helped to answer the overarching research question of the study. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings on IFE/networks in schools and communities. I will first discuss the issues that came up during the study in relation to IFE curriculum. I will then discuss the findings on the perception of parents, religious leaders and RE teachers about IFE curriculum/networks. An analysis will follow the discussion where I will link it with the theoretical framework I used earlier in the study

IFE/Networks in schools and communities

In this section, I will present the result of my research about IFE in schools and the networks in the communities. During the interviews, I sought the perceptions of students, parents and teacher about the interfaith education curriculum/networks introduced in their schools and communities. The participants come from schools and communities where IFE/network was introduced by the Kaduna State government and IMC-MCD.

Students' perceptions of the IFE in schools

Interfaith education is a new curriculum introduced alongside other interfaith networks in the communities targeted at youth in schools and in the communities to

promote peaceful coexistence and understanding among them. According to an IMC-MCD official, the main goal of this curriculum is to create the necessary awareness among the youth who are often used for interreligious violence. I asked questions in order to understand the students' perception about the curriculum. The majority of the students reported that the curriculum helped them understand certain teachings, which they were initially ignorant of. Some of the students however, did not see any reason why they should be asked to study other the traditions of other faiths.

When I asked of their experience of the IFE classes, a Muslim female student pointed out that the class was more of a Civic education class; the difference according to her is that themes centered on religion are taught alongside. I then probed further for her to explain what she meant, she described her experience thus:

When the subject was introduced, I was skeptical about the class because I know that discussing the two faiths in the same class may lead to riot somehow. I told my mother at home about the new subject, she reported to my father and he said, there is nothing wrong with the subject. He explained to her that the subject is just Peace studies, though with a religious inclination in it. I became comfortable with the class, though some of my classmates asked why we should be taught about the other faith. I told them what my father said, but they did not believe me. What I love most about the class was, at the beginning the teachers drew up lists of guidelines that will guide our activities in the class. Each day we have IFE the teachers will write them on the board, I believe the guidelines helped us in containing the extremists among us.

I asked further to understand what she meant by "...extremists among us" she pointed out that some of the students can be overzealous in their religious activities that when another student speaks or asks a question they consider it offensive which might eventually lead to a fight in the class. She also narrated how a teacher was killed because a student falsely accused the teacher of desecrating their Holy Book. When I asked her if there was such incident during any of the classes, she responded that, "The guidelines have helped in

curtailing how students asked questions and how others respond to the questions. We were told to be respectful in asking questions. We should never use foul or abusive language in the class.”

Another Muslim student from Kaduna South pointed out how the IFE classes helped him understand more about the practices of the Christian religion. According to the student, “I was always curious to know what happens in the church. Sometimes I felt like joining my friends on Sunday when I see them going to church.” I asked the student if he has ever asked his friends about the issue of visiting them in the church. The student gazed at me and responded thus: “I can’t do that; they may think I want to spy on them. And my father will kill me when he discovered I visited a church.” This student had a fascinating story, which is rare among children of his age in northern Nigeria. The student narrated an incident when he fought with his friends from the same faith in defense of a Christian friend. According to the student,

We were on a football field when we heard ‘adhan’ over a loud speaker (a call to prayer) from a Mosque close by²⁸. One of our playmates who is a Muslim said we should go and pray. When they were leaving, I refused to join them, so one of my Muslim friends asked me if I am not coming with them. I said no I am not coming, I said I want to stay with the two Christian friends left behind. Though my Christians friends insisted that I should go, I refused. So, one of our Muslim friends said I should be left alone since I prefer staying behind with infidels than joining them to pray.

The student reported that this statement led to an altercation between him and his Muslim friends. The issue was resolved, and he left with his Christian friends. The next day at school other Muslim students who learned about the incident made fun of him and called

²⁸Adhan is called out by a muezzin from the mosque five times a day, traditionally from the minaret, summoning Muslims for mandatory (fard) worship (salat). A second call, known as iqama, (set up) then summons Muslims to line up for the beginning of the prayers.

him an infidel. During break, he confronted the friend who started the name-calling and warned him against using such derogatory word on people. According to the student,

When I asked him to stop using such word on people he asked me what I will do if he does not stop using the word. He even asked me if I was willing to fight for the honor of an infidel Christian. At that moment, I was annoyed and I punched him. It led to a fight and the teachers were called upon, we were then taken to the staff room by the teachers. I was more annoyed because the teachers did not caution him enough against using the word. Rather one of the teachers said, ‘why are you students fighting over a stupid and minor issue such as this?’ I was infuriated by the teacher’s statement; I then asked the teacher if she will be happy if I call her an infidel. She shouted back at me that who gave me the right to address her as such. My friend was asked to leave; the teachers then administered several forms of punishments²⁹ on me.

I probe further to understand why this student took the option of going through such pains because of another student who is not from his faith against those who are from his faith. The student responded thus: “I heard my father said he regretted not helping our Christian neighbors when they were attacked by the Muslim youth in our community. I swore never to overlook anybody molested by another.” The student also pointed out that before the IFE classes he knew nothing about another religion especially the Christian faith. However, his orientation changed when he participated in IFE classes/network in school and his community. The student pointed further, “I learned a great deal about the Christian religion. There are many verses in the Qur’an that have similarities with those of the Bible about respect and peaceful coexistence with others especially Christians and Jews.”

²⁹Corporal punishment or physical punishment is a punishment intended to cause physical pain on a person. It is most often practiced on minors, especially in home and school settings. Common methods include spanking or paddling. It has also historically been used on adults, particularly on prisoners and enslaved people. Though some school authorities are against the administering of corporal punishments, public schools in Nigeria still allowed teachers to administer corporal punishment on the students, though with minimal force.

A female Christian student also narrated her experience in the IFE classes; she was happy to learn about the other faith and was surprised at how it sounds different from what they were taught in their place of worship. She stated that in their place of worship the other faith is considered an infidel faith but was surprised that there are similarities in some of the verses used to promote peaceful coexistence. However, the student is concerned that the teachers are not well trained on the subject. When I asked how? She pointed out that they could not answer certain questions posed to them in the class. In some cases, the teachers like to transfer responsibility to the other during the class period. Responsibilities such as the other teacher may have answer to the question, which the students asked. In some cases, a teacher will leave the other to teach alone. Nevertheless, sometimes she does not feel comfortable when she did not hear her faith teacher speak on the topic discussed for the day. I asked further if she expressed this concern and other issues to any of the teachers. The student responded, “I dare not talk to them or else they will punish me severely for insubordination and I may fall out of favor with the teacher concerned.”

Some students echoed the concern about trained and licensed IFE teachers as well. A Christian student from Kaduna North expressed fear that having untrained teachers in charge of the classes. I probed further to understand what he meant by untrained teachers. The student responded that he is referring to the RE teachers teaching IFE classes. According to this student,

The IFE teachers do not seem to understand the subject properly. Sometimes, they will seem confused in the class and will ask each other ‘did I teach it correctly?’ or they asked questions such as ‘is this how they

say the simulation exercise should be?’³⁰ To me it showed lack of proper grasp of the subject matter.

Though, the student reported that the IFE classes helped him to contribute positively to the interfaith network in his community. He indicated his desire for the government to recruit IFE professionals to teach the classes.

A male Christian student from Kaduna South is among students who did not see the reason behind this subject in the school. According to him, there is no basis for someone to learn about the other faith. He had preferred if the subject is called Peace education, which is to teach about peace without talking about another faith. He states that: “I have learned enough of my faith and is still learning, so what is the use of other faith to me.” I reminded him that this subject came about because of the conflicts Kaduna experienced in the past. He responded that there are other ways of teaching about the topics not necessarily aligning it to religion. He also raised a concern that RE teachers are not the right people to teach the class. I asked why? His response was:

How can they teach about their faiths in the RE classes where they taught students about faithfulness in their faith only to turn around in another class and tell the same students to shift ground to enable them accommodate people from the other faith? They even taught that we worship the same God, if truly we worship the same God why do we have to attend different RE classes? Why do we then hate each other? I believe each faith should remain in their RE classes and the authority should get neutral teachers to teach about peace.

I later learned that this student lost his father during one of the crisis, which probably made him bitter about the other faith.

³⁰Teachers are seen as authority in schools and the community. A show of weakness on the part of a teacher often proof to the students that the teacher is not qualified and cannot send the wrong message to the students not to believe any of the teachings of such teacher.

A Muslim student from Kaduna north who also a member of the CPAN in her community expressed her happiness with the IFE classes; she looked forward to the classes each week. According to her,

The class should be daily because we need to learn more about each other's faith. If the youth in the north east region were taught something like this, the Boko Haram insurgency would have been curtailed because their group has no youth to recruit in their system. This class changed how I view my Christian classmates, I have friends among them. I even visited one of them during her elder sister's wedding, and that was my first time witnessing a Christian at a close range. I invited her too to a naming ceremony in our house. IFE and CPAN should be introduced in all schools and even places of worship. I would love for the teachers to undergo more training before they could teach the class.

This student's concern about the RE teachers seemed to align with the views of some students as stated above. Another member of the CPAN in her community and a Christian from Kaduna South pointed out that IFE curriculum should be taught to parents, religious leaders and politicians as well. According to her, the students and the youth often follow what their religious leaders preached in places of worship. The politicians then seize such opportunity to lure youth into their camps to serve as political thugs using religion as a rallying point. The introduction of IFE is helpful to those who are members of CPAN in their community, because lessons learned in the classes helped to navigate the activities they introduce in the community. The student further gave an example of a simulation exercise centered on onion, which was taught in the IFE class, which her team replicated it in the community during CPAN campaign. She reported that a religious leader later commended them for using such simulation to prove their point on the need for peaceful coexistence. She emphasizes the importance of the IFE classes, which she is of the opinion that it should be introduced in all schools in Kaduna State. However, she

pointed out that some teachers who are not IFE teachers showed little or no interest in the subject. I asked her how? She responded thus,

When we organize an interfaith activity in the school, we expect that all teachers will be present to see what we put together to teach about peace. Majority of them did not show up for the activity and even the District Education Officer did not attend the program. We were disappointed; we thought they will show enthusiasm in the program. Not long ago, Boko Haram were recruiting young people and turning them into suicide bombers, and they targeted schools. When one of the school in our community was bombed all the teachers prayed for an end to such carnage, but here we are trying to promote such concept of interreligious understanding through our activities, but majority of the teachers refused to attend.

Another Muslim student from Kaduna South expressed disappointment over the attitude of some teachers and principal in her school about the IFE activities in school. This student narrated how some teachers often criticized the IFE classes with arguments that this is a misplaced priority since students have RE classes, anything about religion should be taught in such classes. When I probe further, as to why the students felt some teachers and principal are not supporting the program, the student responded thus:

I think some of these teachers are like the religious leaders who approach religion with a close or secluded ideology. They believe their religion is superior to others as such there should not be classes where students should learn about another faith. In my opinion, they thought learning about another faith may lead to conversion of student from one faith to another.

This is a strong allegation, which I asked RE teachers about later during the interview with them; though they could not substantiate the allegation. This student concluded that some teachers (not RE teachers) are ignorant of what the IFE curriculum encompasses and what takes place in the IFE classes. The student suggested that RE teachers should organize school-wide campaign or program that would enable students highlight some of the simulation exercises that took place in the IFE classes. I asked the student if there was

any instance where IFE teachers tried to convert any student. The student responded that IFE classes are entirely different from their RE curriculum. According to the student, “There was no mention ever in the IFE classes about the teachings of another religion as the right faith over another. Rather, the teachers only bring out the similarities of the two faiths (Christianity and Islam) to find a common ground for peaceful coexistence.”

A Muslim student from Kaduna north whose brother was said to be a member of the Boko Haram always feels sad when issues concerning terrorism or interreligious conflicts are discussed. I asked him why so? He responded that some of his classmates often point at him saying ‘there goes the brother of a terrorist’. I assured him that he should not allow such statements to distract him because he is not the terrorist. He pointed out that his brother was radicalized by a certain cleric and his brother later abandoned school and travel to the north-east to join the group. I inquired how he knew his brother joined the group. He responded that his brother called and threatens them to repent and follow their sect or else he will consider them infidels. The brother was also shown in a video posted by the group on the social media. This student pointed out that if his brother had the opportunity to sit in IFE classes his orientation may have changed. I reminded him that there are students in IFE classes that do not agree with the concept of the program, so it is likely that his brother may not have changed his views. He responded that,

I know my brother very well, he found himself in this situation because he did not have another opinion on how to view people from other faith. He was radicalized and had no option to hear a different view hence he joined the group. He is caring person with a good heart; he joins Boko Haram out of ignorance I am sure.

However, his parents were initially against the curriculum but after enlightenment from officials of IMC-MCD in their community during one of the CPAN campaign the father accepted the curriculum. However, the father did not allow him to attend CPAN activities in the community. He states that he learned about the concept of peaceful coexistence in school and he participates in the IFE activities in and out of classroom.

Another student from Kaduna North a Christian on her part is lucky because her father is one of the members of the interfaith dialogue in the community and always encourages her to participate in the CPAN activities in the community alongside her brothers and sisters. The father also encouraged the introduction of interfaith dialogue in their place of worship.

Two female students from Kaduna north and south respectively indicated their interest in studying peace and conflict resolution in the university, they also want the government to embark on massive campaign in the media to bring awareness and not only to students alone but in the entire State. When I told them, the State government currently has a committee on interfaith dialogue, which advises the governor on issues that align to interfaith conflicts, the student from Kaduna north responded, “If there is a committee like that, then they are not doing enough.” The student from Kaduna south is the opinion that they (government) should go into communities for a proper campaign like the politicians.

Some students from schools in both Kaduna north and south opposed to the implementation of the curriculum. They all have the opinion that religious leaders are the people that need to study the curriculum. According to them, most conflicts in northern

Nigeria today originate from comments and teachings the youth get from religious leaders. One of the Muslim students from Kaduna South remarked that,

If the government is serious about sustaining peace in the region, they should start with the religious leaders who are the perpetrators and masterminds of most of the conflicts. They do this through the sermon they preach. I was a witness to a sermon preached by a religious cleric who asked members of his faiths to take up arms to defend their religion from extermination by infidels.

The student concluded that such teachings or sermon would only increase the propensity of violence. Another student also reported that a cleric from his faith once told him that dying for the cause of his faith is martyrdom. To him such teaching does not depict his faith in good light. In some cases, the clerics are arrogant; they often bragged that the authority could not arrest them because they spoke the mind of God according. Another Muslim student from Kaduna south is also of the opinion that religious leaders should be asked to concentrate their energy on teachings that will help the followers to be good adherents of their faith as against teachings that will pitch the people against each other. The student opined that all religious leaders should be asked to attend interfaith dialogue seminars at least twice a year. Another student from Kaduna south a Christian had a different opinion on the religious leaders, he states that IFE should be introduced in seminaries, that way clerics will be taught the rudiments of dialogue with others before their graduation. I drew this student's attention that not every cleric attends seminary because it may be difficult to achieve the suggestion he put forward. The student reply was, "In that case all clerics should be licensed before they could preach or teach." Most clerics in Nigeria are not licensed by any organization; they only apply for permission to start a religious organization. In most cases, they are unqualified to hold such position.

It was clear from the response that RE curriculum in Nigeria has not addressed issues of interfaith harmony, since students are only taught about their religion in places of worship, schools and at home. In Nigeria, some parents make so much sacrifice to train their children about their religion because they believe religion will shape the lives of their children through morally upright living. The findings also revealed the struggles at which some of the participants wrestle with regarding their friends who belong to a different faith. These participants are comfortable to say their friends are not as bad as other members of the friend's faith. This may be the outcome of ideologies parents and religious leaders taught the children. The case of one of the participants is interesting. A student from Kaduna north a Muslim blamed the perpetrators who burned her family house on youth from the Christian faith, but when asked if her neighbor who gave them shelter during the carnage are bad people, she replied that her neighbors are good people. Regardless of the religious differences, she is comfortable to report that her neighbors who are Christians are good people; however, other people from that faith are bad. The children/youth understood religion with a closed ideology is against a wide-world view for them to question and interact with other faith. This according to responses contributes to the division among the people on religion line. The findings indicate the desire by the participants to breakdown the barrier to enable students learn side by side about the religious other in schools. It is often said that education serves as an avenue of hope for the children. Wedge (2008) remarks that schools are great environment to protect vulnerable children from indoctrination.

According to a Christian student from Kaduna north, "The division among the people in our community is as a result of the many religious leaders we have in our

country. We have more religious institutions than schools. If we are able to build more schools and enroll children in schools, we will have an educated society with respect for one another.” I inquired further if the student believes that education alone can curb the frequent interreligious conflicts in the country. The student responded that, he has never visited a Mosque in the past. However, the IFE program introduced in the communities gave him the opportunity to visit one. The student said further:

I thought the place will be empty and will not have anyone to receive us, because I thought, they have no priest like the Christians. And there is no residence of the Imam in the premises like our churches. However, when we visited the Mosque, we met delegates of the Mosque waiting for us. They took us round the Mosque and explained so many things I did not believe exist in the Mosque. I was surprised to see that they have classes for children as my Sunday school classes in my church. I was happy to witness my classmates prayed, while we waited for them. We were welcomed in the mosque and were encouraged to visit more often.

A Muslim student from Kaduna north also narrated her experience when they visited a Church. The student was full of smiles when she narrated her experience, according to her it was one of the memorable visitations she ever had in her life. When I asked why so? The student responded thus:

My father is a strict and respected religious leader in our community. I realized he will frown at my decision to visit a church. He did not believe in the concept of interfaith dialogue then. I was afraid to ask him. Some of my Muslim friends who visited the church narrated how beautiful the place was and the good music. I looked forward to the day I will visit the church.”

This student always asked her Christian friends about church activities. She became inquisitive because she wants to understand why many people from her faith does not like Christians. However, she realized that her friends and classmates who are Christians are very nice people. According to the student, “There is a sharp contrast between what I

hear about the Christians and my experience with them in school and in the community. The positive relationship with my friends who are Christians increased my desire to visit the church.”

When IMC-MCD officials visited the community on a campaign drive, her father embraced the concept of IFE/networks. The father later gave his consent for her to participate in the program. She finally had the opportunity to visit a church. At the church, she witnessed how her friends participated in worship activities. She also reported that she loved the music and the people were friendlier compared to how she knew them outside of the church. She reported that she always looked forward to church visitations, which are part of the IFE/networks activities in schools and communities.

This visitation was one of the exchange activities organized for the IFE classes. All the participants indicated their willingness to visit again when invited. The students also discussed the commonalities they never expected between their religions as they learn in the IFE classes. Some of the narratives in their sacred texts seem similar to each other. Also, the two faiths have almost the same prophets in their faith traditions. All the students affirmed that before now, they were taught that they should have nothing to do with people of the other faith. According to a Christian student from Kaduna north, “I was warned by a Sunday School teacher that as a Christian, I am not supposed to have anything to do with Muslims if they do not convert to Christianity. Being friends with them will only corrupt my Christian values.” When I probed further to ascertain if her Christian values were corrupted because of her interaction with Muslims friends, she said, “I don’t know, but I like my Muslim friends.”

On discovering the similarities in the two faiths during IFE classes, they felt compelled to interact with each other because they all worship the same God. However, they complained about the reaction of some members of their faith towards their engagement with people from other faith. Overall, the students expressed their desire to engage in interfaith activities in the community. The opportunity to visit each other's place of worship without fear is a stepping-stone to actualizing lessons they learn in IFE classes. In addition, the students' response suggests that IFE have helped them understand how to overcome stereotype against another person from a different faith.

During the interviews, many students indicated the desire to break down the barrier to enable students to learn side by side about the religious other in schools. It is often said that education serves as an avenue of hope for the children. Many educators are of the opinion that schools are great environment to protect vulnerable children from indoctrination.

Majority of the students accepted the idea of IFE; responses indicated that its introduction in schools might add value to campaign for interfaith harmony in the community. It was interesting to find out from the responses that participants recommended certain measures to combat religious fanaticism through IFE activities. Responses from those interviewed indicated a desire for schools to involve more in IFE activities that will capture wider audience. In addition, responses suggested increased personal contact among participants both in and out of school environment. This is consistent with Allport's (1954) "intergroup contact theory"; the division among the participants was the result of a long period of religious conflicts in the community. In a situation where the community is divided on religious lines, a great step towards bringing

these children to accept each other regardless of the faith differences is to allow them to come together more often to discuss issues that tend to separate them.

It was interesting to discover during the individual interactions that majority of the students want to know more about each other's faith. The account of visitation to various places of worship was the high point of this study; this is because it is not a common phenomenon for people of different faiths to embark on such mission in northern Nigeria.

On the issue of the qualifications of IFE teachers, this study discovered that the responses indicate that there are no qualified teachers to teach the subject in the schools. RE teachers only attended some seminars/training at the IMC Kaduna for a few weeks, as such they do not feel competent to voice an opinion about the subject. Responses indicate a call for the training and retraining of RE teachers to enable them reach out to their students about interfaith education. I tend to disagree with the idea of RE teachers to teach IFE, these teachers belong to different faiths and are trained to teach their faith traditions in schools. It may be difficult to disentangle their beliefs. I am opinion that, teachers dedicated to IFE should be trained to teach the lessons in schools, that way biases will be removed from the mind of the teachers.

Towards the end of my conversation with each of the students, I asked the question as to what they expect the District Education Office could do to encourage the teaching of the subject in schools. Majority of the students suggested that different sets of teachers be brought in to teach the classes. IMC-MCD should visit the schools occasionally to monitor the progress of the classes as they with the CPAN in the communities. A Christian student from Kaduna south and a Muslim student from Kaduna

north are of the opinion that IMC-MCD should train their staff to teach the classes. Moreover, the State governor should make provision for all RE teachers to undergo specialization training in the subject. Some of the students also suggested that the subject be scrapped because it is of no use since the main perpetrators are not in schools but on the street.

In the next section, I will discuss the perceptions of parents, teachers and religious leaders on the pilot interfaith curriculum.

Parents, Teachers and Religious leaders' perceptions of the IFE curriculum in schools

The views of the parents and religious leaders seem to agree with the students on their perception of the IFE curriculum in schools. Some parents are of the opinion that the subject be taught right from elementary school. In that way children will grow up to understand that the differences in religions does not mean enmity. According to a Muslim parent from Kaduna north, the religious organization he belonged to made provision for interfaith dialogue. It is also encouraged among members. He pointed out that members are encouraged to dialogue with neighbors not to argue with them, but to seek understanding of their faith. They are also enjoined to explain as clearly as possible to any misunderstanding about their faith to the neighbors. Members are encouraged to invite neighbors to their place of worship, so they could see and listen to some of the activities that take place in the worship places. By doing so, he remarked that most of the misunderstandings and misconceptions would be cleared. This parent narrated how the neglect of education in the region contributed to some of the major crises northern Nigeria is currently experiencing. According to the parent:

The neglect of the education sector by the government has resulted in the loss of moral values among the youth. Also, some religious leaders and politicians took advantage of the situation to either indoctrinate the children or induct them in political militancy. The politicians often used these youths for their selfish benefit but abandoned them after winning elections only to come back for them when they want to run for an office again. Schools are neglected and abandoned by the government, in some cases teachers are not paid for over six months. Who will teach the children how to live an upright life morally? When some religious leaders indoctrinate these children in places of worship, the schools will be a great place to disentangle the teachings of pitching one faith against the other. The introduction of this program in schools could not have come at the right time. I fully support the program and will encourage that the Federal Ministry of Education should introduce the program in all schools.

Two religious' leaders from Kaduna north and south respectively accepted the introduction of this subject; however, they are of the opinion that teachers should be cautious on how to teach the subject. They are of the opinion that religion is a sensitive issue in the region and a mistake from any teacher will spark another conflict. The Islamic cleric from Kaduna north state further, "the subject should not be taught in secondary schools alone, rather it should be introduced right from elementary school. This way the children will grow up with the knowledge of another faith different from theirs. The lack of understanding each other's faith often pitches people against one another with the thought that their own faith is better than the others."

I asked if the parents would support the integration of interfaith education in schools. A Christian parent from Kaduna south pointed out that the subject will be a great idea since teachers of all faiths will be in the class during the lessons. The parent remarked further,

We are able to let our children know about their various sexes and we teach them that because the boy is different from the girl does not make her a different being. We are all created to co-exist together, then why can't we teach the children about the different religions of the world? It

will encourage respect for one another even if you don't like my religion, at least you know about its existence and importance to the follower.

Another parent from Kaduna north is of the opinion that when the youths learned about each other's faith in schools they may be encouraged to organize activities that will draw the attention of the community. The parent suggested a town hall meeting where parents will discuss issues centered on interfaith dialogue. Such meetings will encourage harmony among the parents, he is of the opinion that such gathering could fashion out activities that will encourage religious harmony in the community; that way the youths may be encouraged to participate as well. The parent remarks further, "When parents are not united introducing this type of program in the community may be difficult." He added that the neglect of such harmony in the past contributed to the insurgency the country is experiencing currently. Some teachers however, had a contrary opinion to this parent's view. They suggested that the first step is to engage the students in schools, after that, the students should be encouraged to organize activities centered on interfaith dialogue and showcase them during the school's speech and prize giving day. According to the teachers, that may encourage other students to join the cause. Also schools could introduce interfaith dialogue clubs to bring students together outside of classroom as they engage in interfaith activities.

Encouraging youth to participate in interfaith activities is a wonderful effort according to a Christian cleric from Kaduna south. However, the cleric cautions that prominent religious leaders need to be part of it not just politically but with commitment. When I asked why he insists that these religious leaders be part of it, he pointed out that some of these leaders are seen as demi-gods in the society in which their

prominence carries more weight than what the teachers will teach in the classes. In his opinion, “the program will fail if we refuse to bring prominent religious figures as part of the program.” He gave instances where these religious leaders sometimes challenge government policies to the extent that the government normally rescinds such policies for peace to rein. According to a Christian cleric, the poverty level in Nigeria resulted in many people to rely on their faith for hope, and the religious leaders are the agents who preach such messages of hope and some people follow them blindly. The success of IFE and the networks in the communities can only be successful with their inclusion in the program.

Two parents from Kaduna north and an Islamic cleric from Kaduna south are concerned about the welfare of the teachers if the program is to succeed. When I asked why? They all pointed out that IFE is a new concept, which will increase work load on the teachers; therefore, they should be compensated more for their effort in teaching the class. One of the parents remarked that it would be difficult for a teacher to concentrate on this new subject with the meager pay. The parent argument was that IFE is not just a subject but a program that may help with the many crises in the region. He also suggested that the government and IMC-MCD should train competent teachers for the program, if possible the course to be introduced in teachers’ colleges so that potential teachers will have knowledge of the subject as they prepare to commence teaching as a profession. Two teachers from Kaduna north added that there should be more in-depth training in the field of IFE to enable the teachers to pass the knowledge to the students. In addition, there was unison response to the question as to what level of public educational institutions should the subject be taught. The respondents agreed that all level of

educational institutions should be allowed to teach the course. That way some students may specialize in the field with time.

Another Islamic cleric from Kaduna north suggested another method of incorporating the subject into school curriculum. He is of the opinion that the subject be taught under peace education, that way, no religious leader or parent will complain against such program or believe that the teaching of IFE corrupts his religion. This cleric's view was also echoed by some teachers who are afraid that teaching IFE would make people see them as trying to corrupt the RE curriculum in schools. According to a RE teacher in Kaduna south, "I and my colleagues tried to do our best to teach IFE curriculum and also encouraged the students to take part in the interfaith network in their communities. However, one of the major challenges is that we are seen as traitors to our religion. Some parents and religious leaders felt we have compromised our faith." I asked the teacher if such accusation disturbs and affect her commitment in teaching the class. The teacher responded that she tried to ignore it but sometimes it hurts her when her children are referred to as children of an infidel.

According to another teacher from Kaduna south, who is a Christian teaching IFE curriculum comes with many challenges. The teacher reported that some parents confronted her in the church asking for explanation about the IFE curriculum. According to the teacher,

Some parents confronted me and elders in my church they were concerned about the curriculum. Some of the parents accused me of stalling the propagation of the good news of Jesus Christ by teaching the IFE curriculum. One parent even pointed out that there can be no peace between Christians and Muslims as long as the Muslims insisted their religion is superior to ours. After explaining the concept of the curriculum to them, majority understood and accepted the explanation. Though, there

are still some parents who see me as someone who betrayed my faith because of the curriculum.

I contacted an official from IMC-MCD with this concern; he replied that it might be possible to teach the program under peace education; however, it means that IMC-MCD will have to collaborate with institutions that offer peace education. He pointed out that it may need more resources to achieve the success of the program if peace education experts will need to come in.

I inquired to understand the involvement of parents and religious leaders in interfaith harmony in their various communities. The participants have different opinions about their involvement in interfaith activities in their communities. According to a parent from Kaduna south, “Interfaith harmony in our community was encouraged by some of our religious leaders. Few of the clerics are not comfortable with the concept of interfaith dialogue, they see as an avenue to convert people to other faith. I am in support of the program and I attend meetings monthly.” I asked why he only attends the meeting only once in a month, he responded that his profession does not allow him to be present at all time for the meeting. He however, stated that he encouraged his daughters to attend interfaith activities. His daughter is a member of CPAN in their community. A parent from Kaduna north remarked that he is an official of the interfaith committee in his community and place of worship. He represented the community on some seminars and conferences on dialogue at either IMC-MCD or any international organization that initiate such exercise.

Another parent from Kaduna north however blamed some religious leaders of discouraging the progress of dialogue in the community. He pointed out that such clerics used deceptive motives thereby pretending to be committed to dialogue, but will go

behind to discourage their members from participating. I asked if he experienced such action from a cleric. He responded that he did not, but his neighbor experienced it and told him about his experience. I seek to understand the reason for the cleric's behavior. This parent opined that some clerics felt their religion is the ultimate and followers should not relate with people from the other faith.

When I asked the clerics about the parent's concern, two clerics agreed that some of their colleagues are bent on destroying the peace movement in the communities. According to an Islamic cleric from Kaduna south, "Some of these clerics feel their power will be threaten when people live in harmony with one another. The harmony will prompt people to understand the truth about their faith, but when there is conflict and negative teachings from the clerics, the people remain ignorant." Such behavior according to this cleric is beneficial to those clerics. A Christian cleric from Kaduna north complained about a colleague who questioned the rationale behind attending interfaith meetings in the community. He reported that he explained the benefits of such meetings, but his colleague was adamant, and that he did not see the reason why people from his faith that are considered believers should meet with unbelievers. In the course of this data collection, a cleric who initially accepted to participate in the research opted out when he discovered I was the researcher. His argument was that he could not discuss religion with me, because he considered my family as renegades to the religion he belongs.

Some of the responses blamed lack of interfaith education as one the major contributor of religious conflict in Nigeria. One participant is of the opinion that IFE should not be limited to school environment alone, but teachers should encourage it in the

community. To achieve that, some participants suggested using school end of year speech and prize giving days to highlight interfaith activities in the various schools. A participant went a step further to suggest that IFE should start from the elementary schools so that the values of respect and peaceful coexistence could be inculcated in the children from a tender age. The responses from this study are in consonance with the view of Sampson (2011) who argued that the only way to establish a desirable scenario of religious harmony within Nigeria is through the creation and sustenance of a neo-religious educational praxis. According to him, such measure would create a culture of multi-religiosity for children to understand, pursue, and appreciate each. He believed that such effort will not benefit the children, but it will help re-orient the adult population as well.

The teachers are comfortable with the introduction of IFE in schools; however, they are of the opinion that qualified IFE teachers be employed to teach the classes. According to a teacher from Kaduna north “We were only trained for some weeks at IMC-MCD, I don’t think I am qualified to teach the class or be called an expert in the subject area.” The view expressed by this teacher seem acceptable to the other teachers when I asked them if they think they are qualified to teach the classes. The teachers also suggested that the program should be introduced in teacher training institutions to enable upcoming RE teacher have knowledge of IFE before taking up appointment to teach the subject.

Another teacher from Kaduna south also suggested that students should be made to form peace clubs in schools. Such clubs could help them as they carry out their CPAN activities in communities. According to this teacher,

In Japan, children are taught how to clean their environment and classrooms at a very tender age in elementary schools. This is to instill

discipline of cleanliness in the children as they grow. Introducing interfaith curriculum in schools starting from elementary school will not only help the parents and teachers, but the society at large.

The teachers also suggested that parents should be encouraged to have town hall meeting to discuss interfaith dialogue in the communities. Without the support of the parents, the IFE in schools may not be successful, according to a teacher from Kaduna south. The encouragement need to start from home just as parents encouraged their children to participate in religious activities.

From the account of parents and religious leaders, IFE curriculum should be introduced in schools. However, the success of the curriculum depends on how some religious leaders in the communities restrict themselves on how they teach or preach certain topics in their places of worship. In addition, some of the parents suggested the involvement of the government in the program to achieve success. Some of the religious leaders also suggested a regulatory body for all religious clerics to monitor their activities, because some of their actions promotes disharmony among the people. There was also a call by the participants that IMC-MCD should intensify effort in the community through CPAN to accommodate youth in the community who are not part of the school system.

The incessant conflicts, which drive people to live in communities or areas that have the same faith majority also affected the economic aspect of the communities. This action prompts the movement of certain businesses to other areas. As narrated by some of the respondents, the market square in their communities moved from a vibrant area to one that has only a few people because people are afraid for their safety. Religious festivities, which were celebrated by all in the past, were disrupted and stopped because of the lack

of trust between the people. However, with the introduction of IFE and CPAN in the communities, some religious leaders and RE teachers encouraged a re-introduction of such tradition. According to IMC-MCD, the participation of students in interfaith activities in the communities contributed immensely in reducing some of the tensions, which in the past could have resulted in full-blown conflict.

The contribution of some parents was interesting to note here. They are of the opinion that students should be engaged more often in IFE classes, drawing from experiences of conflict which they attributed to illiteracy and ignorance of the religious other. According to responses, such engagement will build the bond among the students by taking cues from the past. This seemed to align with Dewey's (1934) theory of "experiential education", where he posits that education is a central part of what prepares an individual for participating in democracy and community building. Dewey argued that schools should model community experience, he also pointed out that students learned best by experiencing and reflecting on such experience. Participants identified that the past conflicts contributed enormously to the strained relationship in the community, as such, classes centered on such experiences will be beneficial to peace building in the community.

The role of the political class was also discussed during the research. Majority of the respondents blamed the politicians for using religion as a political device to divide the people for their personal gains. Apart from the division of people based on religious lines, participants decried the attitude of politicians who are in power towards education. The respondents said that the neglect of basic education in northern Nigeria contributed to the menace of extremism. This is because the school-age children who are out of school

turned out to be available tools in the hands of the politicians and some religious leaders who often used them to start the conflict.

Some said that ‘Almajiri Schools’ are reported to be an avenue for recruiting and radicalizing some of the youth who are out of school. Though this religious school cannot be said to be totally a recruiting ground for young jihadists, they contributed tremendously to that effect. This could be seen in the fight against Boko Haram, which is currently undergoing in northern Nigeria. Majority of the youth arrested by security forces when interviewed do not understand the rationale for their militancy. Some of them knew little or nothing about their faith. Some of the participants reflected on the contribution of some Almajiri schools in serving as an available venue for recruitment of militants who joined the Boko Haram sect. According to these participants if those youth were enrolled in school, they may not accept to be part of this sect. Since they (youth) realized they have no stake in the future, they opted to fight for the cause of their faith.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I presented the findings on the perceptions of the IFE curriculum/networks in schools and communities. The findings presented the perceptions of students, parents, teachers and religious leaders. Most participants reported an improved relationship with their neighbors since the last interreligious conflicts in their communities as a result of interfaith education/network activities in their communities. The students whom I considered primary participants of this study reported an increased awareness of the other faith. Though some students are against the introduction of the curriculum, many are completely in favor of the curriculum in schools. Some students

reported that the curriculum helped them to understand some of the many dynamics of the two religions in northern Nigeria.

According to the students, the IFE classes/networks in the communities gave them the opportunity to visit each other's places of worship. Such visitation helped them understand so many similarities between the two religions. Parents and religious leaders encouraged more participation in interfaith activities among the people. Majority of the participants are of the opinion that IFE curriculum should be taught by professionals in the field. There were also suggestions that IFE courses be introduced in teacher training colleges to enable teachers graduate with as professionals in the field. In addition, there were concerns about the activities of some religious leaders who often trigger conflicts because of their utterances. Since they (religious leaders) are well respected in the communities, some parents and religious leaders suggested involvement of all religious leaders in Kaduna and the country in general in the program.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, the literature related to peace education, interfaith dialogue, religious education and interfaith education in different contexts was reviewed. In addition, the study examined the perception and understanding of interfaith education and peacebuilding among secondary school students in Kaduna north and south respectively. Allport's intergroup contact theory helped the researcher to understand if the participants learned anything as regards the IFE curriculum/networks introduced in the communities through the many interactions in schools. In addition, Dewey's theory of 'experiential education' was discussed. This helped the researcher to understand how participants responded to their experiences of interfaith conflicts in their communities and how they linked it to the IFE curriculum in schools. Dewey's theory rested on two cardinal principles, which are "continuity and intention." Dewey argued that schools should model community experience and that students learned best by experiencing and reflecting on that experience. The majority of the respondents reported learning about interfaith dialogue, understanding and tolerance stemming from the interfaith conflicts they experienced in their communities.

In the course of the study, the researcher set out to answer one major and three sub-research questions. The major research question was "How have interfaith education curriculum/networks contributed to religious understanding in Kaduna, Nigeria." This major research questions was followed by three sub-questions:

- A. What is the perception of students about the pilot program on interfaith education that was introduced in schools?

- B. What is the perception of parents and religious leaders about the introduction of interfaith education in schools?
- C. What is the attitude of youth towards the Community Peace Action Network (CPAN) in their communities?

The discussion of the research findings is based on the analysis of data collected over the course of the study. The findings also highlighted some themes, which came up during the data collection. In addition, the findings outlined the perceptions of students, parents, religious leaders, RE teachers and interfaith dialogue experts on the IFE curriculum/networks introduced in schools and communities. I will report my conclusions and recommendations based on the research questions.

The interreligious conflict in Nigeria could be said to be a major barrier to progress in the country. The tension between the adherents of Christianity and Islam has affected all sectors of the country. Today in Nigeria, even the political landscape of the country has religious undertones; most citizens vote along religious lines. The tension also affects the economy of most States in the country, especially in northern Nigeria. Many businesses had to relocate to other areas or States because of fears for the safety of staff or business owners. People had to relocate to areas they considered safe or that have a majority of people who belong to the same faith as them. The social life of the people was also not spared going by the account of some of the participants in this study. The friendly relationships and harmony some people of different faiths enjoyed was cut short because of the conflicts. There were increased cases of distrust among the people, since each side points accusing fingers at the other. According to Human Rights Watch (2012), the loss of lives recorded in Kaduna state during the cycles of conflict is comparable to

the number of people killed by the dreaded Boko Haram militants in the northeast region of the country. The educational system was also affected because of relocation of families and death of parents who were killed during conflicts.

According to the findings, the efforts of interfaith organizations such as IMC-MCD and some international NGOs helped to create awareness through rigorous campaigns in the State. IMC-MCD introduced some measures, which include CPAN and Conflict Early Warning and Early Response agents who are community members who respond to and report any escalation of conflict. The effort of IMC-MCD and the State government led to the introduction of IFE curriculum in selected schools as a measure to combat the involvement of youth in the conflicts. Youth are often the combatants used to perpetrate the acts of arson and vandalism. Some respondents are of the opinion that these measures introduced by IMC-MCD may help to reduce the participation of youth in conflicts in the State.

Respondents in this study indicate how important their various faith traditions are to them. In addition, the responses of students showed the devotion of participants to their faith and how their parents want them to be knowledgeable about their faith through active participation in RE activities in schools. During the interviews, I discovered that some participants preferred to be identified by their faith first before their nationality or regional affiliation. The devotion of the participants to their faith often leads to the division among them. It also encourages the concept of “us” and “them” which some religious leaders and politicians use to divide their followers based on their religious affiliation. One of the themes that was reported by the participants, which is believed to create conflicts among the adherents of the two faiths, is the concept of ‘arni/infidel’

(unbeliever). A majority of the respondents either claimed to have addressed someone as such or reported being called by this label. According to the participants, this derogatory word often triggers conflict among the people. On further examination, the researcher understood that this concept stems from the teaching/preaching of some religious leaders delivered at the places of worship. There are indications that most of the participants reported being indoctrinated in their places of worship. To this end, they believe that their faith is the only way to better serve God. This notion prompts them to believe that their faith is superior to other faiths.

The concept of infidel or ‘arni’, which is often used interchangeably by the people depending on the religious faith they belong to, tends to divide the people and create animosity among them. Some respondents reported how this label often triggers religious conflicts because someone decides to use it to address someone else. The derogatory nature of the word in northern Nigeria often makes the person so addressed feel insulted. In most families in northern Nigeria, this concept is used to address people who belong to a different religion from another person, even blood relatives. During the interviews, some students and parents mentioned this word referring to people from another faith. It was surprising to hear some parents whom the researcher considered educated people using such a word in the course of an interview. This often leads children to emulate their parent’s behavior, by expressing resentment/animosity towards people of the other faith.

Some parents also use their religion to determine where to reside with their family. Because people from the other faith are considered infidels, some parents resent living in the same community with such people as neighbors. Experts are of the opinion that religion is a powerful tool, which may affect a society depending on how it is

handled. The position of most of the students interviewed point to the direction of division among the people based on religious ideologies. This position according to them stems from the religious teachings they receive at home or in their places of worship. The views of their parents contributed enormously in shaping their thoughts about their religious beliefs and how they view people from the other faith.

Based on the findings in this study, majority of participants agreed that IFE is very important for religious harmony among students and in communities. The incessant religious conflicts in the country call for more effort in educating the youths of Nigeria. Students from the participating schools of the pilot project of IFE in Nigeria displayed enthusiastic desire to learn about other faiths. Participants argued that IFE should not just be in schools but should be extended to the larger community to enable youth to participate in interfaith activities. A majority of the participants indicated their support of IFE curriculum in schools and CPAN in the communities.

Some respondents suggested that with globalization, there is the need to design curriculum that will address people from different backgrounds or the same background but of different ideologies. RE teachers or IFE teachers should be trained in IFE before allowing them to teach such subjects in schools. A way of achieving this may be through the introduction of IFE in teacher training institutions so that RE teachers graduate with a comparative knowledge of the two faiths and the techniques of interfaith dialogue. Professional development training can be used to train existing teachers.

The respondents also revealed that the role religious leaders' play contributes to the many divisions among the people. There are layers of division even among adherents of the same faith. Such divisions stem from the teachings of religious leaders. The

proliferation of religious groups or sects in Nigeria is another factor that contributed to the frequent interreligious conflicts. Some sects increase the number of religious leaders, which could be labelled overnight religious leaders who have no theological training in the faith. Some parents and religious leaders during the interviews blamed the government for its inability to put measures in place to check the excesses of religious leaders. So many ignorant religious preachers often ignite flames of conflict through their religious teachings. With such perceptions, some of the respondents suggested training and retraining of religious leaders with information on how to address sensitive issues in the community through their teaching and preaching.

Recommendations

One of the prominent religious leaders of the catholic faith in Nigeria once stated that:

For a long time, humanity lived in closed religious' communities, with not much to do with others, who perhaps have their own faith, generally considered as erroneous and false. But now that globalization has packed us into a global village, we are faced with the fact of plurality of religions all of us calling on the same One God (Onaiyekan, 2016, p. 22).

The ideology taught by some of the religious leaders as narrated by some of the respondents often lead to hatred or discrimination against one another.

However, with the current trend of globalization with people moving from one place to another and the world turning into a global village, there should be a change of perceptions on how other faith and people are viewed. The era of a single religion having dominion over another in a multi-religious country is long gone. This means religious adherents need to accept each other as part of the larger society. However, those who feel otherwise may need to revisit their religious education curriculum to accommodate

others. The case of Ireland is an instructive example to look at, the incessant crises prompted the introduction of 'Controversial education' to address the issue. The controversial education helped students in Ireland to understand the concept of diversity in the country. Nigeria can adapt the same principle by introducing measures that will teach the children about the importance of diversity.

Additionally, the government of Nigeria should equip and encourage the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council to mobilize religious leaders to support the introduction of IFE in schools. Social Media could be used also to design IFE lessons to be delivered on such platform since most youth have access to smart-phones. Another effort the government will embark upon to encourage IFE is to revisit the RE curriculum in schools. Most of the RE curriculum is about devotion to one's faith as such it does not give room for the students to view their faith with a worldview in mind. Just as they were taught about their faith in places of worship, the RE curriculum is no difference. With a review of the RE curriculum to allow students to learn about other faiths may be helpful in curbing the incessant conflicts among adherents of the two faiths in the country.

Looking at the contributions of some respondents, they suggested that parents have a role to play in the effort of peace building through IFE. Since they work in the same offices and go to the same markets and hospitals, they should also imbibe the spirit of accepting and respecting each other for peaceful co-existence. Emphasis should be placed on the learning environment to reach out to children and groom them in the knowledge of interfaith co-existence in the society.

A majority of the respondents agreed that interreligious conflicts over the years constituted an impediment to development and stability in northern Nigeria.

Developments in the education sector, foreign investors and infrastructure have been affected. Some of the parents and religious leaders suggested that, the government and religious leaders have roles to play in enshrining peace and stability in the region. According to the respondents, to achieve those, certain measures need to be in place in the different sectors listed below:

Education

Northern Nigeria has the highest rate of illiterate and out-of-school children in the country (UNICEF, 2012). Some parents cling to the teachings of their religion, which is often misrepresented by religious scholars in collaboration with corrupt politicians as an excuse for not enrolling their children in schools. In some families, two or even three generations are often wasted without education. The policy of the government on education is that all children must compulsorily attend the first nine years of school. However, many parents flout such decisions and no parent is ever prosecuted for violating such orders.

The political authorities on the other hand do not provide conducive environment for parents to enroll their children in schools. Since some of the politicians benefit from the political thuggery of some of the youth who are out of schools or have never attended, such politicians are comfortable with the standard of education in the region.

Previous governments in the country have neglected the education sector. Some of the schools lack even basic infrastructure for conducive learning. In some schools students, students sit on the floor to study, while others take lessons under a tree. This type of environment is discouraging to both the teachers and students. The environment often results in some students staying away from school.

The government needs to implement more stringent measures on education especially in the elementary and secondary schools. The government should prosecute parents for refusing to enroll their children in school. On the part of the politicians, there should be intense efforts in restructuring the education sector. Teachers' welfare should be taken into consideration anytime decisions are made about the education sector. State governments that allowed teachers to go for months without salaries should be discouraged. To have a good education environment, teacher's welfare and schools infrastructure should come first.

In addition, the government should consider the integration of western education into the Almajiri religious education system in northern Nigeria. Respect for each other's religious beliefs should be incorporated into the education curriculum to teach the children about faiths different from their own.

Religious Institutions/Preachers

Most Nigerians consider themselves religious. Parents try to train their children in their faith traditions. Failure to do is considered by many as a dis-service to the children and community since it assumes that the children will become irresponsible in the society. Since religion is very important to most parents, it would only be proper if such religion is taught with wide world-view rather than a secluded view. Religious institutions should be encouraged to preach themes that promote unity among the people rather than dividing them.

The government in addition should create an agency that will regulate religious preachers in the country. Some preachers are not concerned about the repercussion of what they say, which often triggers interreligious conflicts. The government should

encourage and give the necessary support to NIREC members to succeed in promoting peaceful co-existence among the people. Prosecution of erring religious leaders and institutions will go a long way in curtailing frequent conflicts.

Reconciliation

The government's usual response to outbreaks of violence in Nigeria, over the last few years, has been to set up commissions of inquiry. Many such commissions have been set up to determine the immediate and remote causes of religious conflicts and violence in different parts of the country, but regrettably Nigerians are constantly kept in the dark as to the findings and implementations of recommendations from such commissions. Only a few of such commissions have published their reports, and even when they have, their recommendations have rarely been acted upon. In relation to events in Kaduna State, the federal and state governments have set up several of such commissions of inquiry since the 2000 violence in Kaduna. A judicial commission of inquiry set up by the Kaduna state government, held public hearings and received numerous submissions on the 2000 Kaduna crisis. Its report was never published, although it was reported to have been one of many documents submitted to the peace conference, which took place in the state.

To show its seriousness in handling, preventing, reducing and ending religious conflicts in northern Nigeria, the government must in the spirit of justice and accountability, publish the findings of previous and subsequent commissions of inquiries while diligently acting upon recommendations made by such commissions.

The government should set up committee to reconcile the people and communities that experience interreligious conflicts in the future. The lack of such

structures in the past often pitched the people against the government, with the belief that the government took sides with a particular group. A reconciliation committee be set up by the government to operate independently with the responsibility of mediating people involved in conflict. The loss of loved ones or injustice is something that cannot be easily forgiven or forgotten. To properly heal the wounded, the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation needs to be imbibed by the victims. Instead of provoking the attackers towards more killings, forgiveness would challenge the attackers towards a sober reflection. Victims of the conflict need to let go of the pains and loss and extend a hand of friendship to the other. The religious actors also need to use the teachings of their religion to ask for forgiveness and reconciliation from the aggrieved. On the part of the government, a truth and reconciliation commission should be set up, modelled after the South African version. This commission should look into the causes, actors and victims of the crisis, then help toward reconciling the people. Unlike tribunals or courts where actors are punished for their roles in conflicts, this commission would be charged with the responsibility of reconciling the warring factions. Prosecution leads to reprisal later, either directly or indirectly. Religious leaders should play a prominent role in achieving this goal. As Audrey R. Chapman puts it:

The influence of religious perspectives and approaches on the TRC also made the South African experience unique. In contrast with other truth commissions, whose commissioners were generally lawyers and jurists, religious thinkers and clergy played major roles in the TRC... Commentators have pointed out that many hearings resembled a church service more than a judicial proceeding, with a definite liturgical character and that the Archbishop Tutu clearly operated within a religious framework.

By allowing sincere religious leaders to serve on the committees of the commission, there will be many positive results in terms of forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation, as opposed to a judicial panel where each individual would want to prove his/her case so that the other would be punished or s/he would escape therefrom. The government of Nigeria should not allow politicians to serve on the commission. After all, the genesis of the conflict is traced to them as indirect actors. Another means of soothing the pains of loss or hatred is for the government to endeavor to re-build all places of worship burnt during the crisis. Re-building the places of worship, a large step way may have been taken in healing the wounds.

Bringing perpetrators to a reconciliation parley at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission seems to be aligned with Allport's concepts of reducing prejudice. However, not all of the concepts could be used in such situation. The concept of common goal; support of authorities, law and custom; personal interaction; and intergroup cooperation may come handy in such situation. This also agrees with Pettigrew et al position that not all criteria listed by Allport need to be met before the people could experience reduction in prejudice against one another. Pettigrew et al further pointed out that there are other outcomes beneficial to intergroup contact such as trust among the people and forgiveness for past perpetrators. This could be achieved during reconciliation process of warring factions.

Leadership

It is disheartening to hear from the participants how the leadership in the country contributed to the many conflicts, because of the neglecting of their constitutional roles. Leadership failures in Nigeria increase the propensity of violence in the country.

Corruption leads to the wide gap between the rich and the poor. Those in leadership position amass corrupt wealth from the government coffers and allowed other sectors to suffer thereby increasing the number of unemployed in the country. The unemployment of parents and youth contributes to the increase in hostilities among the people. The parents cannot afford to send their children to better schools. Even the government-owned schools request payments before children can be enrolled in the school. Some parents cannot afford such payments since some families have between five to seven children. On the part of the youth, their unemployment turns them into available tools in the hands of the politicians who used them as political thugs during electioneering campaigns only to abandon them when they get into office. These youths will remain a nuisance in the communities until the next election, but before then, they contribute to the many interreligious conflicts in the country.

Therefore, the role of credible leadership in the country to help prevent interreligious conflicts cannot be overemphasized. Failure of leadership in Nigeria according to some experts and participants is one of the major problems the country faces.

Interfaith Dialogue

The importance of continuous dialogue among the people in northern Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Politics and religion succeeded in dividing the people along religious lines. The division affects the cordial relationship experienced by the people in the past. In addition, the division prompts people to relocate to communities they feel safe with people from the same faith. Such divisions contribute to people not listening to each other because each side adopts the concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Dialogue is a perfect tool that can help in resolving conflicts and misunderstanding. Adopting Allport's (1954) 'Intergroup contact theory' dialogue could be considered a process whereby peace can be achieved among warring parties. The government and community leaders should encourage frequent dialogue among the people. By bringing them together often, they may understand what causes the disaffection among them. This dialogue should not be restricted to religious leaders and parents alone. The youth should be included in the dialogue process because they will be the future leaders of the country. Educational institutions need to embrace the IFE curriculum to encourage dialogue among students/youth in school and communities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Nigeria is not exempt from the many challenges interfaith dialogue faces. According to Ashafa and Wuye (1999), the most common challenge interfaith dialogue faces in Nigeria is the lack of IFE teachers that are trained in interfaith dialogue. The authors are of the opinion that since most of the perpetrators of religious violence in Nigeria are youth of school age, teacher training colleges should endeavor to include interfaith curriculum into the education system. This way, religious education teachers will reach out to the students, and at a tender age, they will be groomed to respect each other. Since religion is an integral part of the Nigerian society, and research has shown that adherents are often willing to fight and die for their faith, future research should look at how government, parents, religious leaders and religious educators could play various roles in the lives of the students/youth in achieving peaceful coexistence in the following ways:

A. **Identification of the causes of conflict and its impact in the communities.**

There is the need for experts and government to identify the many root causes of the various conflicts experienced in the communities. This could be achieved through sensitization programs using conflict analysis tools such as CPAN.

B. **The Role of local and national media in conflict prevention.** The media is very important in combating conflicts in the communities. There is the need to look at ways the media could play a role in sensitizing the youth and students in the communities.

C. **Participation of women in peacebuilding efforts.** In many parts of Africa, mothers spend more time with the children than the fathers. As such, encouraging women to participate as peacebuilders will be very important. A study in this direction could be helpful.

D. **Establishment of interfaith dialogue directorate in a federal ministry.** The establishment of NIREC is commendable by the federal government of Nigeria; however, this body only contains religious leaders. A directorate could be established under a federal ministry to undertake the responsibilities of coordinating the affairs of interfaith dialogue and awareness for the people.

E. **Access to basic social services.** The lack of social services in some communities in Nigeria often contributes to increase in conflicts. In some cases, because of the scarce services, service providers often discriminate against others. Such discrimination is often based on regional, tribal and religious divide.

F. **Integration of youth programs.** In some countries, youth programs are introduced to engage youth in extracurricular activities. Such programs take youth off the streets and prevent those who want to recruit them for violence from succeeding. This initiative

could be encouraged in Nigeria to engage the youth and help distract them from being used as combatants.

G. **Providing youth with the necessary skills.** It is very important that youth be provided with necessary skills to discourage them from participating in interreligious conflicts in the future. Establishment of skill acquisition centers will be helpful and beneficial to the development of the various communities.

H. **Creation of safe spaces.** When youth stay away from each other it often builds tension among them because of the information passed to them by either their parents or religious leaders about others. However, when recreation centers are provided in communities and everyone is encouraged to use such facility, it may help to build bonds among the youth.

Further research in these areas will be helpful in addressing the incessant interfaith and communal conflicts in Nigeria.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ASSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

Assent Form for Participation in a Research Study (*for Older Child/Younger Adult 13+ years old*) University of Massachusetts Amherst

Principal Investigator:	Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario
Study Title:	Interfaith Education and the Quest for Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria

What is a research study?

A research study is a way to find out new information about something. You do not need to be in a research study if you don't want to.

Why are you being asked to be part of this research study?

You are being asked to take part in this research study because we are trying to learn more about interfaith education and peacebuilding in your town. We are inviting you to be in the study because you are a member of the class where the interfaith education curriculum was introduced. About 63 participants will be in this study.

If you join the study what will you be asked to do?

I want to tell you about some things that you will be asked to do if you are in this study.

You will be asked to participate in a group discussion with some of your classmates where we will talk about interfaith education classes. I will later have an interview with you during school hours for about 30 minutes. I will also observe your interfaith education classes to see how you interact with your teachers during the lessons.

You will be in the study for a period of twelve weeks from June – August 2017. During the interview session, it will be audio-recorded.

How will being in this study affect me?

During the time we will be meeting with you, I know you may be tired and be uncomfortable talking to me. You do not have to worry because I will not tell anyone of our discussion. Whatever we discussed will stay between us. Also, your parent or guardian knows about this study and that we are asking if you would like to be part of it. This study might find out things that will help other people someday. The study will also help us learn more about how to overcome the religious extremism we are experiencing now in Nigeria. Your contribution will help other children in schools that have no opportunity for this type of classes to benefit because the government started the program in your school first. I believe you will not want to see any religious conflict again in your town. That is why you are taught how to live-in peace with each other. I understand that recalling experiences of the previous religious conflicts may be traumatizing. I will contact the Nigerian Air Force Aircrew Hospital Kaduna where you can seek help in case you feel emotionally distressed recalling religious conflicts in the community.

Do your parents know about this study?

This study was explained to your parents and they said that we could ask you if you want to be in it. You can talk this over with them before you decide. If you want to be in the study, your parents will need to sign a form too.

Who will see the information collected about you?

The information collected about you during this study will be kept safely locked up. Nobody will know about it except me the researcher. The study information about you will not be given to your parents or teachers. The researcher will not tell your friends either.

What do you get for being in the study?

You will not benefit from any monetary compensation for the entire study.

Do you have to be in the study?

You do not have to be in the study. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this study. If you don't want to be in this study, you just have to tell me. It's up to you.

You can also take more time to think about being in the study.

What if you have any questions?

You can ask any questions that you may have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario +2348022673152. You can also contact my Faculty Sponsor Dr. David R. Evans dre@educ.umass.edu

You can also take more time to think about being in the study and also talk some more with your parents about being in the study. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

Other information about the study:

If you decide to be in the study, please write your name below.

You can change your mind and stop being part of it at any time. All you have to do is tell the person in charge. It's okay. You will be given a copy of this paper to keep.

If you want to be in this study, please sign your name below.

Signature _____


Date _____

Participant Name _____

Date _____

Name of Person obtaining consent Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario

Date _____

University of Massachusetts Amherst-IRB	
(413) 545-3428	
Approval Date: 05/23/2017	Protocol #: 2017-3862
Valid Through: 05/22/2018	
IRB Signature:	

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR REPRESENTATIVE OF IMC-MCD KADUNA

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher: Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario

Study Title: Interfaith Education and the Quest for Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. I encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

The study will include parents, teachers, and religious leaders in Kaduna North and South respectively. The selection will include two religious education teachers from each school; one religious leader each from the four communities; two parents from each community; one representative each from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) office in Kaduna, Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI) office in Kaduna and Interfaith Mediation Center-Center for Christian-Muslim Dialogue (IMC-CMD) office in Kaduna. As a representative of the Interfaith Media Center Kaduna, you are selected to be part of this study.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this research study is to examine the impact of pilot interfaith education curriculum/networks in selected secondary schools in four communities in Kaduna Nigeria. The curriculum and networks was introduced as factors to achieve inter-religious peace, tolerance and understanding among youth through education and awareness in schools and communities. This study will examine the perception of parents, religious leaders, and teachers on the interfaith education pilot project that was introduced in their schools and communities respectively.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The data collection will take place between June–August, 2017 and will take place in Kaduna State northern Nigeria. The study will take place in four communities where the interfaith education curriculum/network was introduced, they include: Kawo, Tudun-Wada, Sabon- Tasha and Gonin-Gora. I intend to interview one religious leader from each community and one official each from CAN, JNI and IMC-MCD for up to one hour. Finally, I will interview two parents from each community for up to one hour.

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate on a one-on-one interview. I realize that religion is a sensitive issue in northern Nigeria, as such; there will be equal representation of gender and adherents of the two faiths (Islam and Christianity) in the study. During the interview, all questions/conversations will be centered on interfaith conflicts, interfaith education, tolerance and peacebuilding. All interviews session will be audio-recorded. You may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering.

6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, I hope that your participation in the study may help in fostering peaceful coexistence among the people in northern Nigeria.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

In addition, I understand that recalling experiences of the previous religious conflicts may be traumatizing. I will contact the Nigerian Air Force Aircrew Hospital Kaduna where you can seek help in case you feel emotionally distressed recalling religious conflicts in the community.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records. The researcher will keep all study records, including any codes to your data in a secure locked file cabinet at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location. The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed 3 years after the close of the study. All electronic files in MS word and folders containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such as files and folders will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only I will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researcher may publish the findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations. The study data may be released to the Interfaith Mediation Center-Christian-Muslim Dialogue (IMC-CMD) if the need arises to enable the center improve on the design of the curriculum and networks. Participants' names will not be used, since only pseudonyms will be used during the research.

• WILL I RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT FOR TAKING PART IN THE

STUDY? There will be no monetary compensation for participating in the study.

• WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. I will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further question(s) about this project you may contact the researcher Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario at +1413-336-2785 or +2348022673152. You may also contact my Faculty Sponsor Dr. David R. Evans dre@educ.umass.edu If you have any question(s) concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

12. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects' research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

13. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Participant Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of Person
Obtaining Consent

Print Name:

Date

University of Massachusetts Amherst-IRB (413) 545-3428	
Approval Date: 05/23/2017	Protocol #: 2017-3862
Valid Through:	
05/22/2018	<i>Janay C. Smith</i>
IRB Signature:	

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher: Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario

Study Title: Interfaith Education and the Quest for Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. I encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

The study will include students, parents, teachers, and religious leaders in Kaduna North and South respectively. The selection will include two religious education teachers from each school; one religious leader each from the four communities; two parents from each community; one representative each from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) office in Kaduna, Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI) office in Kaduna and Interfaith Mediation Center-Center for Christian-Muslim Dialogue (IMC-CMD) office in Kaduna.

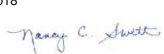
As a parent whose child attends school in the selected schools in the study, you are selected to be part of the research.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this research study is to examine the impact of pilot interfaith education curriculum/networks in selected secondary schools in four communities in Kaduna Nigeria. The curriculum and networks was introduced as factors to achieve inter-religious peace, tolerance and understanding among youth through education and awareness in schools and communities. This study will examine the perception of parents, religious leaders, and teachers on the interfaith education pilot project that was introduced in their schools and communities respectively.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The data collection will take place between June–August, 2017 and will take place in Kaduna State northern Nigeria. The study will take place in four communities where the interfaith education curriculum/network was introduced, they include: Kawo, Tudun-Wada, Sabon- Tasha and Gonin-Gora. I intend to interview one religious leader from each community and one official each from CAN, JNI and IMC-MCD for up to one hour. Finally, I will interview two parents from each community for up to one hour.

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IRB Signature: 	

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate on a one-on-one interview. I realize that religion is a sensitive issue in northern Nigeria, as such; there will be equal representation of gender and adherents of the two faiths (Islam and Christianity) in the study. During the interview, all questions/conversations will be centered on interfaith conflicts, interfaith education, tolerance and peacebuilding. All interviews session will be audio-recorded. You may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering.

6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, I hope that your participation in the study may help in fostering peaceful coexistence among the people in northern Nigeria.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

In addition, I understand that recalling experiences of the previous religious conflicts may be traumatizing. I will contact the Nigerian Air Force Aircrew Hospital Kaduna where you can seek help in case you feel emotionally distressed recalling religious conflicts in the community.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records. The researcher will keep all study records, including any codes to your data in a secure locked file cabinet at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location. The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed 3 years after the close of the study. All electronic files in MS word and folders containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such as files and folders will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only I will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researcher may publish the findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations. The study data may be released to the Interfaith Mediation Center-Christian-Muslim Dialogue (IMC-CMD) if the need arises to enable the center improve on the design of the curriculum and networks. Participants' names will not be used, since only pseudonyms will be used during the research.

• WILL I RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

There will be no monetary compensation for participating in the study.

• WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. I will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further question(s) about this project you may contact the researcher Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario at +1413-336-2785 or +2348022673152. You may also contact my Faculty Sponsor Dr. David R. Evans dre@educ.umass.edu If you have any question(s) concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

12. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects' research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

13. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the

opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Participant Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of Person
Obtaining Consent

Print Name:

Date

University of Massachusetts Amherst-IRB	
(413) 545-3428	
Approval Date: 05/23/2017	Protocol #: 2017-3862
Valid Through:	
05/22/2018	<i>Nancy C. Swett</i>
IRB Signature:	

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher: Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario

Study Title: Interfaith Education and the Quest for Peacebuilding in
Northern Nigeria

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. I encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

The study will include parents, teachers, and religious leaders in Kaduna North and South respectively. The selection will include two religious education teachers from each school; one religious leader each from the four communities; two parents from each community; one representative each from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) office in Kaduna, Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI) office in Kaduna and Interfaith Mediation Center-Center for Christian-Muslim Dialogue (IMC-CMD) office in Kaduna.

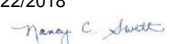
As a religious leader representing your faith tradition, you are selected to be part of this study.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this research study is to examine the impact of pilot interfaith education curriculum/networks in selected secondary schools in four communities in Kaduna Nigeria. The curriculum and networks was introduced as factors to achieve inter-religious peace, tolerance and understanding among youth through education and awareness in schools and communities. This study will examine the perception of parents, religious leaders, and teachers on the interfaith education pilot project that was introduced in their schools and communities respectively.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The data collection will take place between June–August, 2017 and will take place in Kaduna State northern Nigeria. The study will take place in four communities where the interfaith education curriculum/network was introduced, they include: Kawo, Tudun-Wada, Sabon- Tasha and Gonin-Gora. I intend to interview one religious leader from each community and one official each from CAN, JNI and IMC-MCD for up to one hour. Finally, I will interview two parents from each community for up to one hour.

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Valid Through: 05/22/2018	
IRB Signature: 	

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate on a one-on-one interview. I realize that religion is a sensitive issue in northern Nigeria, as such; there will be equal representation of gender and adherents of the two faiths (Islam and Christianity) in the study. During the interview, all questions/conversations will be centered on interfaith conflicts, interfaith education, tolerance and peacebuilding. All interviews session will be audio-recorded. You may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering.

6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, I hope that your participation in the study may help in fostering peaceful coexistence among the people in northern Nigeria.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?


I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

In addition, I understand that recalling experiences of the previous religious conflicts may be traumatizing. I will contact the Nigerian Air Force Aircrew Hospital Kaduna where you can seek help in case you feel emotionally distressed recalling religious conflicts in the community.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records. The researcher will keep all study records, including any codes to your data in a secure locked file cabinet at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location. The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed 3 years after the close of the study. All electronic files in MS word and folders containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such as files and folders will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only I will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researcher may publish the findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations. The study data may be released to the Interfaith Mediation Center-Christian-Muslim Dialogue (IMC-CMD) if the need arises to enable the center improve on the design of the curriculum and networks. Participants' names will not be used, since only pseudonyms will be used during the research.

- **WILL I RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?** There will be no monetary compensation for participating in the study.

University of Massachusetts Amherst-IRB (413) 545-3428	
Approval Date: 05/23/2017	Protocol #: 2017-3862
Valid Through: 05/22/2018	
IRB Signature: 	

10. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. I will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further question(s) about this project you may contact the researcher Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario at +1413-336-2785 or +2348022673152. You may also contact my Faculty Sponsor Dr. David R. Evans dre@educ.umass.edu If you have any question(s) concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

12. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects' research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

13. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Participant Signature:

Print Name:


Date:

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of Person

Print Name:

Date
Obtaining Consent

University of Massachusetts Amherst- IRB (413) 545-3428	
Approval Date: 05/23/2017	Protocol #: 2017-3862
Valid Through: 05/22/2018	
IRB Signature: 	

APPENDIX E
CONSENT FORM FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher: Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario

Study Title: Interfaith Education and the Quest for Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. I encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

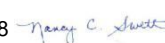
The study will include students, parents, teachers, and religious leaders in Kaduna North and South respectively. The selection will include two religious education teachers from each school; one religious leader each from the four communities; two parents from each community; one representative each from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) office in Kaduna, Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI) office in Kaduna and Interfaith Mediation Center-Center for Christian-Muslim Dialogue (IMC-CMD) office in Kaduna. As a religious education teacher in the secondary school where the research will take place, you are selected to be part of this study.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this research study is to examine the impact of pilot interfaith education curriculum/networks in selected secondary schools in four communities in Kaduna Nigeria. The curriculum and networks was introduced as factors to achieve inter-religious peace, tolerance and understanding among youth through education and awareness in schools and communities. This study will examine the perception of parents, religious leaders, and teachers on the interfaith education pilot project that was introduced in their schools and communities respectively.

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University of Massachusetts Amherst-IRB	
(413) 545-3428	
Approval Date: 05/23/2017	Protocol #: 2017-3862
Valid Through:	
05/22/2018	
IRB Signature: 	

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate on a one-on-one interview. I realize that religion is a sensitive issue in northern Nigeria, as such; there will be equal representation of gender and adherents of the two faiths (Islam and Christianity) in the study. During the interview, all questions/conversations will be centered on interfaith conflicts, interfaith education, tolerance and peacebuilding. All interviews session will be audio-recorded. You may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering. I will also observe the Interfaith Education classes you will teach during the course of the study. In this class I will observe your interaction with the students; I will review the lesson note for the day to see if the objective of the class is understood by the students at the end of the lesson.

6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, I hope that your participation in the study may help in fostering peaceful coexistence among the people in northern Nigeria.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

In addition, I understand that recalling experiences of the previous religious conflicts may be traumatizing. I will contact the Nigerian Air Force Aircrew Hospital Kaduna where you can seek help in case you feel emotionally distressed recalling religious conflicts in the community.

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• WILL I RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT FOR TAKING PART IN THE

STUDY? There will be no monetary compensation for participating in the study.

University of Massachusetts Amherst-IRB (413) 545-3428	
Approval Date: 05/23/2017	Protocol #: 2017-3862
Valid Through: 05/22/2018	
IRB Signature: <i>Nancy C. Schwartz</i>	

10. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. I will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further question(s) about this project you may contact the researcher Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario at +1413-336-2785 or +2348022673152. You may also contact my Faculty Sponsor Dr. David R. Evans dre@educ.umass.edu If you have any question(s) concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

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Print Name:

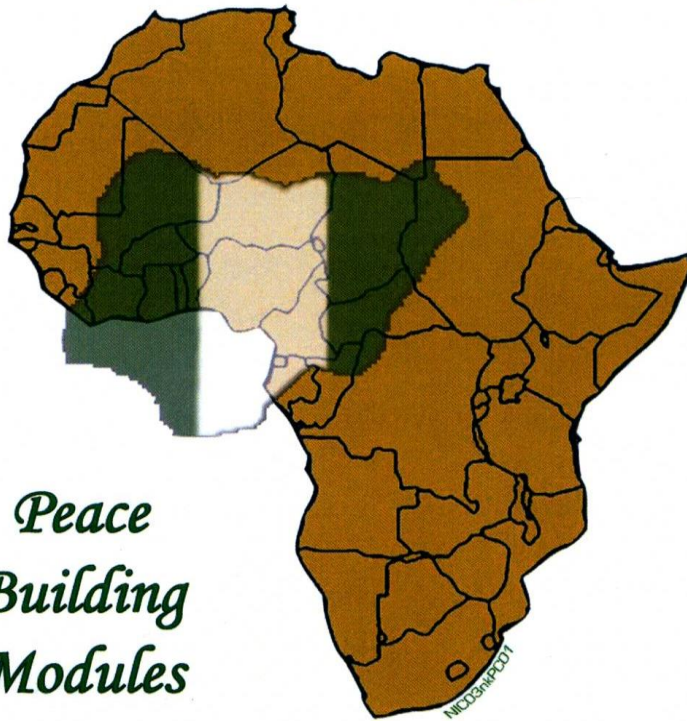
APPENDIX F

PEACEBUILDING MODULES FOR STUDENTS

Students For Peace



*Peace
Building
Modules*



Student Guidebook

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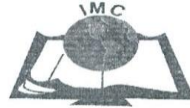
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APPENDIX G

EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE MANUAL FOR COMMUNITY PEACE OBSERVERS



Training Manual on Early Warning Early Response For Community Peace Observers

**By
Interfaith Mediation Centre, Kaduna**

November 2015

CHAPTER 1

Agreements

“Now you have an opportunity to create Agreements together about how you will communicate in order to have the kind of conversation that results in greater learning and understanding about each other. The proposed Agreements on the easel pad or handout have been used by others to create a safe-enough environments where people can speak from the heart and listen fully. Let’s read them through, one at a time, and see whether they are clear and also whether they need to be revised. And then whether you are all willing to commit to them.

Proposed Agreements

Regarding the *spirit* of our speaking and listening:

- We will speak for ourselves and from our own experience.
- We will not criticize the views of other participants or attempt to convince them.
- We will listen with resilience when we hear something that is hard to hear.

Regarding the *form* of our speaking and listening:

- We will participate within the time frames and share airtime.
- We will not interrupt except to indicate that we cannot hear a speaker.
- We will “pass” if we do not wish to speak.”

Regarding *confidentiality*:

- Following the dialogue, we will speak about what happened in ways that do not allow other speakers to be identified and will honor any specific request from a speaker.

“Are there any questions about what any of these agreements mean?”

“Would you like to suggest any changes or additions?”

(If a suggestion is made and agreed to by all, add it to the posted list.)

“So is each of you prepared to commit to these agreements as best you can and allow me to remind you if you slip or forget?”

“Okay, then these will serve as your agreements. If at any point you feel these are not serving your purposes adequately, speak up and we will see if it makes sense to revisit them.”

This section intends to acquaint participants with skills of ethics of communication and anger management in tense situations. With these skills participants will be able to prevent the occurrence or escalation of violence among individuals and groups of people in their respective communities. The major aim is to ensure that participants of this training will be able to differentiate between **probing/interrogating questions** from **questions of genuine curiosity**; which will in turn enable them to collect authentic and unbiased information that will be used for effective for violent conflict prevention. In addition, after this training participants will also be able to prevent violence occurrence and escalation through promotion of mutual understanding among individuals with misunderstandings in their communities.

"Triggers, Temptations & Alternatives"

Purpose: A small-group exercise to identify personal triggers, temptations and more constructive alternatives for each participant.

Think of a time when you became upset about something that was said about an important aspect of your identity (e.g. race, religion, ethnicity, core social or **political values** and beliefs).

EARLY WARNING ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

SUB-CONTENTS

- Definition of early warning
- Difference between early warning and intelligence gathering
- Framework for early warning
- Steps to early warning and early response
- Basic elements of early warning
- Challenges of early warning and early response
- Trainer's notes
- Additional resources

Objectives

- To deepen participants knowledge of basic definition of Early Warning
- To enable participants appreciate the difference between early Warning and Intelligence Gathering
- To highlight to participants the basic relationship between various elements of Early Warning and its connection to Conflict Analysis
- To enhance participants' appreciation on challenge encountered in early warning system

Specific Methodologies

Brainstorming, plenary presentations, illustration, group exercises and interactive discussions.

Methodological guides

Brainstorm Exercise: facilitator asks participants to give one word that best describes early warning for them and why/ they are given one minute to write down its meaning in their various local languages. The exercise leads to further discussion on whether their communities practice any level of Early warning and how it is performed.

Plenary presentation: using a flipchart, the facilitator uses their examples to explain the Early Warning process, its basic features and its importance in the prevention of conflict or violent crises. Also steps involved in early warning and early response are explained and their linkage to Root causes, Proximate conditions and intervening factors is established.

Illustration: the facilitator project EW framework using a multimedia projector to deepen appreciation of participants to the linkages involved in an effective EW analysis.

Group Exercises: Participants are divided into groups to choose specific conflict contexts peculiar to their environment analyze it using the projected framework. Each group will be given opportunity to present their exercise and also offer opportunity for questioning and interactive learning.

Interactive Discussion: the Facilitator summarizes the session and invites questions from participants to test their understanding of the session.

What is Early Warning?

Early Warning is a process of reading specific indicators as signals and patterns of signals, and translating those patterns into a kind of anticipation of the likelihood of the emergence or escalation of violent conflict. It entails the trends, sparks and triggers of conflict that can provide data for forecasting the emergence of conflict. It is a guide to understanding conflict structures and character of actors and stakeholders. It can also be described as procedure or mechanism for structural and systemic collection and analysis of information, and the subsequent communication of results of this analysis to policy makers in a form that would be easily recognized and understood. It is therefore an aspect of peace building that analysis signs and symptoms' or indicators of potential conflict to prod preventive actions to avert degeneration into crises. It enables us understand structural realities to diagnose possible outcome. Early warning bridges that gap between signs and occurrence of conflict unfolds, i.e. the gradation of conflict. Early warning indicators can be identified across different phases of conflict. The following table is a summary of the 5 phases that conflict often goes through.

Table 1: phases of Conflict

PHASE	FEATURES
Phase 1 Pre-conflict	Conditions that is normal to the society concerned. If the society has democratic institutions in place, protests will be moved peacefully through the institutional channels
Phase 2 Conflict Emergence	Disputes become more evident and protesting groups more vocal and militant If political conditions are more authoritarian, a higher level of violence can be anticipated
Phase 3 Conflict and Crisis phase	The community becomes engulfed in conflict. Characterized by chaos, complex emergencies and uncontrolled community actions
Phase 4 Conflict Settlement	Characterized by interventions to bring conflicting parties together, ceasefires, peace agreements and an end to the violence
Phase 5 Post conflict	Community returns to pre-conflict conditions, and if causes have been dealt with to the satisfaction of those involved, they can be expected to stay in this phase.

When is it Critical to Warn?

Early warning is extremely critical at the formation or escalation stage of a conflict when it is still latent or generating pockets of open confrontation. Beyond this stage is crisis which redefine preventive action to conflict resolution. Early warning is not 100% solution to preventing conflict. However the cost of prevention has proved to be cheaper than the cost of human and material resources wasted in destabilizing conflict. It is cheaper to nip conflict in the bud than to invest huge resources in conflict resolution and transformation.

What is the Difference between Early Warning and Intelligence gathering?

Early Warning	Intelligence Gathering
1. Overt (open) Sources	Covert Sources
2. Unclassified	Classified
3. Emphasis on Human Security	Emphasis on State Security/interest
4. Motive to prevent violence	Emphasis on State Security/interest
5. Early Warning is not spies	Some intelligence gatherer may be professional spies
6. Large audience of contributors and utilizes	Limited audience-State
7. Multiple options for response from NGOs, CBOs and CSOs	Unidirectional response-Government

What Early Warning is not

- Early warning is not Intelligence Gathering
- Early warning is not a Prophecy
- Early warning is not a Magic Wand against violent conflict
- Early warning is not an end in itself

Framework for Early warning

Establishing a framework for Early Warning and Early Response entails a systematic and collaborative relationship between the state institutions, policy makers and civil society organizations. It is a gradual process which can be sustained if there is a grassroots structure which is reliable and committed to the cause of peace. Most conflicts in Nigeria have many layers involving multi-level stakeholders. It is therefore critical that analysis and interventions are based on inclusive interest and commitment to transformation by various, monitoring and analysis should be based on local intervention strategies. Decision makers should develop enough confidence in the analysis to respond impartially.

Steps to EW and ER

For proactive conflict prevention mechanisms, effective prevention is predicated on the relative importance of early response to early warning. The following steps have been designed for quick and appropriate intervention:

Early Warning

- Define the indicators
- Monitor the indicators
- Issue Warning
- Communicate the warning

Early Response

- Receive warning
- Accept the Warning
- Act on EW
- Consistent support and

Inclusive participation in Early Response (not ad hoc or one-off activity)

Reliable early warnings buy time not only to prepare for short term containment but also to design, build support for and implement longer term proactive strategies and development program that can reduce the likelihood of future negative conflicts. An early warning system is more than the flow of information and reports from those on the ground regarding highly visible or rapidly escalating crises. It should also provide reliable analyses that identify still latent

APPENDIX H

PEACE MEDIATORS TRAINING MANUAL

1

**INTERFAITH MEDIATION CENTRE
PROCESS FOR MEDIATORS
2012 TRAINING MANUAL**



CONFLICT ANALYSIS:

- There are three key aspects to peace practice - conflict tracking; conflict analysis; and conflict intervention. Conflict analysis is the stage at which the information of conflict incidents are reviewed and dissected. It proceeds from conflict tracking findings, and aims at establishing the validity of assertions made and the nature and depth of conflicts.
- Conflict analysis uses available information from conflict tracking to determine conflicting parties (primary and secondary), their concerns and interests and their manifest behaviour. It is a reflection process that is conducted to reduce assumptions and identify the critical nature of the relationship between conflict parties before and during hostility, Conflict analysis helps in determining the appropriate response methodologies and models. It has three stages:
 1. Pre-conflict analysis
 2. Intervention analysis
 3. Post-conflict analysis

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

3

- Pre-conflict analyses refer to the examination of information from conflict tracking before outbreak of hostility. It involves activities that provide entry points into conflict prevention and mitigation. Intervention analysis entails investigations conducted to determine the impact and relevance of ongoing peace processes. It helps in understanding the appropriateness of a given response methodology to a specific conflict situation. While post-conflict analyses are conducted to understanding lessons learnt, and monitor the peace building process such as reconciliation and healing.
- At every stage of conflict analyses, there are certain general and specific issues that are revealed. Some of these issues include:

Type, nature and structure of conflict

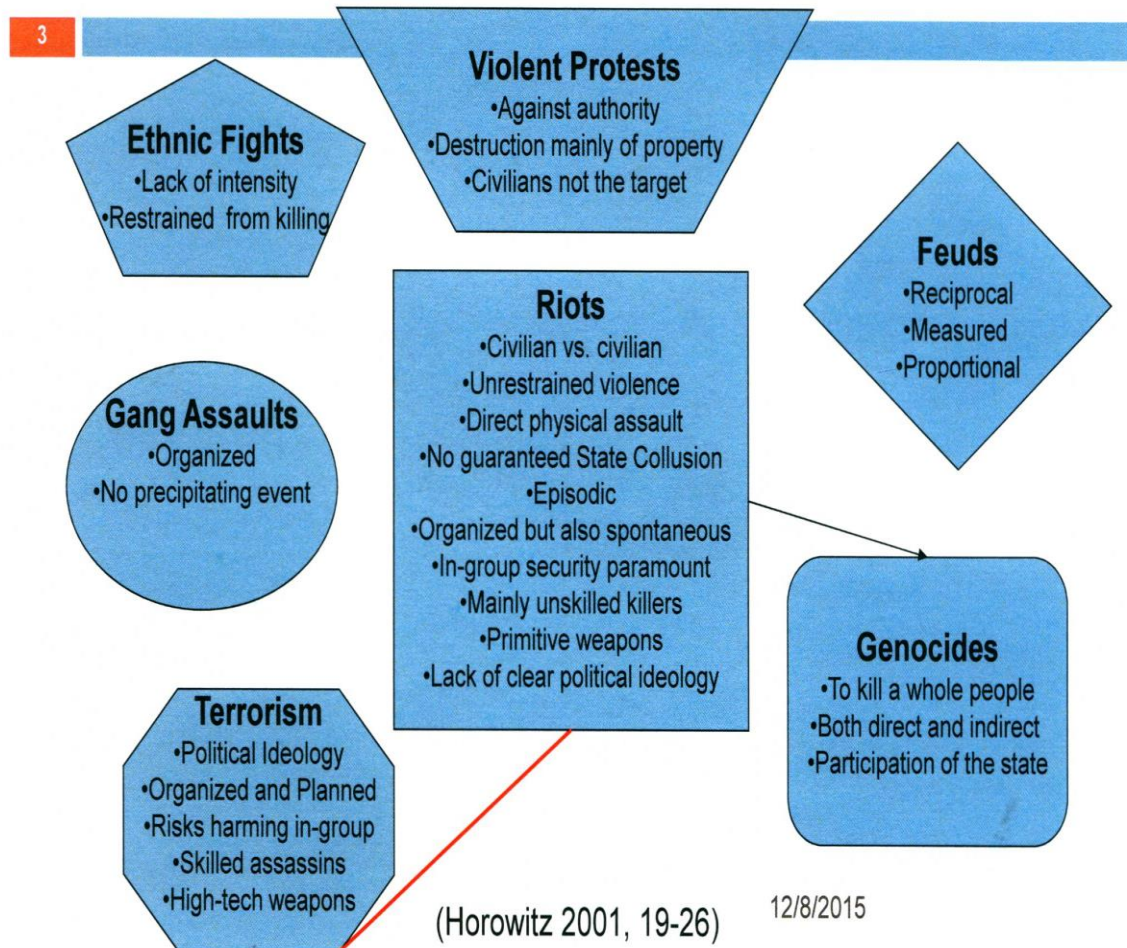
- Character of conflict parties
- Power and group dynamics
- Positions maintained and interests promoted
- Needs, fears and concerns of parties
- Causes, trends, sparks, and triggers of conflict
- Perceptions maintained and behaviour exhibited
- Resources available and mobilized

MODELS OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS

4

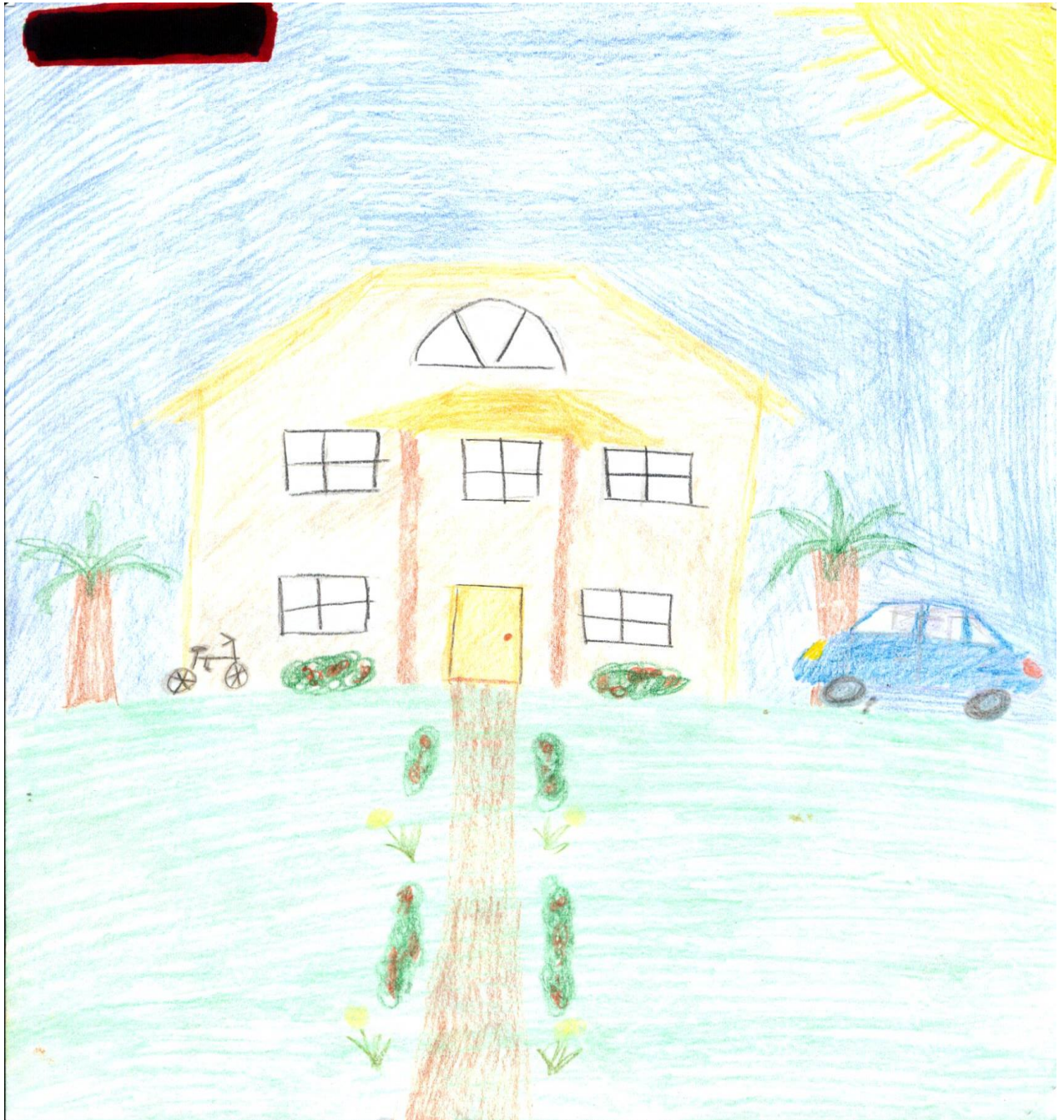
Different models of conflict analysis were developed to address issues raised above. While some of these models focus on a combination of issues and are multi-dimensional, others adopt unilateral approaches. Thus, the appropriateness of most analytical models is determined by the extent to which it provides solutions to different issues. It should be noted that the choice of a given analytical model in peace practice is also influenced by the dynamics of conflicts. Complex conflicts may require a combination of models, while less complex situations may not. Some of the tools in analyzing conflict are listed below. Each of these will be explained in more detail in this paragraph.

Categories of Violence



APPENDIX I

A STUDENT DEPICTION OF THEIR HOUSE BEFORE AND AFTER AN ATTACK IN KADUNA NORTH





APPENDIX J

**A STUDENT DEPICTION OF ATTACK ON THEIR HOME AND MILITARY
INTERVENTION TO SAVE THEM IN KADUNA SOUTH**





APPENDIX K

A STUDENT DEPICTION OF THEIR HOUSE BEFORE AND AFTER AN ATTACK IN KADUNA SOUTH





APPENDIX L

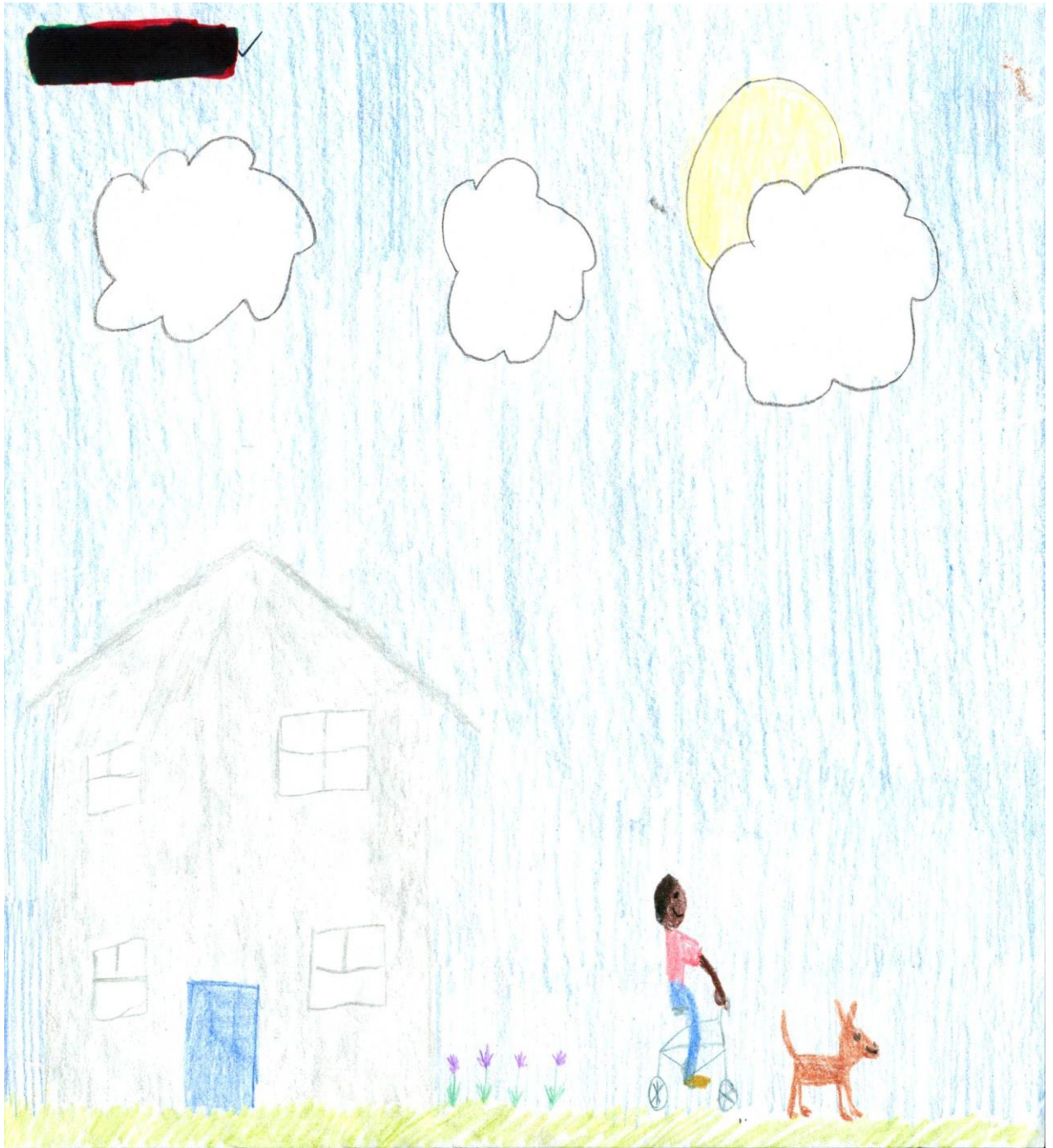
A STUDENT DEPICTION OF THEIR HOME BEFORE AND AFTER AN ATTACK IN KADUNA NORTH





APPENDIX M

A STUDENT DEPICTION OF THEIR HOME BEFORE AN ATTACK BY HOODLUMS IN KADUNA NORTH





APPENDIX N

A STUDENT DEPICTION OF THEIR PLACE OF WORSHIP BURNED DOWN BY SOME HOODLUMS IN KADUNA NORTH





APPENDIX O

KADUNA PEACE DECLARATION

The Kaduna Peace Declaration of Religious Leaders¹

22nd August 2002

In the name of God, who is Almighty, Merciful and Compassionate, we who have gathered as Muslim and Christian religious leaders from Kaduna State pray for peace in our state and declare our commitment to ending the violence and bloodshed, which has marred our recent history.

According to our faiths, killing innocent lives in the names of God is a desecration of His Holy Name, and defames religions in the World. The violence that has occurred in Kaduna State is an evil that must be opposed by all people of good faith. We seek to live together as neighbours, respecting the integrity of each other's historical and religious heritage. We call upon all to oppose incitement, hatred, and the misrepresentation of one another.

1. Muslim and Christians of all tribes must respect the divinely ordained purposes of the Creator by whose grace we live together in Kaduna State, such ordained purposes include freedom of worship, access to and sanctity of places of worship and justice among others.
2. As religious leaders, we seek to work with all sections of the community for a lasting and just peace according to the teachings of our religions.
3. We condemn all forms of violence and seek to create an atmosphere where present and future generations will co-exist with mutual respect and trust in one another. We call upon all to refrain from incitement and demonization, and pledge to educate our young people accordingly.
4. Through the creation of a peaceful state we seek to explore how together we can aid spiritual regeneration, economic development and inward investment.
5. We acknowledge the efforts that have been made within this State for a judicial reform and pledge to do all in our power to promote greater understanding of the reform, so that it can provide a true and respected justice in each of our communities.
6. We pledge to work with the security forces in peace keeping and implementation of this Declaration in the State.
7. We announce the establishment of a permanent joint committee to implement the recommendations of this declaration and encourage dialogue between the two faiths for we believe that dialogue will result in the restoration of the image of each in the eyes of the other.

This declaration is binding on all people in the State from this day of 22nd August 2002 and agree that any individual or group found breaching the peace must be punished in accordance to the due process of the law.

Modelled on the Alexandria Declaration of January 2002 this Peace Declaration was agreed and signed by eleven Christian leaders including Archbishop Achigili and eleven Muslim leaders, Imams and Sheikhs and by His Excellency Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi the Executive Governor of Kaduna State.

¹ <http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/work/declarations/kaduna.cfm>

APPENDIX P

KAFANCAHN PEACE DECLARATION



THE KAFANCHAN PEACE DECLARATION

*March 23rd, 2016
Kafanchan, Kaduna State, Nigeria*

CONTENTS

The Kafanchan Peace Declaration

- I. Purpose
- II. Acknowledgement of causes and consequences of violence
- III. Acknowledgement of previous efforts to find a solution to the violence
- IV. Code of conduct
- V. Follow up actions
- VI. Dispute resolution
- VII. Requests to other processes and institutions

The farmers and grazers Declaration

- VIII. Commitments and claims of grazers
- IX. Commitments and claims of farmers
- X. Policy recommendations for State Government of Kaduna and Federal Government of Nigeria
- XI. Recommendations for the international community, civil society and other stakeholders working in Kaduna State
- XII. Establishment of a monitoring committee
- XIII. Shared stipulations
- XIV. Review of this declaration
- XV. Walking forward together
- XVI. Public apology

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